

WEEKLY REFLECTION

As the apostle Paul writes to the Church of Galatia, he warns them against such things as sexual immorality and impurity; idolatry and enmity; rivalries, dissensions, and divisions etc. But, he continues, against the fruit of the Spirit—against love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (v.22-23)—against such things there is no law. Why is that?

Well, firstly: we should know that Christianity is not a set of commands to be obeyed. Instead, it is heart transformation that occurs when we cultivate our relationship with God and choose to walk by His Spirit. The list of attributes that make up the fruit of the Spirit are attributes of God themselves, reasons to praise and worship Him because of His manifold perfection. For example, God is the very embodiment of love. The whole law can be summed up in the command to love Him and to love others. Joy stems from love. We can be joyful because nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. Peace was God's design for us in the very beginning, and patience (or long-suffering, as per the KJV translation) is something that God has for us in abundance as we sin, stumble, and lose our way even on our journeys back towards Him.

Moreover, God and Paul never expect for the fruit of the Spirit to grow in us out of our own efforts. The call is for us to be walking in the Spirit (v.16, 19), to be actively involving Him in all things. We are to follow His promptings as He guides our hearts. We are to walk along the paths of righteousness as He brings to mind and convicts us of what is good and what is not. The fruit of the Spirit should choke out our thorny and sinful fleshly desires as we become more and more intimate with God. All these things should and *will* flow out of us naturally when we drink of the living water that is Jesus, and allow His Spirit to change our hearts and minds.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

Without referring to Scripture—are you able to remember all of the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit? What comes to mind when you think about the fruit of the Spirit? (Can be related to the traits themselves, imagery that pops into your mind, or people you know who exhibit and display the fruit in their lives etc.)

QUESTION TWO:

Which works of the flesh are common and most celebrated in our culture? In contrast, which aspects of the fruit of the Spirit are least noticed and celebrated within the church at large?

QUESTION THREE:

Which aspect of the fruit of the Spirit do you particularly need to ask God to grow in you? How will you know when you, or other believers around you, are walking in the Spirit?

Which works of the flesh from verses 19-21 do you struggle the most with? Why do you think you are gratifying your flesh in that way? How are you desiring to find security, satisfaction, or significance through these things instead of finding them in Jesus, and how does the gospel change things?