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ROOTS

INTERNAL ROOTS DEFINE EXTRENAL FRUITS



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To unite people in fellowship with God and one another



ROOTS

INTERNAL ROOTS DEFINE EXTRENAL FRUITS



What do you think of when you hear the word “tree?” The mighty trunk of an oak? Widespread branches, generously shading everyone sitting beneath? Mulberry fruit? The strange shape of a maple leaf? Likely as not, when you hear the word “tree,” you do not think about the most important part – the roots, but it is the roots of the tree that determine the structure of the rest of the tree, they provide food and strength to withstand the strongest winds. Since we cannot see the roots, we do not think about what they look like until something happens to the tree, at which point we remember that they are the source of nourishment.

The book of Psalms starts with a description of a righteous man, saying, “whatever he does prospers.” If we imagine such a prosperous life, we will probably think about a nice house, family, prosperity, or a fleeting sense of satisfaction that we get from the things we do. Of course, when we think about a successful life, we think about its outward attributes. But the psalm writer is focused on something else, for him, a person’s life is defined by the roots that provide nourishment. The righteous man is compared to “a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.” But, strange as it may seem, when he compares the righteous to the wicked, the author focuses on things that we cannot see. His comparison of the wicked to

“chaff blown by the wind” describes a life that has no roots. Interestingly enough, this image appears in ancient nomadic folklore, literature written by people who were accustomed to wandering from place to place. The point here isn’t just about having a settled life, but it is about what nourishes a person, what lies at the foundation of his life.

90% of our success and satisfaction in life stems from things we cannot see – our roots. The remaining 10% come from the circumstances around us, whether planned or accidental. This shows us what we are worshiping in our lives, our highest priorities, the principles we live by, the company we surround ourselves with. This is why the Apostle Paul speaks to the Colossians about the image of roots. He writes, “Have your roots planted deep in Christ. Grow in Him. Get your strength from Him. Let Him make you strong in the faith as you have been taught. Your life should be full of thanks to Him.”

Just as we cannot see a tree’s roots, it is difficult for us to see from the first glance what a person’s convictions are, or his faith and principles, but these are the very things that determine the fruits of a man’s life, which are visible to everyone. We waste a lot of effort on our outward appearance, and we continually forget that it is our roots, though unseen, that define our outward lives.

INTERNAL ROOTS DEFINE EXTRENAL FRUITS:

- WORSHIP FORMS PURPOSE
- THE GOSPEL FORMS PERSPECTIVE
- EVANGELISM FORMS MINISTRY
- CHURCH FORMS COMMUNITY

P S A L M # 1

^{1:1} Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, ² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. ³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers. ⁴ Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away. ⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous. ⁶ For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.



WORSHIP DETERMINES OUR GOALS IN LIFE

WHAT I WORSHIP DETERMINES WHAT I WILL LIVE FOR

Ask any average Muscovite what he worships, and he is likely to answer you with silence and a confused expression. The vast majority of those living in our metropolis associate the word “worship” exclusively with religious cults. They believe that we have evolved in such a way, that our successes are no longer attributed to ancient gods that demand sacrifices from us. The things we used to call “idols” have since become exalted “goals.” We no longer need to bow down to Hestia, the goddess of the family, instead, we make our family the highest priority in our life. We no longer bring sacrifices to Athena, but this doesn’t stop us from making knowledge and wisdom the most important thing in our lives. Perhaps we’ve never been in Fortuna’s temple, but this doesn’t mean that we don’t cherish luck. And of course no one believes that success in business comes from Hermes, but this doesn’t stop us from sacrificing quality time with our family in order to advance our role of service or our career. We have only gotten rid of the image, all the while preserving the object of our worship.

Along these same lines, it’s interesting to look at Moscow’s World Trade Center near Krasnopresnenskaya street. This center was built in 1980 by the architect V. Kubassov with the collaboration of Armand Hammer, and is also known as the Hammer Center.

This is probably one of the most honest places in Moscow, because right in the front there is a statue of the god Mercury, the god of business. Here, in this modern institution we see not only the fruit, but the roots. If we are completely honest with ourselves, we would realize that we live in a polytheistic city; there may not be many temples, but objects of worship are everywhere. What are you worshipping? What is the foundation for your life goals and priorities?

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION:

1. Read Psalm 1. The Psalm writer compares the “righteous” and the “unrighteous”, saying that one is “like a tree planted by streams of water”, and the other is like “chaff blown by the wind.” What are the roots in the life of a righteous man? Why doesn’t an unrighteous man have these roots? How else does a believer’s life differ from a non-believer?
2. Read Colossians 2:6-10. We can’t see roots. It’s difficult to tell at first glance what a person’s convictions are, his faith or principles, but these are the very things that determine the fruit that his life will produce, which is something everyone can see. What do you think we are so quick to focus on our outward appearance and to forget that it’s our roots (invisible) that shape our outward lives. Why do we spend so little time and effort on what is most important?
3. Read Colossians 1:15-16. We were created to serve and to worship. This is in our blood, it’s in human DNA. This is why we find ourselves searching for ways to fill the hole in our hearts. We worship money, power, prestige, popularity, family, children or knowledge. Why is it so hard for people to worship the Creator, the One who is worthy of worship? What hinders our friends or acquaintances from repenting and glorifying Christ? What is holding them back?
4. Read Acts 17:22-25. I give God the glory and the honor for all that He is, and all that He is to me. This is why Paul tells the Athenians about God’s greatness before moving on to repentance and praise. How did Paul describe God in these verses? How does Paul help us to see that God is worthy of our worship?
5. Read Acts 17:26-30. In these closing verses, Paul draws two conclusions, based on this understanding of who God is and on man’s dependence on Him: 1) It is worthless to bow down to idols, since they cannot contain God, and 2) we must repent in order to glorify the Creator. How might these conclusions be applied in today’s culture, where we rarely see idols in the form of metal statues? What might it mean for us to stop worshipping idols?

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LESSON:

OUR WORSHIP FORMS THE FOUNDATION FOR OUR PRIORITIES:

- **MAN:** WE DO NOT BELONG TO OURSELVES, WE WERE CREATED TO WORSHIP GOD.
- **IDOLS:** EVERYONE WORSHIPS SOMETHING, AND THAT SOMETHING FORMS THE FOUNDATION FOR A PERSON’S PRIORITIES.
- **GOD:** ONLY THE CREATOR IS WORTHY OF OUR PRAISE, AND ONLY BY WORSHIPING HIM DO OUR HEARTS FIND FULFILLMENT.



APPLICATION:

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Learn to start every day in prayer, and to start every prayer by praising God before you move onto thanksgiving, and to make your requests only after the first two.