

LENEXA EDIFIER

“and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)

November 17, 2024

THE GOOD SOIL

Jim Stauffer

“But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. (Luke 8:15)

What do we encounter on our way to the good soil? Do we realize those who are and are not the good soil are the everyday folks we encounter in our usual movements in society? I am hopeful in this brief article we can identify the characteristics that make up the good soil and then help each of us see what kind of soil we are in the hope we can change if need be.

The first step in identifying the difference in the good soil and other soil is to look at the parable and see the reaction of other soils to the seed.

First, we have the seed sown by the road or wayside. Jesus says this about that soil. *“When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. (Matthew 13:19)*

Second, we have the seed sown in the rocky soil and Jesus tells us this about that soil. *Yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. (Matthew 13:21)*

Next, we have the seed sown in the thorny soil and Jesus' remarks, *“And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. (Matthew 13:21–22)*

Finally we get to the good soil. Here is what Jesus has to say about this person. *“And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.” (Matthew 13:23)*

Now, we have four different responses to the seed, correct? Well in one sense of understanding this issue we have **two** different responses. Either we value something appropriately or we do not. The first person while not understanding, did not pursue it in order to understand it. In view of the overall presentation of the Lord and the gospel of His kingdom, we must understand He has provided sufficient reason for anyone to believe there is something special about this word/seed. Peter describes it as follows. *Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. (1 Peter 1:22–23)* The miracles and effective teaching of our Lord should cause all men to take a serious look at His word.

Each of these soils that failed to accept and embrace the seed/word and allow it to take hold in their lives had temporal, fleshly reasons that distracted them. This destroyed their objectivity. We depend on a logical, objective approach in our decision making to lead us to the right choices.

It then becomes imperative we properly evaluate if we are to choose that which is better. Moses tells us in **Psalm 90** our best expectation in this life is 80 years. Jesus promises us we will live eternally in heaven or hell, that we have an immortal soul that will be raised at the second coming and spend eternity in bliss with God the Father or in eternal suffering with the devil and his angels (**Matthew 25:46; 1 Corinthians 15:50-54; John 5:28,29**).

Do we want to make the best choice? Then let us put aside earthly and temporal considerations and choose that which is eternal and follow the footsteps of our Savior Who died to redeem us.

How Bright Is Your Lamp Shining?

Jefferson David Tant

I'm sure that the title of this article brings to mind the statement Christ made about Christians being the light of the world. *“You are the light of the world. A city set on*

a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14-16)

Obviously, that applies to every Christian, whether young or old. Therefore, wherever we are in this world, we need to be sure that our light-switch is always in the “on” position. Our light shines to our family, to our neighbors, to strangers and obviously to our schoolmates.

Through the years I have been aware of the effect that the light of young people has had on others. I have known of an 11-year-old inviting one of his schoolmates to visit the church he attended. This resulted in her and her mother being baptized.

I was in a gospel meeting where a 15-year-old member invited two of her classmates to attend the meeting, and both were baptized.

There was a family that had a morning devotional at breakfast before the teenagers left for school. Some neighborhood friends were invited, and two became Christians out of those meetings.

One of the members of the church where I was preaching went back to his home for a class reunion several years after graduation. One of his classmates spoke to him and said, “I always knew there was something different about you.” What was different? His life as a Christian was clearly seen.

Young readers, and older ones too, always remember that you are a lamp that leads those in the darkness of sin to the light of the gospel. Remember what Christ said? **“You are the light of the world!”**

So let your speech, your dress and your behavior be such that your light is always turned on. Start a discussion with your friends. Invite them to go to church with you. You never know whose heart is open to the gospel until you bring the subject up. Don’t let one of your friends stand beside you at the Day of Judgement, who will hear the words “Depart from me,” and who will then turn to you and ask, “Why didn’t you ever tell me?” What would your answer be?

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GET YOUR OWN!

While there is certainly nothing wrong with sharing some things, sometimes a person just needs to see to themselves. While it may not be because of personal hygiene, our faith is kind of like that. We don't mind sharing. We even try to instill our faith in others. But in the end what each person needs to do is to get their own.

“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Php 2:12). Each one of us has to get a move on. Each one of us needs to be diligent and zealous and mindful and loving. Faith isn't something that is passed down like an earthly inheritance. Each one of us is responsible for moving with godly fear.

