

# James 3:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

## Analysis

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**Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.** Can a fig tree bear olives or a grapevine figs? Neither can saltwater produce fresh. Identity determines fruit. Likewise, redeemed tongues should bear godly speech, not contradictory fruit.

Reformed teaching on union with Christ emphasizes new identity; speech inconsistent with that identity must be addressed through repentance and faith.

## Historical Context

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Agrarian imagery resonated with diaspora Jews familiar with fig and olive cultivation. Mixed fruit signified corruption or disease. James warns that duplicity indicates spiritual sickness."

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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1. What mismatched fruit do you observe in your speech?

2. How can you address root issues producing inconsistent words?
3. What reminders of your identity in Christ keep speech aligned?

## Interlinear Text

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μὴ	δύναται	ἀδελφοί	μου	συκῇ	ἐλαίας	ποιῆσαι	ἢ
<b>Can</b>	G1410	<b>brethren</b>	<b>my</b>	<b>the fig tree</b>	<b>olive berries</b>	<b>bear</b>	<b>either</b>
G3361		G80	G3450	G4808	G1636	G4160	G2228
ἄμπελος	σῦκα	οὕτως	οὐδεμία	πηγὴ	άλυκόν	καὶ	γλυκὺ
<b>a vine</b>	<b>figs</b>	<b>so</b>	<b>can no</b>	<b>fountain</b>	<b>salt</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>fresh</b>
G288	G4810	G3779	G3762	G4077	G252	G2532	G1099
ποιῆσαι	ὕδωρ						
<b>bear</b>	<b>water</b>						
G4160	G5204						

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 12:33** (Parallel theme): Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.