

Rock Us: *Godsense: Experiencing Life Through the Five Senses of Jesus* Part 4: The Nose Knows

Smell is another incredible human sense. We have 10 million smell receptors that can detect 1 trillion different scents. Odor molecules travel to specific sites (olfactory epithelium) and bind to olfactory receptors located in the nasal cavity. Once bound to olfactory cell receptors, intensified smell signals are transmitted via the olfactory bulb (lying inside the nose and extending to two important areas of the brain: the amygdala and hippocampus) that rapidly reach the limbic area of the brain, an area responsible for controlling emotions, memory, learning, instinct, motivation, etc. This is why smells can trigger strong memories: cookies baking may remind us of grandma's house or mowed grass reminds us of playing outside as kids.

Our sense of smell enhances life. Think about these nice smells: fresh flowers, a seabreeze, popcorn popping, bread baking... Smell also helps greatly in tasting. Is also super useful in detecting unclean things (body odor/stinky socks/poo, etc.), unhealthy things (rotten food, dead animals, harmful chemicals) or unsafe things (like smoke before a fire erupts). Without smell, it's no doubt that life would be much worse.

Smell is also a mysterious thing that invisibly travels through the air. **The nose knows!** We can't see smells, but we know they are there & we know they are communicating something to us long before we see it (if we ever see it at all.) I smell really good fried food smell in the cafe sometimes. This smell invisibly communicates to me that someone got french fries, often long before I see the greasy Hecky's bag on the table. A telltale super stinky, sulfuric smell of rotten eggs wafting through the air usually means one thing??? Yes, you guessed it- someone ripped a "SBD" fart! Of course, we want to avoid smelling farts at all costs!

The funny thing about bad smells is that we can detect them in others, but not so much in ourselves. Think about B-O, bad breath or smelly armpits: these revolting smells are easy for us to detect in others. But we don't often smell out stinky feet, rancid pits or dragonbreath. But WHEN we become aware of our bad bodily smells, we're embarrassed & we try hard to stop stinking. We try hard to get rid of our stink, right? A lot of dealing with bad smells is a **COVER UP**: we use footpowder, deodorant, gum, mints, etc. But with these cover-ups, the smells often still linger. **The nose knows!** Only a true, deep cleansing removes our bodily stench. But BO returns if we stop cleaning ourselves.

As bad as these smells are, there's something far more stinky than feet, pits, bad breath and farts. It's our sin. Simply put, our sin is any thought, word or action that offends God & His plan for life: opposite of 10 commandments. Our sin is a foul smell to those around us too and it repels people. Think of someone who lies, swears, backstabs, steals, etc. Do you want to be around that kind of person? No, their sin repels you. But as bad as that is, our sin stinks to God. It's an offense in His nostrils (Referring to evil, pagan sinners, God said in **Is 65:5b** *These people are a stench in My nostrils, an acrid smell that never goes away.*) Sin is described as "*the rotting fruit of death*" (**Rom 7:5**) that separates us from God & leads to another source of stink: DEATH. **Romans 6:23a** *For the wages of sin is death.* In essence the payment someone receives for their sins is death, and death stinks (think of roadkill or smelly chicken bones in your garbage...). And as garbage and roadkill rots away, it is attractive... to flies, words & vultures. In the same way, sin attracts other sinners: low-lives, hypocrites, backstabbers, thieves, abusers, pervers, users/pimps, ungodly evil people. Sin also attract the demonic & invites the presence of Satan himself... IN a few words, sin stinks up your life & wrecks you, and your relationships with people & with God.

We've been talking about Jesus & looking at His perfect life & senses. When Jesus walked the earth, He smelled sin & death, but He came to wipe both sin & death out forever. The story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead in **Jn 11:39-44** illustrates how Jesus deals with the stench of sin & death. Jesus raised the dead man Lazarus to life, restoring him fully, even wiping out the putrid smell of sin & death. When Jesus entered into the situation, sin & death are defeated & even the smell of sin & death is gone. Jesus turns death to life, He paid for our sin through His sacrificial death on the cross & defeated death by rising from the dead three days later. Just like Jesus raised Lazarus from death to life, He can the same for you, giving you eternal life, purifying & cleansing us from the **stink of sin**.

