

Fruitless Living

by Wayne Goff

“What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death” (Romans 6:21).

Sometimes I wonder if carnally minded people ever sit back and take a look at the intrinsic value of their lives. If I thought that this life was all that there was, then I think I would be a miserable, depressed person. There’s no lasting fruit to this earthly life, or as Solomon stated it, *“life under the sun.”* No matter what you do, how well you do it, or the station in life to which you can attain, **it always ends in death!** Some people are perfectly happy to live that life — eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you die — and hope there’s nothing beyond the grave. But I have never viewed life with such near-sighted glasses.

“What Fruit?”

Paul is explaining in Romans 6 that the Christian has been **forgiven** of his past sins, **cleansed** in his conscience from the guilt of sin, and given a **new lease** on life by the grace of God. All this has been freely given to the Christian by God so that he can live a fruitful, productive, and powerful life for righteousness. The Christian *“dies”* to sin. That is, he stops living **for** sin, and **in** sin. He begins to *“live”* for God, Christ, and right living. It is a life of which one can be proud.

On the other hand, Paul asks the Romans what *“fruit”* they had in their former sinful lives. There is none in this life, and eternally it leads to permanent death. So let’s consider the fruitlessness of sinful living for a minute:

- ✓ **Sexual sins: adultery, fornication, homosexuality, Galatians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10** lead to divorce, broken homes, ruined reputations, sexually transmitted diseases, cancer and AIDS. There is no fruitful living in the long run there, just the *“passing pleasures”* of sin (Heb. 11:25).
- ✓ **Unrestrained conduct: uncleanness, lewdness, Galatians 5:19** leads to dissatisfaction, ruined homes and relationships, and unbridled, uncontrolled lust. This lifestyle has no restraints and can lead to violence, alcoholism, drug addiction, other criminal activity, and even death. In order to get that next “buzz” or “fix” or “adrenaline rush,” the person has to find something *more exciting* than the last sin, so he begins to *“work all uncleanness with greediness”* (Ephesians 4:19). But in the end, there is only emptiness, sadness and discontentedness. The thrill is gone!
- ✓ **False gods: idolatry, sorcery, witchcraft, Galatians 5:20** all have their temporary thrills, and deceive one into believing he has some “inside track” to the netherworld through seances, ghosts, haunted houses, etc. Perhaps he thinks that by reading the stars or the cards he can predict one’s future, etc., but when the end of life comes there is nothing to greet him but darkness and gloom. Only the Christian dies with the hope of living again.
- ✓ **Intemperate living: hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, Galatians 5:19**, leads to an undisciplined, self-centered, anxious life. There is no security in wondering what will happen to you next, or what will anger you next. Without any reason to learn self-control, temperance and self-discipline, one leads an aimless life. The narcissistic lifestyle where *one’s greatest love is self-love* is a hollow, empty existence. Eventually, *the only one* who loves you is you! While you try to “get a grip,” you wonder why you cannot direct your own life (Jeremiah 10:23). Psychologists, psychoanalysts, and counselors may give you some hope for awhile, but none of it endures.
- ✓ **Envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, Galatians 5:19** are the end of the road to the one who has now become a **slave** to sin! Nobody ever intends to fill his heart with envy, but without the “reins” of Scripture to control him, things get out of hand. Nobody ever decided to become a drunken sot in the middle of life, but that is the end result of the one who needs a drink every evening to “calm his nerves.” He is setting himself up for heartache and misery. **Revelries** like dancing, bar-hopping, etc. often lead to black outs, rapes, murders, and all kinds of disconsolate living. Like fools rushing over the cliff, these pleasure seekers never see it coming!

Thankfully, the Christian puts these things in his past, and looks forward to a better lifestyle with the hope of heaven eternally. ***What fruit do you have in your carnal life?***

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