



## “WHAT’S THAT SMELL?”

by Vincent M. Newfield

“WHAT’S THAT SMELL?” Have you ever heard or said those words? I say them every time my wife, Allison, bakes her fabulous oven-fresh oatmeal-raisin cookies. Mmmm Mmmm! I can smell them now! Yes, there’s nothing quite like the flavorful fragrance of delicious food filtering through the air.

On the contrary, there’s nothing quite like getting a good whiff of something that smells so gross it makes you gag. You know what I mean—the overwhelming odor of something that’s been left too long in the fridge, or the rancid scent from the inconspicuous sponge that reeks of rotten food. P U!

**FRAGRANCE** - Sweetness of smell; that quality which affects the olfactory nerves in the nose with an agreeable sensation; pleasing scent; grateful odor.

Adapted from Noah Webster’s First Edition of an American Dictionary of the English Language (1828), Foundation for American Christian Education (San Francisco CA 1995).

In a similar way, you and I give off an *odor* spiritually as believers—an invisible aroma inseparably linked to our attitude. Without question, our attitude emits an aroma that either *draws* people to Jesus or *repels* them from Him. To have a good attitude, we must abide in the Vine, Christ Jesus (see John 15:4-8). As we do, we bear the fruit of His Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22). The aroma of these fruits is *rich* and *inviting*—to Christians and non-Christians alike.

As a child, I remember regularly being drawn to the “grapes” of goodness and gentleness in my grandmother and grandfather. Similarly, the “pears” of peace and patience portrayed by my parents and Sunday school teachers magnetically pulled me closer to Christ. Not only was I drawn to the rich aroma of their attitude, but I was also able to *taste and see that the Lord is good* (Psalm 34:8 NKJV). How? Because their outstanding attitude overflowed into outstanding *actions* (see Mathew 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12).

Indeed, it is wonderful to be on the receiving end, but God also wants us to *freely give* to others what we have freely received (see Matthew 10:8). The truth is, our attitude is emitting an aroma all the time. The question is, is it the sweet smell of the Spirit that draws people to Jesus, or is it the sour scent of the fruit of the flesh that repels people from Him?

...Through us, [God] brings knowledge of Christ. Everywhere we go, people breathe in the exquisite *fragrance*. Because of Christ, we give off a *sweet scent* rising to God, which is recognized by those on the way of salvation—an *aroma* redolent with life.

—2 Corinthians 2:14,14 The Message

I must admit, my attitude toward people has left a lot to be desired at times. God showed me this one day when some people of “another faith” came to my door. The doorbell rang and I could see through the glass who they were. Immediately, my Christ-like attitude went south on vacation. I thought, “Oh no, not them again! Don’t they have anything better to do? They’re so messed up mentally. I don’t have time for them.”

Now God had already been dealing with me about my attitude as well as reaching out to the unsaved. The Holy Spirit stopped me dead in my “mental tracks” and said, “You know, you were once lost, and I sent somebody to you. Many times you *thought* you knew the truth about Me and you didn’t, so I sent someone to show you the way. These guys at your door, like many others, think they know the truth, and they’re zealously knocking on doors to tell others. They’re more faithful than many Christians, and they’re

somebody's son and somebody's brother. You've asked me to send someone to *your* family members. Will you reach out with an attitude of love and compassion to somebody else's? If you won't, who will?"

Needless to say, I was cut to the core. I asked God to forgive me for my stinkin' attitude and to help me represent Him better. Indeed, I've had to ask Him to forgive me for a bad attitude toward my wife, my kids, my friends and total strangers. Maybe you need to do that too. God loves you and desires to develop His fruit in your life—He wants your attitude to emit a flavorful fragrance that draws people to Him. Somebody somewhere is in desperate need to catch a good whiff of the wonderful Savior we worship. So ...*be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind [having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude]*, allowing the fruit of God's Spirit to be produced in your life and sending out a satisfying smell that draws others to Him!

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