We bear one another's burdens as we learn to forgive others in a godly way (**Gal 6:2**). But each one of us has to bear our own load as well (**Gal 6:5**). It is a personal walk of faith, hand in hand with Jesus. That is why each one of us is called to examine ourselves (**1 Cor 11:28**), to prove ourselves (**2 Cor 13:5**), to do our part within the Lord's body.

We see this personal responsibility most clearly in the parable of the ten virgins in **Matt. 25**. Five were wise. Five were foolish. As the bridegroom was delayed, all slumbered. At his return all arose and trimmed their lamps, but the foolish did not have enough oil. They begged the others, but it was not to be. ***“No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell and buy for yourselves” (vs. 9).*** We need to prepare for ourselves and the sooner the better.

We share and share often, but at some point we have our own journey to walk. It doesn't matter what Mom and Dad or whomever did, so many years ago. We have to make sure the faith is in us. The Lord wants to save us, but the Lord isn't going to save us against our will. Each one of us must diligently seek Him.

John Hines

IS HOMOSEXUALITY CAUSED BY GENETICS?

By Joe Price

In his book, *Born Gay?*, Dr. John Tay, clinical geneticist and former head of the Division of Human

Genetics at the National University of Singapore, talks about the contrast in opinion between the public and the scientific community, on whether gays are born this way. He noted how the public's popular belief stems from how the media played up the early scientific studies in the 1990s on brain structures, twin studies, and the Xq28 gene. These studies have in fact been heavily criticized by fellow professionals to be flawed and biased. It must be noted, too, that other than the media headlines, the very same researchers of these studies have themselves confessed that they have not found anything genetic that is deterministic of the homosexual orientation.

Dr. Tay gave insight to the question of whether gays are born that way and they cannot change by explaining what genes really do to us: "The effects of genes on behavior are very indirect because genes make proteins, not preferences. The scientific truth is that our genes do not force us into anything. Genes are responsible for an indirect influence, but on average, they do not force people into homosexuality. The startling conclusion is that genetic factors are much less important than environmental ones in the causation of homosexuals. On this basis, the claim by homosexuals that 'I am born that way, so I cannot change' is simply not true."

-via Homosexuality and Science, cited in Words of Life, Feb. 25, 2024, Vol. 16, No. 8

God's word says:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Eugenics, 6

The love of money is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6.10), and I would venture that the love of money is the root of which eugenics— whether abortion, euthanasia, etc.—is a fruit. Eugenicists propose to eliminate poverty/ preserve wealth by eliminating people. They argue that eliminating people is the solution to all sorts of societal ills: the drain on wealth, the drain on one's time, freeing caregivers from the mundane drudgery of caring for another, etc.

If man were but a higher form of animal, the laws of husbandry might apply. But while man may share some biology with animals, we are God's special creature, which means that theology is to come before biology. Whenever man turns to man from God, he invariably is choosing death over life. The denial of God doesn't lead to a richer humanity but to subhuman and inhuman acts, like the killing dependent young and the dependent old. God as man's creator has the final say — not you, or your doctor, or any other "expert"—on who lives and who dies (**Job 1.21**). God has given man the right to kill certain criminals (**Gen. 9.6, Rom. 13.4**), but I've yet to find where He gave anyone the right to kill a baby because it was inconvenient or an elderly person because they were mentally impaired.

Two concluding thoughts:

First, "Never send to know for whom the bell tolls," said John Donne, "it tolls for thee." If you have the right to decide that another needs to die, don't be surprised if the day comes when another decides you need to die.

Second, if you've had an abortion or facilitated one, or if you've agreed to the medical killing of a mentally impaired elderly person, confess it to God for He is *"faithful and just to forgive"* (1 Jn. 1.9).

Kenny Chumbley

Glory to the Reader or the Writer?

The fruit fly has long been the mainstay of bio-medical research. An article in Newsweek Magazine lauded the scientific breakthrough of reading "almost all of the chemical letters -- 165 million of them -- that make up the fruit fly's DNA." It is called "an impressive technical feat in its own right."

My marvel at this technological accomplishment of man falls far short of my awe for the One who started with nothing and made everything that man is now discovering. The science of man is simply reading what God has written. And even at that, we are still reading at the elementary school level - humans have almost 20 times more DNA than fruit flies!

"I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well" (Psa. 139:14).

by David Diestelkamp

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

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SERMON: I AM THE LORD THY GOD!

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10