

The Most Wanted List

In 1949, a reporter wanted to write a story about the “toughest guys” being sought by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The FBI provided the names of 10 wanted criminals, and the article was a hit. On this day in 1950, the agency debuted its “Ten Most Wanted Fugitives” list, posting it in public buildings. Today, the internet makes it possible to circulate the list all over the world in seconds.

In order to be on the list, a suspect must be considered extremely dangerous. The second criterion is whether or not publicity will likely assist in the apprehension of the fugitive. In the early days, the list mostly included burglars, bank robbers and car thieves. Today, terrorists, serial murderers, organized crime figures and international drug dealers dominate the list.

In contrast, the Apostle Paul presents a “Nine Most Wanted” list of the kinds of fruit the Holy Spirit produces (Galatians 5:22-23). After listing the evil acts that result from giving in to the desires of our sinful nature, he lists the fruit that comes from letting the Holy Spirit control our lives. These nine characteristics should be cultivated and sought by every believer: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Non-believers frantically chase their ideas of love and joy, but seldom catch their true fulfillment. Many value material success over faithfulness and kindness. Many individuals define goodness by worldly standards and lack peace. Our society often misinterprets gentleness and patience as being wimpy and weak-willed. For many people, self-indulgence has replaced self-control.

Yet, a life demonstrating these nine traits of a renewed spirit gives a picture of Christ that cannot be ignored.

And that’s what’s most wanted in our world today.

--Beecher Hunter