

REFLECTING THE POWER OF GOD

AUGUST 7, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Last week we began to look at the Fruit of the Spirit (evidence of the Spirit working in our lives), beginning with love, joy, and peace. Let's continue to examine the rest of the fruit.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Galatians 5:22-23. Listed below are some notes regarding the fruit:
 - PATIENCE: From the Greek word *makrothymia*, meaning "long temper". Longsuffering, endurance, slowness in avenging wrongs, putting up with people without exploding, waiting through difficult times.
 - KINDNESS: From the Greek word *chrēstotēs* meaning "usefulness, moral excellence". Looks for ways to adapt to meet the needs of others.
 - GOODNESS: From the Greek word *agathōsynē* meaning "uprightness of heart and life". Generosity that overflows from kindness. Interested in the welfare of others.
 - FAITHFULNESS: From the Greek word *pistis* meaning "belief, fidelity, the character of one who can be relied on". Dependability, trustworthiness, commitment.
 - GENTLENESS: From the Greek word *praotēs* meaning "humility, meekness". Courtesy, considerateness. Refers to controlled strength rather than weakness.
 - SELF-CONTROL: From the Greek word *enkrateia* meaning "the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions". Restraint of one's emotions, impulses, or desires.

Share with your group something from the above descriptions that stood out or surprised you.

2. Read Exodus 34:5-7 and describe the characteristics of God that relate to patience. Why is patience such an important character aspect for a Christ-follower?
3. Read Colossians 3:12-15. In a world full of anger, a 'me-first' attitude, and conflict, God wants us to be kind. Can you think of any circumstance when it is okay to treat others in an unkind manner? How would your home life, church life, and/or work life change if you reflected God's kind nature?
4. How would you define 'goodness'? Read Titus 3:1-8. How are goodness and obedience linked? Can goodness only be shown through our actions?
5. Hebrews 11 is known as the faith chapters and tells of many Old Testament people who exhibited great faith (Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Rahab). What was a common characteristic in all of their lives (Hebrews 11:13-16, 39)? If God were to add you to the Faith chapter, what could be written about your faithfulness?

Study Questions for Community Groups

6. Read Galatians 6:1 and 2 Timothy 2:24-26. How does Paul say we are to deal with fellow believers who sin, and people who do not know Christ? How does gentleness communicate love?
7. Do you consider yourself to be self-controlled? If so, is this enough to be exhibit the fruit of self-control? If not, is there hope for you? Does self-control depend on you or on the Holy Spirit?
8. As Pastor Joe shared on Sunday, a 'me-centered religion' boils the Fruit of the Spirit down to a to-list, while God's way is a long walk, full of twists and turns. The closer we walk with the Spirit, the more we reflect that relationship. How can you keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25)?

APPLICATION

Try as we might, we cannot manufacture fruit under our own strength. A fruit tree receives energy and water from above and through its roots. Similarly, we must focus on God and allow His Spirit to flow through us to produce fruit. John 15:4 states, "*Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful **unless you remain in me.***" Spend this week reflecting on this passage, and ask the Spirit to show you what it looks like to remain in Christ.

SCRIPTURE

²²*But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*
²³*gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!*

Galatians 5:22-23