

Hosea 9:10

## Wild Berries

*I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season.*

Wild blackberries are one of my favorite outdoor foods. They're not near as seedy as the hybrid garden-variety berry, and they're far more sweeter. I know of several places where blackberries grow wild. This gives me an additional incentive to hike or fish in those areas. Because I know where to look, I know I'll find them when they're ripe and ready to harvest.

God knew exactly where Israel was, too. Not only where they were in the wilderness but also where they were in a relationship with Him. And He "found" them and made them His people. The message here is not so much His searching (He knows where everything is) but His delight in "finding" people who desire Him to be Lord.

Likewise, He knows where we're at in a relationship with Him. If we're without Jesus as Lord of our lives, then we're not ready for the final harvest. But when God finds us by His word of truth, we become a kind of firstfruits (James 1:18) – we become children of the living God. May He find each of us as grapes in the wilderness, ready to turn loose of the vine that gives earthly life so that we can abide in the Vine who gives eternal life (John 15:1).

Even as Christians, we experience highs and lows in life. Sin, wrong choices, or just the heavy weights of daily living can cause our sweet, ripened life to be bitter and unsavory, kingdom-speaking of course. Think of how you will look to God if He should suddenly find you in any of these situations. Remember, He already knows where you're at in your relationship with Him. It's a matter of how much you want to be like Jesus every moment of every day. In your daily prayer time, pray to be more and more like Him.

**TIP:** When picking wild blackberries, also pick some leaves. They make a soothing warm drink when dried, crushed, and steeped like tea. As with any wild harvest, be sure to wash them thoroughly, and be doubly sure that you're harvesting the right thing.

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Hosea 9:10 (Study Guide)

Wild Berries

HOOK

1. What is your favorite wild harvest?

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2. Describe how to establish a vineyard, including pruning technique (if you don't know, guess!).

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3. Make a list of wild plants that you know for sure are edible. Give a few important details.

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Explain how God found you. Where were you in the wilderness of life when this happened?

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Tell how you live your life so that God can find pleasure in you. What will you do to be better?

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SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words:    God searching            God finding            God making

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