

Study Hints for Thinking Further

International Bible Lessons

Galatians 5:22-26; 6:1-10

Sunday, February 26, 2012

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be answers to the discussion questions, but hints a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why do you think Paul lists “love” as the first fruit of the Spirit? How might love influence each fruit of the Spirit that Paul lists?

In First Corinthians, chapter 13, Paul wrote that love is the greatest of three virtues: faith, hope, and love: “And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love” (1 Corinthians 13:13). Jesus also emphasized love; the love of God for us and the love we need to have for God and others. 1. Love is first, and when we love as God intends, 2. We will experience true joy in spite of our circumstances; 3. We will seek and work for peace; 4. We will strive to show patience; 5. We will want to treat others with kindness; 6. We will give generously of our time, talents, and treasure as the Lord leads us; 7. We will demonstrate faithfulness to God and others; 8. We will be gentle toward others in need, whether physically or spiritually or morally in need; 9. We will seek to exercise self-control when provoked and we will not follow our flesh in our relationships with others.

2. How can believers be guided by the Spirit and not deceived by evil spirits?

Believers will need to prayerfully study the Bible and seek good teachers who believe the Bible is truly the word of God. Believers will need to study the Bible knowing that the Bible is the absolutely reliable guide for life. Also, believers will need to remember that the Holy Spirit will never lead anyone to do what the Bible forbids, because the Holy Spirit, Who inspired the Bible writers, will never contradict himself: “All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17-17). A believer must trust the Bible as the word of God and seek to bear the fruit of the Spirit, and in this way will be less likely to be misled by evil spirits. The Holy Spirit will never lead anyone to renounce God, or the truth of the Bible, or Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, or the moral law of love as expressed in the ten commandments and the New Testament.

3. What are some thoughts and actions that can help believers restore “in a spirit of gentleness” one who has transgressed?

A believer can pray for the love of God for the transgressor to fill them when they speak to the transgressor; and pray they see and experience the love of God for them. They can pray for the right words to speak and for the right timing to speak, if they are to speak. Believers can pray for the heart and mind of the transgressor to be made ready by God to accept what they have to say as they speak in the spirit of gentleness that God gives them the words that God gives them. A believer can review the fruit of the Spirit and pray that all of these fruit will be shown to the transgressor. A believer should remain humble and remember that they either have or possibly could, but for the grace of God, sin is the same way as the transgressor. Demonstrating arrogance or pride will throw up a wall between the believer and the transgressor.

4. Explain what Paul means when he talks about sowing and reaping?

If we do evil or sow evil deeds, we will reap evil consequences or painful experiences. If we do good or sow good deeds prompted by the Holy Spirit and the Bible’s teachings, we will reap good consequences or good experiences. If we sow good, as Jesus sowed good, and if we are persecuted or crucified as Jesus was in this life, we will reap eternal life and eternal rewards and commendation from God.

5. In these verses, what are some actions that Paul tells believers to take? From your observation or experience, which of these actions do people in the church most need to take today?

1. We must crucify the flesh with its passions and desires. 2. We must live by and be guided by the Holy Spirit. 3. We must avoid being conceited or envious of others, especially of those who may be more spiritually advanced or more spiritually mature than we are. 4. We must not try to be spiritually better or superior to others, but seek to be like Christ, Who should serve as our standard of spiritual completeness. 5. We should prayerfully seek to restore transgressors when possible. 6. We must love and help others. 7. We must test our work according to God’s standards as revealed in the Bible. 8. We must do our share of the work with other believers. 9. We must share the good things we have with our teachers. 10. We must sow deeds that reflect the fruit of the Spirit and His leading. 11. We must keep doing right and never give up. 12. We must work for the good of all, especially fellow followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

— © Copyright 2012 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr. You may reprint or reproduce Study Hints for Thinking Further for not-for-profit use.