



The "Oh Yeah!"

Letter

Seeds, Seedlings & Weeds

by Tim Loper

Seeds are small and harmless and generally don't proclaim their future by their appearance. The seed of an apple shares no resemblance to the fruit it came from nor the tree that produced the apple. Without the fruit, it becomes impossible to the untrained eye to know what fruit or plant it came from. There are three ways to uncover the nature of a seed you find laying along the sidewalk of life.

The first is to see the fruit which contained the seed. An analogy between the role of farmer and the role of parent is clear to see. As parents, it is our responsibility to train ourselves to recognize the seeds that are falling into our child's life. We pay attention to the fruit that our children are exposed to and recognize that those seeds may grow up in our children if those seeds are allowed to germinate in their hearts.

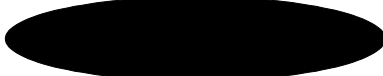
"Do not be deceived: 'Bad company ruins good morals.'" 1 Cor 15:33 When we as parents recognize that the friends our children may be keeping are dropping unwanted seeds into our children that will grow up to be big problems later, the vision of that weed gives us strength to separate our children from those seeds.

Some weed seeds are designed to fly in the air and float with the wind. The influence of radio, TV and movies will effect our children. This is another area where we can act to protect and limit the types of seeds that fall into our children's hearts.

The second way to discover the nature of a seed is to put the seed in the ground and watch it grow into a plant. This can be a long process. First a seed must die in the fruit, fall to the ground and be covered with soil. Then it germinates, takes root and rises above the surface to be seen for the first time. A seed may have come to life days before it ever became visible.

Now that the seed is a seedling, it may look like a plant we recognize as a weed immediately and we can quickly pluck it out. Other seedlings are a bit tougher to recognize. A blade of grass and the first

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* PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF OUR NEW EMAIL ADDRESS BELOW!
* DUTY 3 FROM "THE FATHER'S MANDATE" REMINDS US TO RESPECT OUR CHILD'S PRIVATE WORLD. DON'T GO IN REARRANGING AND DOING MAJOR RECONSTRUCTION IN THOSE TENDER MOMENTS! ALSO, RESPECT THEIR PUBLIC WORLD! NEVER HUMILIATE THEM IN FRONT OF THEIR PEERS!
* REMINDER: THE TIME YOU HAVE WITH YOUR CHILDREN IS SO SHORT - NEVER TAKE IT FOR GRANTED!

shoot of a corn seedling look very similar, but by observing our children's lives and praying for God's wisdom, we can recognize the heart behaviors that we must address.

It takes a diligence and persistence and a vision of what the seedling will grow to be to gather the strength needed as parents to pull those weeds out. We must remind ourselves that weeds come out easier when the ground is soaked with our love and when the weed is young. Don't let sin grow big and deep; recognize it when it is small.

Sometimes the new seedling looks just like a desired plant, but it isn't. For instance, there is a weed called "shattercane" that looks just like the commercially grown grain crop sorghum. In fact, the farmer cannot tell the difference until the plant flowers. Of course, at that point the farmer is in serious risk that the good sorghum will cross pollinate with the shattercane and produce a contaminated seed. Such situations exist where cultural wisdom and norms have blinded us to the differences, or where our child's actions look good but the motives are secretly evil. This is an example of when the third way to identify a seed really becomes important.

An extremely valuable third resource for seed identification is to seek the advice of others. When the source fruit is not visible and the seedling is camouflaged, it is time to call on the experts. The experts are those that have already lived through the circumstance you are living through. They that have seen that seed before and remember where it came from, how it got there, how it came to settle and grow and what it looks like through

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A Parenting Treasure From The Word

"As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor." Ecc 10:1
Are we allowing small areas of sin in our children that is ruining their whole witness?



FUN Idea OF the Quarter

When was the last time you were really silly with your kids? In generations past, this was sadly unheard of, but a vital part of a relationship is missing when family members feel they can't be themselves with each other. Believe me, my girls have seen a goofy side of their mama that no one else on the planet has seen! Children need to see that you are someone they can have fun with. They need to know they won't be shamed or laughed at when they are having fun. Ask yourself these questions: are your kids more comfortable being themselves outside your home or inside? Do they trust you enough to show all sides of their personalities? Dance, sing weird, roll on the floor, laugh out loud! Show your colors and they'll show you theirs! (Article suggestion from Abigail!)



Marriage

Time slips by so quickly in our busy, busy lives! Far too often we can go for weeks without tangibly expressing love and appreciation to our spouses. Personally, I don't ever want to stop romancing my husband or being romanced by him! I've come up with my own personal scheme to help me not be lulled into complacency. Each week on my list of things to do, I include a note to myself to do one thing to keep that spark. It may be something as simple as shooting hoops in the driveway together or stuffing his car full of balloons or as elaborate as kidnapping him for a weekend! It can be expensive gifts or heartfelt notes. Friendly or spicy - the choice is yours! Use your imagination or get a book of ideas to help. Just do something!

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stages of growth. The experts are the Holy Spirit and Scriptures, pastors, counselors, and Godly friends. Like the "Phone a Friend" lifeline in "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire," we can call on God to bring all the information to us that we need through His Word, through friends, through family pastors and specialists.

No matter what we do, our children are out among the weeds when they are at school or even at church. What can we do to address those seeds? This is where the preparation of our children's hearts comes into play. As you have been placing God's Word into their hearts, teaching the "moral and practical reasons why," you have been preparing them to reject the bad seeds. It is like a farmer applying "pre-emergence" herbicides

to his fields. Not every seed that falls to the ground germinates. Seeds are dead and without friendly ground for that seed, they will stay dead. Because your children are armed with the truth of God's Word, they will be able to reject many of the seeds that fall into their lives.

The diligent farmer takes many steps to ensure he grows a good crop that produces good fruit. He uses pre-emergence herbicides, he plows down the weeds that surround his field to prevent weed seeds from blowing into his field and he diligently searches for and pulls the weeds that do grow up among the crop he has planted. As parents, for the Glory of God, we also take action in those three ways to ensure God's Kingdom is full of productive plants and free of weeds.



Announcements

We are thrilled to announce to you all that our daughter, Ashley, is engaged to be married this December! We know that she has found the man the Lord has reserved for her. His name is Tim and we are excited to add him to our family. God has truly blessed each member of our family through him. Her sisters are thrilled to have Tim as their big brother as he already treats them! To have God send such a godly young man for our precious Ashley is an answer to the prayers we've prayed her whole life!

Quotes Worth Remembering

"If we had paid no more attention to our plants than we have to our children, we would now be living in a jungle of weeds."

~Luther Burbank



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