

### PICKING BERRIES, FINDING GOOD

I headed for the raspberry patch early Sunday morning – nothing like fresh berries on whole grain cereal. As I picked I noted that there were two sources of the fruit - those that were immediately seen on the outside edges of the patch and those that required a lot of wrestling with vines and the supports that held them up. Often those elusive “pickin’s” were larger, riper and juicier than the prominent, easily spotted crop but they sure required a lot more effort and produced a lot more scratches.

From the raspberry patch I headed to the peas. Looking over the heavily-laden vines I realized that sometimes an abnormally cool and wet spring has its rewards. Talk about a bumper crop! Scratches aside, both raspberries and peas offered the same lesson – some fruit is easily seen, some requires diligence to seek it out. Here’s the lesson that came to my heart, perhaps it will encourage you, as well.

When we ask God to show us the things in our life that displease Him and hurt others, there are habits that easily come to mind. When it comes to root causes and unrecognized attitudes that need to be pruned, however, that requires the light of God’s word and sometimes other people to help us see clearly.

On the other hand, some folks display such obvious “good fruit” in their lives that it’s easy to recognize God’s love. Others, however, seem so prickly and difficult, it requires a deliberate commitment to find their goodness, often at the cost of pain and scars. The secret in both scenarios is to never give up looking for the best.

“Living as becomes you] with complete lowliness of mind (humility) and meekness (unselfishness, gentleness, mildness), with patience, bearing with one another and making allowances because you love one another.” Ephesians 4:2