

By Their Fruits You Will Know Them

November 24, 2019

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If you have read this blog for a while, you know that I am an administrator for my local school district. My office is actually inside a school. It is not, however, an office within the main office complex, it is a classroom on the 6th grade hallway. My colleagues and I see and hear all of the goings-on of 11 and 12 year-olds, and when possible and necessary, we help the teachers. Last week, we seemed to be needed quite a bit.

On Wednesday, I was in the office and heard banging and yelling in the hallway. I walked out thinking there was a fight. Two students were banging on a classroom door and yelling at the substitute teacher to let them inside. I reprimanded the boys and brought them back to sit at the table in our office so we could discuss appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. During class change, the substitute teacher walked in and explained that he had sent them out because of their nasty attitude and loud profanity.

On Thursday, I was walking alongside a class the teacher was leading to the gym. One little girl was visibly angry. Her face was tight, she was crying, and every few steps she punched the wall. I touched her arm and asked her to step out of line. The teacher saw this and stopped to explain, "she wants me to rescore some of her work, but if she's gonna cuss at me, I'm not gonna do it." I thought that girl was going to punch the teacher! I walked her to my office to have a chat. She insisted the teacher was wrong for not accepting her request. She could not find fault in herself - this issue was all the teacher's fault. I could not get her to see that her words and attitude were problematic.

On Friday morning I heard profanity and walked out to see what was happening. It was one of the boys from Wednesday, walking down the hallway, angrily talking to himself! Into the office. He explained that he was on his way to ISS, but it was all the teacher's fault - he was innocent. The teacher told them they had 90 seconds to finish at their lockers, and he didn't think that was enough time, so his reaction was, "Ugh, oh my God," and the teacher sent him to ISS. I took the stance of explaining the meaning of a reputation, and how his, seemingly innocent OMG could have been perceived as a rough day to come because of his previous attitude and actions as known by the teacher. "She probably thought this was her opportunity to be rid of you for the day before you even came to her class." He did not understand that explanation, instead he responded, OMG again. I said, "You know, God comes to our rescue when we are right, not when we are wrong." He did not understand that explanation, either. I walked with him to ISS and told him I hoped his weekend would get better.

Galatians 5:16-17, 19-25

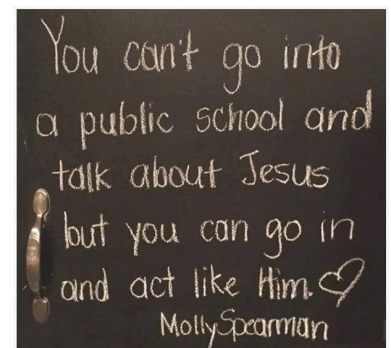
¹⁶So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

¹⁹The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²²***But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control.*** Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Student discipline has been at the forefront of quite a few conversations, recently. It's a big problem and it catches many of our well-meaning teachers off guard. They are professionals who know their content, they use great creativity in preparing lessons, only to have it fall apart with unruly students. I pray about this issue from a school administrative standpoint, and have asked the Lord to give us solutions. This week, I was reminded of something my Bible Study leader said last year. She explained that God revealed to her that she was expecting her son, who was not saved, to behave as if he had the Fruit of the Spirit. He didn't have the fruit, so could not act as if he did. I believe our schools are suffering the same discrepancy. We want our students to behave as if they have the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22), but largely, they do not. Instead, what we see are acts of the flesh (Gal. 5:19) manifested in student behavior and attitude.

So, what's the solution in a system operating separate from the Church? Well, the SC Superintendent of Education said, "You can't go into a public school and talk about Jesus, but you can go and act like Him." A large portion of students manifest acts of the flesh, but not all. Unfortunately, the group is large enough to pose a major distraction to the learning environment. Some students, praise the Lord, do know Him, and consistently behave as if they do! The same is true of our teachers. I would say that they all try to behave, but those who are not saved have buttons that can easily be pushed causing them to revert to words and actions of the flesh.



We need more Jesus. Our population is not totally devoid of the knowledge of God, so those (teachers and students) who believe must engage in [sharing the Gospel](#) with those who do not. The law is against public proclamations of the Gospel in schools, but in our personal and private conversations we can talk about anything we choose. Our schools need more acts of love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These attributes are sure to be seen by those who do not conduct themselves in this way and it may cause them to wonder why we are not engaged in the same discord as they are. If we don't talk about Jesus, per se, we can and MUST act like Him. "Therefore by their fruits you will know them." (Matt. 7:20)