



The Fruit of the Spirit is ...

August 2011 Volume 2 Number 7

Gal 5:22,23

Fruit and the Kingdom

We were sitting with our group at lunch when the cultural advisor stood up with some local fruit in his hand. "What is the difference between the fruit that is found in the tropical regions (like Thailand) and the fruit that is available in your home countries?" he asked. There were a few attempts to define the difference but then Peter said "the main difference is that all of the fruit that grows locally here has to be peeled, opened or otherwise "unlocked" from the protective outside layer. You can't just bite into it and enjoy it. You have to work at it."

As we thought about this Peter went on to explain that the same is true of Thai culture and of most cultures here in Asia. Many foreigners only see the exterior because they either do not have the time or do not take the time to investigate further. Inside Asian fruit there is a multitude of tastes and flavours. Some is very sweet like pineapple, other fruit like durian is definitely an acquired taste! All Asian fruit however requires effort in order to find out what it is like. For us as "Farang" (western foreigners) what we initially see is not really what is there. It takes effort to get to know people and understand their point of view and what and how they think about things.

Living cross culturally is not easy. It takes effort. There will be some things (like durian) that are downright unpleasant when we first encounter them. If we are to be God's

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ambassadors and live incarnationally we will have to work at it on a daily basis.

Come to think of it, the same is true of becoming and being a Christian. Jesus was quite clear about the fact that he did not come to make our lives easier. As an evangelist Jesus went out of his way to make it hard for people to come to him. Remember his answer to the disciples when they asked him why he spoke in parables? In Matt 13 he quoted the prophet Isaiah and said that the "secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven had been given to (the disciples) but not to (the people). Parables tended to obscure the truth to those whose hearts were not turned toward God.

And even the disciples needed constant explanations of what Jesus was saying.

After we become Christians it does not get any easier. Think about the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22,23). This is not something we produce, but is produced in us by His Spirit. For us to get at the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control takes effort. We are constantly having to peel away the things that prevent us from enjoying the fruit God's Spirit has placed in our lives.

Praise and Prayer

Praise for :

- A wonderful week off and time spent with friends
- The opportunity to meet with many of our "O" colleagues for a day of Prayer in July
- We now have our own transportation—Bonus!
- Continued progress in Language study. We

have progressed to our Thai A,B,C's

Prayer Needs:

- We are approaching the 6 month (midway) point of Language Study. Pray for continued (fresh) enthusiasm and stamina to complete the first level of our language training during the final 6 months. Sometimes we feel like the scarecrow in the Wizard of Oz:

"If I only had a brain"

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