

Daily View

“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today’” Hebrews 3:13

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Mellow Yellow

I was one of those really smart kids who graduated from high school at age 17... or was because I started kindergarten at age 4? That was probably it. Anyway, back then it was hard to get a summer job unless you were 18. The one exception was working for the school district because they were kind enough to hire 17 year olds.

So, after graduation, I got a job with the Garden Grove School District. Doing what you ask? Polishing school buses. The only thing I remember about that job is that by day's end I was coated in yellow. Oddly enough, a hit song around that time was “Mellow Yellow” by Donovan. So, I was the mellow yellow bus polishing kid... but not because I was “mad about saffron” (eye roll).

So I've been yellow, literally, and I aim to be mellow most of the time. “Mellow” means “softened or matured by age or experience.” A mellow person is easy-going, generally cheerful, cool-headed. Maybe James was talking about being “mellow” when he said this, in James 1:19,

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger...

Jesus was the King of mellow — warm, kind-hearted, gracious... “*I am gentle and lowly in heart,*” he said (Matthew 11:29). He was the perfect example of the fruit of the Spirit in action, which exudes “mellowness” — *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*” (Galatians 5:22-23).

Having said this, there are occasions when being “mellow” is just being “yellow” (as in “*cowardly*”). Jesus wasn't “mellow” when he overturned the tables of the money-changers (Matthew 21; John 2). “Mellow” isn't the word we would use to describe how he called out the Pharisees, recorded in passages like Matthew 23.

But those were the exceptions. Typically, he dealt with sinners with a spirit of “mellow-ness” (as we've defined it). His treatment of the woman at the well, recorded in John 4, is a perfect example. Divorced five times and involved in an ungodly relationship, she was a sinner, by any definition. But Jesus treated her gently and patiently and the result was that “*many Samaritans from the town believed in him because of the woman's testimony*” (John 4:39).

Being mellow most of the time is a good thing but it's a challenge to stay mellow in every situation. I can't say I'm mellow in the car all the time. I'm too impatient with people who don't drive as well as I do — although I'm *extremely* patient when I don't drive as well as I do. One thing that reminds me to be mellow in traffic is to imagine that the person in the car in front of me is a fellow Christian. Can you imagine following a driver that you feel is not driving as quickly as you think they should and you are making faces at them, even *bonking* at them only to pull into the church's parking lot right behind them? *Awkward*. It's better and less embarrassing to be mellow when behind the wheel.

Parents are challenged to stay mellow every day. My kids would say I was mellow, *up to a point*. I had a “long fuse.” But like all parents, there was a yellow mellow boundary that could quickly turned from mellow yellow to testy orange, to irate red. Fortunately, there *is* such a thing as “righteous indignation”; James said, “*slow to anger*” (not *no* anger) and Paul said, “*be angry* and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Ephesians 4:26). Normally, however, people should view us as “mellow.” Or, better yet, as full of the Fruit of the Spirit — *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control*.

*Unless otherwise indicated the opinions expressed in this publication and images used are solely those of David Posey.
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