

LIFE QUESTIONS



Cultivating Healthy Values

Elim Church, Clapham

People can have all manner and types of values in life, - a good job, education, health, nice clothes, friendships, to be happy, to travel the world, to have a happy family life, to make plenty of money, to look after themselves and 'blow everyone else', or want to have plenty of fun, and excitement in life!. These are just a few of the many values I've heard of over the years and the list could go on. Often our values may not seem bad or wrong in themselves, but are they the things that will really bring satisfaction in life?

Having had the privilege of sitting at the bedside of those who are about to leave this world, I have never heard someone say, 'I wish I had spent more time at work', or 'I wish I had made more money' or 'I wish I had visited such and such'. But I have heard it said that if they had the chance to live their lives over again they would spend more time investing their time and energies in developing and improving their relationships with others. After all, many of the things we think are important - in the whole scheme of things aren't that important after all. For we can't take these things with us when we die.

Every plant or creature has been designed with a purpose - to reproduce itself - so that the species will continue and not die out. Regrettably, because of disease, catastrophe, selfishness and way of life - many species have become extinct, and we've lost the pleasure of their uniqueness in the world. In the scriptures we read of two lists. The first reads, "But when you follow your own wrong inclinations, your lives will produce these evil results: impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, idolatry, spiritism (that is, encouraging the activity of demons), hatred and fighting, jealousy and anger, constant effort to get the best for yourself, complaints and criticisms, the feeling that everyone else is wrong except those in your own little group and there will be wrong doctrine, envy, murder, drunkenness, wild parties, and all that sort of thing. ..." (Gal 5:19-21 TLB). It's amazing so many of these things have become acceptable - depending upon your view and or the social group you choose to associate with. I trust you will agree that these are not very healthy values to adopt.

On the other hand, another list is recorded that states the values which are positive and acceptable in a progressive society. Values which I'm sure you would want to know and experience - "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23 NIV). What we need to be aware of is that these values are clearly ones which flow out of a walk and relationship with Holy Spirit, who often gives us the desire to produce these things in our lives. But they cannot really be produced by our own ability, effort and striving as they will be a poor imitation of what He wants and is able to do in us.

A significant point to note is that the first part of the above verse states, "But the fruit of the Spirit is ...". By using the singular word 'is' the writer seems to suggest that the qualities mentioned are related to and flow in and from love. This is an area we will look at in another

subject later on in this site. However producing the right kind of fruit will affect both the way we treat others and the way they will respond to us. It will also enhance our relationships and reflect true character in our lives.

Why not take a moment to ask Holy Spirit to show you the fruit He is producing in your life and ask Him to continue His wonderful work in this area. I'm sure you will be surprised at what He will reveal and accomplish in your life in the near future.