

God Embrace 5: How Much More

Fruit to root

The things we do and think are the fruit, and the fruit in our lives is not random. Rather, what we do is rooted in belief—some understanding of God or ourselves, that may be right (which would lead to good fruit) or that may be wrong (which would lead to bad fruit). Although there is often some value in trying to change the fruit (or the outward behavior), for genuine and lasting change, we have to get to the root, and change it. Simply put, when we see bad fruit, we want to trace back to whatever false beliefs are creating it. Then we want to work to change the root, and not just the fruit.



James 3:9-14 With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness.

¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

¹⁴ But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. NIV84

Matthew 12:34b [Jesus said,] "For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks." NIV84

The fruit of speaking badly about others comes from an unclean heart (possibly envy and ambition).

1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. NIV84

Many kinds of evil are rooted in the love of money.

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. NIV84

The fruit of pleasing our sinful nature indicates a root of belief that doing so will produce enjoyment in life rather than destruction. We think sin is going to pay off!

Ecclesiastes 4:4 And I saw that all labor and all achievement spring from man's envy of his neighbor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. NIV84

The fruit of achievement indicates a root of comparison and envy.

Galatians 2:12 Before certain men came from James, [Peter] used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. NIV84

Hypocrisy can be rooted in our fear of what other people think.

James 4:1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? NIV84

The fruit of fighting and quarreling comes from inner desires.

1 Corinthians 3:2-3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? NIV84

Jealousy and quarreling is rooted in worldliness, and perhaps not seeing ourselves as children of God.

Matthew 8:26 [Jesus] replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. NIV84

Fear may be rooted in a lack of faith.

Matthew 10:29-31 [Jesus said,] "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. NIV

Fear may be rooted in a lack of belief that God cares.

Luke 7:47 [Jesus said,] "Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven — for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little." NIV84

A lack of love for God may indicate that we don't understand the depth of our sin and forgiveness.

Matthew 23:26b [Jesus said,] "First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean." NIV84

2 Peter 1:5-9 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; ⁶ and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; ⁷ and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. ⁸ For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. NIV84

A lack of growth is rooted in not understanding our forgiveness.

1 Timothy 1:15-17 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. ¹⁷ Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. NIV84

Romans 5:6-11 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. NIV84