

200531 Interview w Dan Chriestenson
Part 6 in the series “Come Together”

What do you remember most from the interview?

What were some things that resonated with you?

Was there anything you wrestled with?

READ James 1:19-27

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” James 1:19–27 (NIV)

What did James mean when he said “*human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires?*” Can you think of any examples where this has been clearly demonstrated to be true?

James seemed to imply there is a difference between God’s anger and human anger. How might these be different?

Fill in the blanks “*We should rush through [anger], walk through [sadness], and linger in [peace and joy].*”

Why is this so important? How might a response in anger look different from a response in sadness?

READ Galatians 5:16-25

“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. . . . The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfishness, dissensions, frictions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”

Do you ever sense a conflict inside of you between what “your flesh” wants and what “the Spirit” wants?

When you witness an act of injustice, racism, cruelty, or hate, what is your initial reaction? Would you say your *initial* reaction stems more from your “flesh” or from the Spirit?

Give some examples of both fruits of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit you have recently observed in connection to the murder of George Floyd. Be specific. (Give specific examples of displays of each fruit.)

Is it sometimes difficult to tell the difference between a fruit of the flesh and a fruit of the Spirit? Why?

READ: Luke 9:51-56 (NASB)

“When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, “Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” But He turned and rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” And they went on to another village.”

What did Jesus mean when he said “you do not know the kind of spirit you are of”?

In a situation where you had strong feelings about something, have you ever wondered about yourself “what spirit you are of”?

If you had to chose between demanding justice or demanding mercy, which would you choose? Why?

Which did Jesus encourage us to prefer, justice or mercy? Why?

What was Jesus’ reaction to the inhumane, cruel, hate-filled, unjust, brutal execution of an innocent person (himself) at the hands of corrupt law enforcement agents who had a long history of abusing their power (the Pharisees)? [A: “Father forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing.”]

How can we best follow Jesus in this troubled time?