









The Seed and the Sower: Two Views

SOIL	VIEW #1 No Fruit = No Life	VIEW #2 No Fruit = No Maturity
Wayside		
Stony		
Weedy		
Good		

View #1: Fruit Indicates Life









The ultimate mark of the genuine believer, the good soil, is fruitbearing. He not only hears and understands but also indeed bears fruit. Spiritual fruit is the inevitable product of spiritual life. ... Not only does Jesus assure us that true believers bear fruit but that they bear it in great abundance: one a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. Those figures represent phenomenal yields of 10,000 percent, 6,000 percent, and 3,000 percent. Believers differ in fruitbearing because they differ in commitment to obedience, but all are profusely fruitful. (MacArthur, J. (1989). *Matthew*. Chicago: Moody Press.)

View #2: Life Indicates Life; Fruit Indicates Maturity

Those of us who have grown up in "Christian" countries sometimes fail to appreciate the fact that genuine Christians have renounced their faith in Jesus under severe persecution (e.g., Peter). We may tend to think that people who do this were never genuine believers. That may be true in some cases. However we need to remember that for every Christian martyr who died refusing to renounce his faith there were other believers who escaped death by renouncing it. To say that their behavior showed that they never truly believed is naive and unbiblical (cf. 19:11-27; 2 Tim. 2:12; 4:10a [Demas...]).

The people in view in verse 13 stop believing because of adversity, but those in verse 14 do so because of distractions (cf. Matt. 6:19-34; Luke 11:34-36; 12:22-32; 16:13). Notice that Jesus said that these "believers" (v. 13) produce no mature fruit (cf. John 15:2). In the light of this statement we need to examine the idea that every true believer produces fruit and that if there is no fruit the person must be lost. Fruit is what appears on the outside that other people see. It is what normally, but not always, manifests life on the inside. It is possible for a fruit tree to produce no fruit and still be a fruit tree. Today the testimony of many Christians would lead onlookers to conclude that they are not believers because they do not produce much external evidence of the divine life within them. However, Jesus allowed for the possibility of true believers bearing no mature fruit because they allow the distractions of the world to divert them from God's Word (cf. John 15:2). (Tom Constable. (2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible*. Galaxie Software.) [John 3:18...]

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