

Matthew 7:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Analysis

Good trees bear good fruit; corrupt trees bear corrupt fruit. This is natural law and spiritual law. A person's character determines their fruit. You can't produce righteousness from an unrighteous heart. This underscores the necessity of heart transformation, not just behavioral modification.

Historical Context

This principle refutes moralism (trying harder to be good) and legalism (external conformity). Jesus insists on heart change first—becoming a good tree—which then naturally produces good fruit. This points to regeneration and the Spirit's transforming work.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Are you trying to produce good fruit by willpower without cultivating a transformed heart?
2. What fruit in your life reveals what kind of tree (heart condition) you have?

Interlinear Text

οὕτως	πᾶν	δένδρον	ἀγαθὸν	καρπὸν	καλοὺς	ποιεῖ
Even so	every	tree	good	fruit	good	bringeth forth
G3779	G3956	G1186	G18	G2590	G2570	G4160
τὸ	δὲ	σαπρὸν	δένδρον	καρπὸν	πονηρὸν	ποιεῖ
G3588	but	a corrupt	tree	fruit	evil	bringeth forth
	G1161	G4550	G1186	G2590	G4190	G4160

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 5:9 (Good): (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Psalms 1:3 (Parallel theme): And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Colossians 1:10 (Good): That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Jeremiah 17:8 (Parallel theme): For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

Jeremiah 11:19 (Parallel theme): But I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.

Jude 1:12 (Parallel theme): These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

Philippians 1:11 (Parallel theme): Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Isaiah 61:3 (Parallel theme): To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org