If you want to be clean from the stench of sin & the curse of eternal death, God made one way: Jesus Christ. **1Jn 1:7b** *"the blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses [purifies] us from all sin."* Clean & pure things don't stink. The only way to wipe out sin & its stench is to defeat it. Jesus defeated both sin & death on the cross once & for all. So if we don't want to be a stench to people & to God, we all need Jesus to de-stink us. You may say, "What's up with that, blood that can clean us? Remember that *...the wages of sin is death* (**Rom 6:23a**). Something or someone must die to pay for our sin. **Heb 9:22b** *...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.* Jesus, the perfect Lamb of God, paid it once-and-for-all when He shed His blood for you on the cross. **1Jn 1:9** *...if we confess our sins to Him, He [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.* The smell & curse of sin & death are removed when you trust in Jesus & confess your sins to Him. Now God's plan's clear: **Rom 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Not only did Jesus defeat the stench of sin & death, He came to restore the good smells & aromas of life. Jesus is the perfect & pleasing sacrifice to God, a great aroma as opposed to the stench of sin. **Eph 5:2** *He [Jesus] loved us and offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God."* Likewise, God considers our righteous living, gifts and sacrifices for Him to be "pleasing aromas" the complete opposite of the terrible stink of sin & death. God wants us to live lives of sacrificial love, following in the footsteps of Jesus (**Rom 12:1**). This pleasant-smelling life honors God & people, attracts godly people and points others to God.

So here's the major contrast of life. 1.) Like denying our smelly BO, bad breath & stinky armpits, we can make believe that our sin doesn't stink and lead a life of selfish, stinky sin that drives people away, offends God, attracts nasty people & evil, and leads to death. Or 2.) We can admit we have sin in our lives, that it stinks & that we need Jesus (and Him alone) to cleanse & purify us. Then we'll lead a sin-cleansing life in Jesus that produces pleasing aromas of righteous living, sacrificially loving & serving people & God. This verse breaks down this contrast: **Gal 6:8a** *Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay & death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit.* If you want to be a pleasing aroma to people & to God, follow God's Word: **Eph 5:1-2** *Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are His dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us & offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.*

Whatever you do, don't deny that you have smelly sins, just as we all have BO, etc (**1Jn 8, 10**). **The nose knows!** And if your nose doesn't know your sin or can't detect its stink, ask God to stiff if out (**Ps 139:23-24**). **God's nose knows!**

BIBLE SCRIPTURES

Rom 7:5 *When your old nature was still active, sinful desires were at work within you, making you want to do whatever God said not to and producing sinful deeds, the rotting fruit of death.*

Rom 6:23a *For the wages of sin is death...*

Gal 6:8a *Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay & death from that sinful nature...*

1Jn 1:7b, 9 *The blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin. If we confess our sins to Him, He can be depended on to forgive us & cleanse us from every wrong. It's perfectly proper for God to do this for us because Christ died to wash away our sins.*

1Jn 1:8, 10 *If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that His word has no place in our hearts.*

Ps 139 23-24 *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

Eph 5:1-2 *Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are His dear children. Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us & offered Himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1a. What your favorite smell & why? 1b. What's the stinkiest, nastiest stench you've ever smelled?

2. *The nose knows...* Has someone ever let you know that you smelled really bad? What did you do about it & why?

3. Read Rom 7:5. Like bad BO, *sin stinks*. What is sin & why does it smell so bad? Who does it repel? Who does it attract?

4. Read Rom 6:23a & Gal 6:8a. What's the end result of sin? Why do so many people seemingly not care about sin's final result?

5. Read 1Jn 1:7-9. How does Jesus' blood cleanse & purify us? What's our role in the this sin-cleansing process?

6. Read 1Jn 1:8, 10 & Ps 139:23-24. Like denying bad BO, we can deny & hide our sin. Are there sins that you're denying or hiding in life?

7. Read Eph 5:1-2. Do you want to be a pleasing aroma to people & God like Jesus was? If so, what needs to change in your life?

CLOSING PRAYER: Lord Jesus, thank You for shedding Your precious blood to cleanse & purify us from our sin. We confess our sins to You now & realize that they only lead to death & destruction. Help us to imitate You, Lord Jesus, so that we can also be a sweet and pleasant aroma to people & to God. We love You and thank You for Your great love and forgiveness. Amen.