

Bearing Crazy Happy Fruit

Galatians 5:22-23

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Crazy Happy

Reflect

Outline: Recap

Realize

Points to Ponder

Respond

Questions to draw out understanding.

REFLECT

One of the most amazing things about Jesus' teaching in the Beatitudes is that Jesus gives us a system of ethics that should define our lives...and it's an ethic that's completely different from how our world sees ethics. It's the ethics of the kingdom of God! As we press further into the kingdom of heaven, the Spirit begins to grow beautiful fruit in our lives. When we live into Jesus' kingdom, not only does it make a totally counter-cultural statement to our world, it transforms our lives from the inside out.

[LINK to SMALL GROUP VIDEO MATERIALS](#)

REALIZE

1. Love always comes first

- **Galatians 5:22-23**
- **1 Corinthians 13:13**
- **John 15:13**
- **Leader Notes**
 - God is love, so when our lives are rooted in him, love has to be a part of who we are and how we live. But it's not the kind of love we mean when we say, "I love French fries." It's self-sacrificial love.
 - Jesus demonstrated love for us by laying down his life for us, so pure love lays down its life for others too. That doesn't seem like it would make us very happy, but God's crazy happy plan for our lives leads us into things we wouldn't expect. It leads us to live self-sacrificially in a self-aggrandizing world.
- **In what specific ways (or with which specific people) is the Lord asking you to demonstrate love that is self-sacrificial?**

2. Joy happens when we focus on Jesus

- **Philippians 2:3-4**
- **Leader Notes**
 - The joy that Jesus wants us to have is really his own joy. On our own, we chase happiness and joy in places that aren't eternal, and the moment something changes circumstantially, our joy evaporates.

- The Sunday school acronym is still accurate: Jesus, Others, You. When we seek Jesus first, we worry less about everything else, and we end up with a joy that is unshaken when things change.
- **What are you focusing on right now, and what fruit is your focus bearing?**

3. Peace happens in three directions

- **John 14:27**
- **Leader Notes**
 - Just like everything else in life, peace occurs in three directions: upward, inward, outward. When we have peace with God, we arrive at an internal peace, a peace with ourselves, that's not possible otherwise. Because you can't give what you don't have, if we possess peace with God and, consequently, inward peace, we can make peace with others.
 - In our current cultural moment, there's nothing more important than making peace with others. When we act as peacemakers in the world, we become couriers of God's shalom, his peace that makes places where "nothing is missing or broken."
- **Spend some time in prayer, and ask the Lord to help you experience his peace. Who do you need to make peace with this week?**

4. Patience is trust in action

- **Romans 8:24-25**
- **Leader Notes**
 - "Longsuffering" is an old but appropriate word for patience because, to be patient, you have to suffer for a long time. Paul makes the distinction in 1 Corinthians 13 that real love suffers long *and* is kind. In this life, we all experience suffering, but when we're walking with Jesus, we can hold onto our joy and our kindness.
 - When we trust God, the timing of things (especially things that take a long time) is nothing to worry about. Really, we get impatient because we don't know where the outcome is going to go. When we trust God's good plans for our lives, we can live patiently in hope when we haven't seen the outcome yet because we know the one who's planning it.
- **In what area of your life do you need to patiently trust the Lord right now?**

Optional Follow-up Questions:

- What makes you say that?
- How do you feel about that?
- How would you explain your answer to a non-Christian friend or neighbor?
- Why did God design it to work that way? Why not just do (whatever else) instead?
- What would you say to someone who disagrees with that?
- Why do we really have to do it like that? Why can't we just go (some other route) instead?