

The Sweet Fragrance of a Christ-filled Life 2 Corinthians 2:1-15

There is time in everyone's life when they learn that their body was not created to have a natural sweet smell all the time. Working with teenagers, especially at camps, we leaders notice quickly those teens who refuse to listen to their nose (and our constant advice) and go days without deodorant, and sometimes without a shower! Their body has a smell, but it is no longer a pleasing smell to me or anyone else around them. Their choices lead to the displeasure of others, yet they don't seem to notice!

Have you noticed that many times Christians lead the same life, spiritually? They may have heard that they need to be applying God's Word (spiritual deodorant if you will), yet they refuse to take the time to do it, and as a result their lives become a sour smell to God instead of a sweet-smelling fragrance.

Just like others notice that a person showers, applies deodorant, and perfume or cologne, when a believer applies the right truths from the Bible, his or her actions become a sweet-smelling savour unto God and others.

Read 2 Corinthians 2:14, 15.

Ephesians 5:2 says, "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour."

When a person chooses to live a life that is a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God, it pleases God, and like bees to pollen, others are attracted to the fragrance of a life lived unto Christ.

Every believer should be a sweet-smelling fragrance to God.

How can your life be a pleasing aroma unto God and for others to enjoy?

1. By listening to God's Word with your heart.
 - In 2 Corinthians 2:12, we see Paul facing a dilemma.
 - Here was Paul with an open door to preach to the people in Troas. While he was there he was expecting Titus to come and give a report on the Corinthian church and how they were doing in response to Paul's first letter to them. When he could not find Titus, Paul said *"I had no rest in my spirit."*
 - Paul's next statement is the answer to why you must listen to the guidance of the God's spirit in you, even when you feel like going another direction. *"Now thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ."*

- Paul felt, in his flesh, very uneasy about leaving Troas where a door was open to preach the gospel. But he could not find rest when he could not find Titus and the report of the Corinthians, therefore he left in search of Titus.
- As hard as it was to leave those in Troas who needed to hear the gospel, Paul could not let go of the feeling to find Titus, receive the report, and get word back to the Corinthians, so they could continue growing in their relationship with God.
- What was it that caused Paul such unrest? I believe it was the Holy Spirit in Paul leading him to followup on the Corinthians.
- Just as Paul had the Holy Spirit in him, those who have accepted Christ have the Holy Spirit within them, also. Romans 8:9a
- At the point of salvation, God places His very Spirit in you to seal you and to lead you!
 - Ephesians 1:13 - The believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit when they believe.
 - Romans 8:14, 15 - Those who believe on Christ are given the Spirit of God to lead them.
- The Bible is the sword of the Spirit! The Bible is your tool to lead and guide you, through the Spirit.
- Even though you have God's Spirit, which is always going to lead you in the right direction, that doesn't always mean you will listen to the directions of His Spirit.
- Man's flesh can lead him to disregard the direction of God's Word.
- At the moment people trust Christ as their Savior, they are freed from the power of sin, however they are still in the presence of sin!
 - Romans 6:12-14 explains how the believer is dead unto sin and that he/she is not to yield themselves to it any longer.
- Because of man's free will and Satan's presence on this earth, Satan is able to cloud the thinking of man with temptations that "look" or "feel" right!
2 Corinthians 4:4
- A good illustration of this in the Bible is Matthew 19:16-22.

- This young ruler had so many things “leading” him that he didn’t even hear what Jesus was saying! Could you imagine? This guy was standing before Jesus and couldn’t listen because his “stuff” was in the way.
- Sadly this situation can also affect Christians, too. A focus on personal wealth and possessions can cause a person to miss the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Too many times, someone will sit in front of the Lord, either in church, the Bible, or with a Christian friend, and not hear the message the Spirit is seeking to get through.
- It is the responsibility of Christians to seek to renew their thinking daily by going to the Word of God. This time of renewing will help keep the things of this world from crowding out the guidance of God’s Spirit in their daily lives.
- According to Colossians 3:10, the new man in Christ is renewed in knowledge. The knowledge is found in the Bible.
- 2 Corinthians 4:16 says that the “*inward man*” is to be renewed daily!

As you allow the Word of God to be in you, and you listen to the guidance of the Spirit, you will become a sweet smell unto the Lord, but #2, you will become a sweet fragrance unto the Lord...

2. By loving others with a genuine heart

- The love that Paul had for others could never be overlooked. He loved the lost and the saved. His desire was to see Christ magnified, and with that came loving others.
- It was the love that Paul had for God and for the Corinthians that allowed God to triumph in Paul during this situation.
- What is love? It appears 252 times in the Old Testament and 258 times in the New Testament.
- The first occurrence of love is in Genesis 22:2 when God describes Abraham’s feelings about Isaac.
- Love is what leads people to live unselfishly. John 3:16
- Love is a character trait of God. 1 John 4:19. “*We love him, because he first loved us.*”

- According to Genesis 1:27 God created man in His own image, and if God is love, then man must have been created to love.
- I think it is so cool that the first mention of “love” in the Bible is when God is asking for Abraham to do what God was already going to do.
- Paul obviously loved the Corinthian church. 2 Corinthians 2:4
- Look at Paul’s concern for the Corinthians in 2:1-4.
- Paul’ could not stand to think that the Corinthians had not responded to the first letter the right way. He was bothered.
- Paul also instructed the church to show their love toward the one who was dealt with in the first letter, lest he fall away from abandonment. Vs. 8-11
- If Paul did not care so deeply for those he had invested in, he would have had no problem finding rest in Troas, as people were hearing the gospel.
- I believe that when it comes to pleasing God, love is the determining factor.
- These verses show that God intends for man to possess a genuine heart of love.

- I believe the key to the Christian life is knowing the love that Christ had for you, and because of that love, (which you did not deserve) you love others.
 - Read Mark 12:28-31. Jesus said love of God first, and love of others second, were the greatest commands
 - Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:14: Paul agrees with Christ and notes that love of others leads to fulfilling the law, therefore bringing honor to God and providing a pleasing fragrance to Him.
- Love is the motivation to live a life that is a pleasing fragrance to the Lord.
- Love is a choice and not something that just happens.
- Every man was created by God in love and to love, but man has the free will to choose not to love.

Conclusion:

If you are finding it hard to make right choices, maybe it is because you have blocked out the guidance of the Holy Spirit with other “things,” and you need to let go and turn your heart to Him and listen.

As you seek to be sensitive to the Word of God and allow His Spirit to guide you, you will find your life becoming a sweeter fragrance to God.

A life that will be a sweet-smelling aroma to God is the life that is led by His Spirit, loving others as himself.

If Christians are able to love with a sacrificial love, and listen to the direction of His Word, then Christ will most certainly be glorified here on earth, and God will lead them to triumph in Christ!