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# AN ATTRACTIVE FRAGRANCE

## I. Aromas

- a. Smells have a direct connection to memory.
  - i. Certain smells can bring us back to a person or place instantly.
  - ii. Each person has a distinct smell, even when using the same perfume.
- b. We also have a spiritual aroma that can attract or repel people.
- c. If we're nose blind to the smell we project, we could do more damage than good.
- d. A Christian life's true aroma is made up of humble attitudes and actions that reflect Jesus.

## II. Paul, a Happy Captive

- a. The Corinthian church was a proud church that valued knowledge and power.
  - i. Their estimation of Paul had fallen as they became enamored with teachers who touted personal strength and victory.
  - ii. Paul wrote letters to combat their beliefs.
- b. **2 Corinthians 2:14-15** (NRSVue) <sup>14</sup>*But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession and through us spreads in every place the fragrance that comes from knowing him.* <sup>15</sup>*For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.*
- c. The triumphal procession referenced the Roman victory parade to honor conquering Roman generals.
  - i. In this picture, Jesus is the conquering hero.
  - ii. Paul is the happy captive, having been conquered by Jesus.
- d. This was a shocking picture to the Corinthians.
  - i. Paul declares that Christians should joyfully accept a humbled position.
  - ii. Freedom comes when Jesus leads us.

### III. Jesus is the Example

- a. **Philippians 2:5-8** (NRSVue) <sup>5</sup>*Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, <sup>8</sup>he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.*
- b. Jesus humbled himself to save us.
- c. When the early Christians copied Jesus, they became attractive to the people of their world.

### IV. Jesus' Challenge

- a. **Luke 9:23-24** (NRSVue): <sup>23</sup>*Then he said to them all, "If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.*
- b. The cross is not a burden to bear; it represents only one thing: death.
  - i. To take up your cross means to put to death your will, ambitions, and pride to follow Jesus.
  - ii. The miracle of taking up your cross is that the more you lose, the more you gain.
- c. Humility brings us closer to Jesus
  - i. It is the pathway to personal revival.
  - ii. **2 Chronicles 7:14** (NRSVue): <sup>14</sup>*If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*
- d. Worries and distractions choke out our connection to Jesus.

### V. A Sweet Aroma

- a. **2 Corinthians 2:15** (NRSVue): <sup>15</sup>*For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.*
- b. We draw people in as we live like Jesus. Pride stinks, but humility attracts.
- c. Our humble attitude of living like Jesus reminds people of what God can do.

- d. **1 Corinthians 3:18** (NRSVue): *<sup>18</sup>Do not deceive yourselves. If you think that you are wise in this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise.*
- e. **2 Corinthians 8:9** (NRSVue): *<sup>9</sup>For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.*
- f. **Luke 9:24** (NRSVue): *<sup>24</sup>For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will save it.*

## **VI. The Reality of Humility**

- a. Humility is sacrifice.
  - i. We give up our “right” to fire back on social media.
  - ii. We lose our ability to treat others with indifference.
  - iii. We abandon anger to pray for our enemies.
  - iv. We can no longer treat our families with disrespect.
- b. Humility is gain
  - i. We gain the right to live under God’s blessings.
  - ii. We receive Jesus’ victory and freedom.
  - iii. We can be a healer of relationships instead of breaking them apart.
  - iv. We get to be the sweet aroma that shows people Jesus is the answer.
- c. Our world desperately wants answers. Our humble, Jesus-like attitude points them to only One who can meet their deepest needs. That is why we make the daily sacrifice to live humbly.