

Introduction

GALATIANS 5:22-23

You might have heard these verses before. You may even know a song about the fruit of the Spirit not being a coconut (Thanks VBS!). However, it took me a while to realize something about the fruit of the Spirit: They're not spiritual gifts. God has gifted each of us with multiple spiritual gifts and has chosen to not gift us with certain spiritual gifts. We should develop the spiritual gifts we have and not focus on the ones we don't have. For example, I don't have the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. Therefore, I don't even try to speak in tongues. However, the fruit of the Spirit isn't like that. I can't just be like, "Sorry God, I'm not gifted with self-control. I like partying with my friends too much so I'm not going to focus on having self-control."

Be honest with yourself: Is one of these missing from your life? If so, pray and ask God to give you opportunities to display these more. Until we are showing each of these traits in every situation we're in, then we haven't completely surrendered over to allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us.

-Hunter Belton

Wednesday

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

Christians like to talk ad nauseam about joy. We have songs with hand motions, paintings of the word, bracelets, we've even turned it into an acronym... but we never really talk about what it really means. For the longest time, I thought it meant I was supposed to be happy all the time - an impossible feat. Even Jesus wept and felt anger and was tempted. So, what then, is this elusive concept of joy? In Phillipians 4:4, Paul writes to "Rejoice in the Lord always," a sentiment common throughout the letter. But, to me, the really interesting part of this is that Paul was writing this letter from prison - probably not his happiest memory, if I had to guess. But the thing about joy is that, unlike happiness, its source isn't in our circumstances. Happiness is temporary - it comes and goes based on the day, the amount of homework we have, whether or not the Romans throw you behind bars... Conversely, joy is permanent. Its source is in the Lord. His love for us is unwavering. When we put our hope in the future He provides, we find joy in the work that He is doing in us and for us, as well as in the knowledge that we are His.

-Alexi Bolton

Thursday

2 CORINTHIANS 6:3-6

Kindness is a fruit of the Spirit that can seem easy to glaze over--of course you're supposed to be kind! It's extremely easy to be kind to those who are kind to you, or even neutral towards you. The difficulty comes when God calls you to be kind to those who aren't even remotely kind back, or even to people that just get on your nerves. When you abide in the Holy Spirit, you are able to bear the fruit of kindness - the kindness that Paul speaks of to the Corinthians. Paul made sure to always be kind in order to make sure that the Corinthians were not able to use his own actions as reasons to discredit his ministry. You should be living in a way that reflects God as to not hinder others from seeing Him. When you are kind in times when it is not easy, it points back to a small piece of the kindness that God is trying to show to everyone. Be mindful of the way you speak today; if you catch yourself being unkind [directly or indirectly], try to change your mindset into how God sees that person or group and find something kind to say!

-Emily Valdez

Friday

HEBREWS 12:14

Peace. The word conjures images of people shaking hands or hugging, two fingers held up, tie-die, and that circle symbol with an upside-down fork in it. Real peace, though, is something deeper. It is a state of tranquility which comes from resting in God, in which a person doesn't worry about the situations God puts them in, or is afraid of the plans God has for their life. Peace like this can be so hard to find in the world today, and especially in college. During this crucial time in life in which we make so many important decisions, it's hard not to worry or to feel anxious. In my experience, at times, it feels like I can hardly go ten feet without being reminded that anything I do could impact the rest of my life, and that if I make the wrong choices, I won't end up where I want. When we make the wrong choices, as we all do at some point or another, it can seem like we're losing control, but that's the point. Peace isn't about having control, it's about trusting that all the things we worry about are in the hands of God.

-Albert Godlesky