

Discussion Questions  
The Spirit's Fruit (Part 2): Joy  
Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 1:12-26; Psalm 16

1. In our Philippians 1 passage, what seems to be the secular desire that forbids joy from being borne? How does this “false fruit” keep us from being able to bear joy?
2. What prevents religious people from having and bearing the Spirit’s fruit of joy? Where have you seen this to be true in your experience?
3. What is the relationship between joy and sorrow? In Paul’s experience? In Christ’s earthly experience? In our present experience? Why is it impossible for sorrow and happiness to coexist, while it *is* possible for sorrow and joy to coincide? What does this tell us about the nature of joy?
4. Imagine the gospel message making its way from Paul’s cell throughout the imperial guard. What kinds of conversations would the jailers and soldiers and officials be having? What aspects of Paul’s countenance would be inexplicable to them? What would Caesar think about these dynamics?
5. Meditate on the Pauline conviction that “what has happened to me will ... work out for my deliverance/salvation.” Consider the question and answer from the beginning of the Heidelberg Catechism:

Q.

What is your only comfort  
in life and death?

A.

That I am not my own,  
but belong with body and soul,  
both in life and in death,  
to my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ. He has fully paid for all my sins  
with his precious blood,  
and has set me free  
from all the power of the devil.  
He also preserves me in such a way

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that without the will of my heavenly Father  
not a hair can fall from my head;  
indeed, all things must work together  
for my salvation.

Therefore, by his Holy Spirit  
he also assures me  
of eternal life  
and makes me heartily willing and ready  
from now on to live for him.

6. How does Jesus bear the Spirit's fruit of joy? 2000 years ago? Now?

7. What is God saying to you? What are you going to do about it? Who's going to help you?