

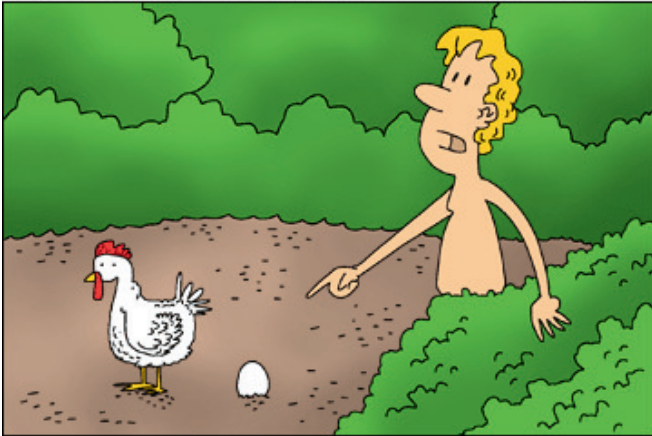
Faith and Funnies

A newsletter from Faithful Friends KY

July, Vol. 2-25



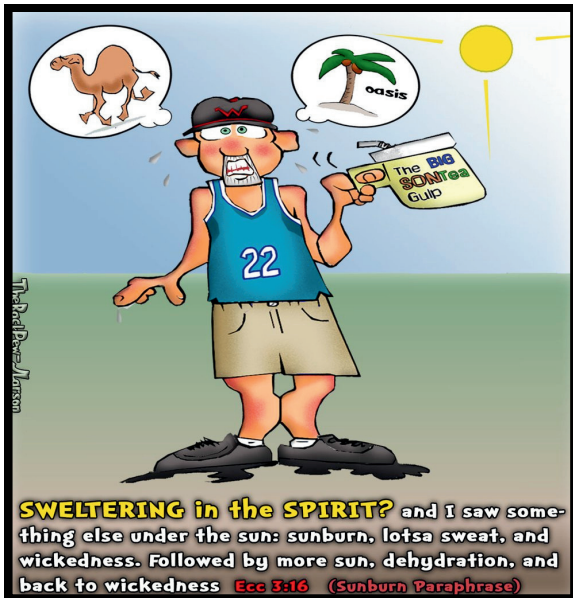
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(See Genesis 1:1-2:3)

07-06-2015

I MISSED IT ... WHICH ONE CAME FIRST?



SWELTERING in the SPIRIT? and I saw something else under the sun: sunburn, lotsa sweat, and wickedness. Followed by more sun, dehydration, and back to wickedness **Ecc 3:16 (Sunburn Paraphrase)**

Psalm 74:17 "It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter."

This Month in History

July 14, 1789 - The fall of the Bastille occurred at the beginning of the French Revolution.

July 16, 1969 - The Apollo 11 Lunar landing mission began with a liftoff from Kennedy Space Center at 9:37 a.m.

July 18, 1947 - President Harry Truman signed an Executive Order determining the line of succession if the president becomes incapacitated or dies in office. Following the vice president, the speaker of the house and president of the Senate are next in succession. This became the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified on February 10, 1967.

July 23, 1952 - Egyptian army officers launched a revolution changing Egypt from a monarchy to a republic.

Growing Fruit

written by Marla Carter

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

When I was younger, I thought of the fruit of the Spirit as a sort of checklist for being a good Christian. I thought they were qualities that I needed to work harder at. Unfortunately, as hard as I tried, I couldn't consistently be more loving, or more joyful, or more peaceful. The culture said to find your “inner peace,” but mine was missing.

The thing is, that is the whole point of the fruit of the Spirit. They are precisely things we cannot generate on our own--at least not to the degree that God commands. Take love, for example. It's easy to love people who love us. Anyone can do that. But Jesus says, “Love your *enemies*, bless those who *curse* you, do good to those who *hate* you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44) Who can love like that?

What about joy? I don't consider myself an angry or sad person, but joyful? James 1:2-3 says, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.” I should have joy in the midst of suffering? That's impossible!

Well surely we can all be a little more kind, right? 1 Peter 3:9 says, “Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.” So I am to show kindness to those who are evil to me? I am supposed to bless them?

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There is no way I could consistently show love and kindness to my enemies or remain joyful in the middle of suffering. And God knows this! The fruit of the Spirit are things that He grows in us as we walk with Him in faith. The fruit of the Spirit are actually a reflection of God's own character. God Himself defines them.

True love is not a feeling like the world tells us. It's a choice. It's an action. It leads to a type of kindness that is not merely being nice or polite to someone, it's compassion fueled by love. Joy is not simply being happy. Happiness is fleeting and depends on our circumstances. Joy is so deeply embedded in us that it doesn't slip away because our life is falling apart. Joy is rooted in who we are in Christ and what He has done for us on the cross. Peace--real peace--can never be found within ourselves. Our hearts are too turbulent and restless. The peace that passes all understanding is the kind of peace that God give us so that when the world is falling apart around us, we are not afraid. We are not in a panic. We are not anxious. We have peace because we trust in God's promises for our life.

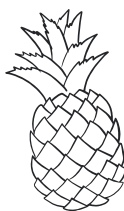
Isn't it freeing to know we don't have to work harder at being "good?" God sets the bar for our lives very high, and then He gives us the power we need to live up to it--the Holy Spirit. When we abide in Him through His Word and through prayer, He grows us to look more and more like Him. And when we love like He loves, and we have joy and peace that can't be explained, people around us want to know what's different about us. Then we get to tell them about the God who changes lives!

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:35

Fruit of the Spirit

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LOVE
 PATIENCE
 GENTLENESS
 FAITH



JOY
 KINDNESS
 FAITHFULNESS
 GROW



PEACE
 GOODNESS
 SELFCONTROL
 SPIRIT

