

Holiness on the Outside

(written by Sis. Linda Poitras)

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”

(Romans 12:1-2).

INTRODUCTION:

- ✓ Bring a basket of fruit (oranges are easiest to handle).
- ✓ Inspect fruit to see the ones good, clean, and ripe for eating.
- ✓ Introduce a piece of “bad” fruit (rotten, too ripe, scarred and ugly).
- ✓ Put the piece of “bad” fruit into the basket with the good, clean, and ripe ones.
- ✓ What will happen to the basket of fruit? Why?
 - Will the many ripe fruits change the one bad fruit, and why?
 - Will the one bad fruit change all the many good ones, and why?

How do we know that fruit is bad? There is a law of the harvest, which applies to everything that grows. If it is something we eat, the outward appearance will usually tell everything we need to know.

God’s children are compared to “the harvest” many times in the Bible (Matthew 9:37-38; Luke 10:2; John 4:35-38). We are also compared to “fruit.” These references are made to help us understand certain principles of growth. They help us understand about working in God’s vineyard, and dealing with bringing in the sheaves. What can we learn from this law of harvesting?

- ✓ How do you know when fruit is bad? (You can smell it, feel the soft spots, and see the brown spots.)
- ✓ Why do you not need to cut open the fruit to see if the inside is bad? (The outside will tell you everything you need to know about the inside.)
- ✓ Many good fruit will not change a bad fruit.
- ✓ One bad fruit will spoil a whole basket of good ones.
- ✓ The fruit closest to the bad one will spoil first.
- ✓ Given enough time, all the fruit in the same basket will be spoiled by one bad fruit.
- ✓ How do you keep the bad fruit from spoiling the good ones? (You have to take the bad fruit out of the basket.)

What Bible principles agree with this law of the harvest?

1. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" - 1 Corinthians 5:6; Exodus 13:7; Mark 8:15; and Galatians 5:7-9
2. "Come out from among them and be ye separate" – 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Isaiah 52:11; Revelation 18:4

These principles are applied to all of life. They are a standard for living life God's way, and have been a part of His plan for His chosen people since the beginning. God's people have always been different. There has always been a separation between those who followed Christ, and the rest of the world. Being His chosen has always shown itself on the outward appearance. (*If you know it, teach and sing the chorus "Jesus on the Inside, Working on the Outside."*)

Romans 12:1-2 clearly states that our body is to be given to God as a living sacrifice. As we daily go about our business, we are giving our selves – the actual physical body – to God's plan and purpose. To do that, we must be as careful as they were in the Old Testament about the sacrifices they brought to the Tabernacle. That makes it very important to present a proper sacrifice – without spot or blemish on the outside too. These verses remind us of some things God requires from his "sacrifices." (Have these Scripture references written on scraps of paper. Call volunteers to come forward to read from each different passage. Discuss – and write on a board if available – what each passage says about standards of holiness.)

- ✓ 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 – Separation from the world and unclean things is necessary for God to be our Father.
- ✓ 2 Corinthians 7:1 – We must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness because we fear God.
- ✓ 1 Timothy 2:8-10 – Men need holy hands – without wrath and doubting. Women should dress modestly (not vain or conceited, aware of limitations), with shamefacedness and sobriety (temperate in the use of all sources of pleasure), not with costly things that would hinder her ability to help the poor, or those less fortunate.
- ✓ 1 Peter 3:1-6 – Speaks of the submission of a woman to her own husband, shown in her outward appearance. These verses refer to plaiting the hair and wearing of gold as not good.
- ✓ 1 Corinthians 11:13-15 – The main sign of submission in a woman is her uncut hair. This is so important, the angels watch her, looking especially for this one thing.
- ✓ Deuteronomy 22:5 – Men and women must wear clothes that are for their own sex. Another way of saying this is, our clothes must make people think we are either a girl or a boy. If we do not, it is an abomination to God. (That means he hates it.)

Throughout history, what people wear is a message about who they are, what job they do, and how much money they have. Since dress gives a message, we must be sure we are sending the right message to anyone who sees us.

It is necessary to base all doctrines of the church on Bible truths – even the doctrine of standards for what we wear and how we look. The verses used in this lesson are for people who were not familiar with God’s laws. They needed answers to questions about how to live victorious every day. We may not live in Bible times, but we certainly live in the same worldly environment.

- ✓ Call on volunteer wearing military uniform (if you can get someone to do this) to come forward.
- ✓ Ask if anyone knows who this person is.
- ✓ What is their job?
- ✓ What can you tell by the uniform they are wearing about the work they do?
- ✓ List some of the things that give you information, just by being a part of the uniform.
- ✓ Ask the one dressed in uniform some simple questions:
 - How long have you been working on this particular job?
 - What are some of the privileges this uniform gives you?
 - What are some of the things required when wearing a uniform?

Never forget the importance of your Christian uniform, as you walk in His light.

(Sing “Walking in the Light” while marching around the room.)

Walking in the Light

It is a great thing to serve the Lord,
 It is a great thing to serve the Lord,
 It is a great thing to serve the Lord,
 Walking in the light of God.

Ohhh, walk, walk, walk, walk, walking in the light;
 Ohhh, walk, walk, walk, walk, walking in the light;
 Walking in the light of God.

Study Questions

1. Why are God’s children compared to “the harvest” and “fruit” so many times in the Bible? (Support your answer with Scripture.) _____

2. List seven (7) things we can learn from the law of harvesting.
 - 1) _____
 - 2) _____

- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

3. List two (2) Bible principles that agree with this law of the harvest. Support each with Scripture.

1) _____

2) _____

4. In the space provided, write what each passage says about standards of holiness.

1) Deuteronomy 22:5 _____

2) 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 _____

3) 1 Corinthians 11:13-15 _____

4) 1 Timothy 2:8-10 _____

5) 1 Peter 3:1-6 _____

6) 2 Corinthians 7:1 _____

5. List the three (3) messages sent by what people wear (how they dress).

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

6. Explain what Romans 12:1-2 has to do with "holiness on the outside." _____
