

Fact Sheet for “Mother’s Day”

Pastor Bob Singer
05/10/2015 (Mother’s Day)

“The driving force behind Mother’s Day was Anna Jarvis, who organized observances in Grafton, W.Va., and Philadelphia on May 10, 1908. As the annual celebration became popular around the country, Jarvis asked members of Congress to set aside a day to honor mothers. She finally succeeded in 1914, when Congress designated the second Sunday in May as “Mother’s Day.”

Mother’s Day can also bring out strong emotions.

For those with good relationships with their mothers this holiday is a time for giving them gifts, taking them out to dinner, and showing them your love. The 5th Commandment (Exodus 20:12) is not a problem to observe if this describes your relationship with your mother.

But, if Mother’s Day had been celebrated in OT times could you imagine the problem this would have created for Joash, one of the kings of Judah? His mother was Athaliah, who had killed all the royal family when her own son died so that she could take power. She would have tried to kill Joash too if she had found out that he was alive. Could you imagine sending her flowers?

Could you imagine if your mother had been Jezebel, who was evil, an idolatress, and wanted to kill Elijah? God’s judgment was that she would be eaten by the dogs.

This day *can* also pose other problems for those who have had a miscarriage or are unable to have children, have strained relationships with their husband or children, have been divorced

Fortunately the role God has given me in His kingdom is to preach His Word, not Mother’s Day. Today I have chosen a passage that, if we follow it, we will please God and likely those around us too. And it is a passage that applies to every one of us, not just mothers. It is a passage with a bright side and a dark side. The bright side is the fruit of the Spirit. The dark side is the works of the flesh. It begins in Galatians 5:16.

^{ESV} ¹⁶ **But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.**

Let’s stop here a second. **For the person who is not a Christian** many of the things mentioned in this passage won’t make good sense. Here’s why. All of us who have become Christians have come face-to-face with our own sinfulness. We have believed the message of forgiveness for our guilt through faith in Christ who paid the penalty for us on the cross and rose again on the third day. But it doesn’t stop there. God gives us a down payment of our future inheritance with Him... the Holy Spirit. It is through the Spirit that we are given the ability to embrace God’s word (1 Corinthians 2:14). The Holy Spirit also enables us to obey God’s Word (Romans 8:2).

Now, for the Christian... we can never say that that we *can't* follow what God says in Galatians 5:16-26. We have the Holy Spirit, but we also have a will of our own. We have the ability to please God. The real question is, "Will we?"

^{ESV 16} **But I say, walk the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.** ¹⁷ **For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.**

Your choices are not set in stone.

¹⁸ **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law** (see Galatians 2:15-16).

Here's the dark side...

¹⁹ **Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality** (any and all forms of illicit sexual relationships), **impurity** (moral uncleanness in thought, word, and deed), **sensuality** (an open, shameless, brazen display of these evils), ²⁰ **idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy** (a sinful and self-centered type), **fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,** ^{21a} **envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these** (This is not a complete list.).

^{21b} **I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.** (Compare 1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

Now, the bright side...

²² **But the fruit** (singular, indicating that these qualities come as a package) **of the Spirit is love** (agape), **joy, peace** (inner repose and quietness, even in the face of adverse circumstances), **patience** (forbearance under provocation), **kindness, goodness, faithfulness,** ²³ **gentleness** (This marks a person who is submissive to God's Word and considerate of others), **self-control; against such things** (Again, this is not a complete list.) **there is no law.**

(Compare 2 Peter 1:3-9)

Here's an interesting question. If I feel offended, demeaned, or hurt... or if I feel that something should be done that isn't being done... does this trump what the Holy Spirit wants to produce in me? Do I now have the freedom in Christ to do the works of the flesh, particularly the anger parts?

That's a really hard question, particularly when I have strong emotions about something.

²⁴ **And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.** ²⁵ **If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.** ²⁶ **Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.**

Whether it's Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving or Christmas... God's Word stands firm as the beacon of His desires for us. We may have difficulties honoring some others due to their choices, but I never want to cause others that same difficulty with me. The best way to live is to live by the Spirit, letting Him produce His fruit in our lives.