

The Fruit of the Spirit

A nine-week study

— with Emma Danzey —





Introduction

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law

Over the next few weeks, we are going to focus on each fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in our lives. It is intriguing that there are multiple qualities, but fruit is a singular word. Strong's Concordance shares, "The Greek word for fruit is karpos. This is a singular word that means: Probably from the base of harpazo; fruit, literally or figuratively."

Karpos is a noun, but harpazo is a verb. When we ponder how the Holy Spirit produces Spiritual fruit in the lives of believers, we see the tie between karpos and harpazo. A Christian receives the Spirit and then takes action, living out these qualities.

One Source, Much Fruit

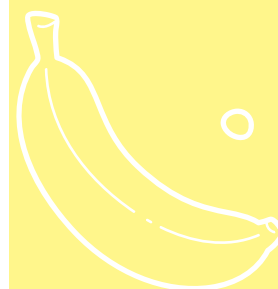
As I researched a single tree that produced different fruits, I discovered this video of a professor named Sam Van Aken at Syracuse University who has grafted 40 different stone fruits into one tree. It is exquisite. All of the fruits are different, however they have one common denominator – they are all stone fruits. Scripture tells us that gentile believers in Christ Jesus have been grafted into the family of God. All of the disciples of Jesus might look different and come from a variety of backgrounds, but we are truly one in Christ Jesus. He is our common denominator.



Romans 11:17-18 tells us that the roots support the branches. Jesus says in John 15:5, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

Jesus is the Vine. We are the branches. Just like the professor gathered different branches to graft into the main tree, when we accept Jesus, we too are grafted into the family of God (John 1:12). All of the spiritual fruit that we produce is a result of the Spirit’s work in our lives. God receives all of the glory because He is the source.

Each week we will include a study, some questions to focus your own personal study, and a verse to meditate on throughout the week. Ready? Let’s get started with the first fruit of the spirit: Love.



Week 1: Love

The first fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5 is love. When we try to grasp the Biblical definition of love, we see themes of sacrifice and selflessness. God Himself is love (1 John 4:8). This is known as agape love.

Alyssa Roat from Christianity.com shares, “Biblical writers used God as the standard for true agape. Agape love, in the Bible, is love that comes from God... As 1 John 4:8 states, ‘God is love [agapos],’ meaning He is the source of agape love. His love is undeserved, gracious, and sacrificial.”

We notice that this same word, agape found in 1 John 4:8 is connected to the word love in Galatians 5:22. The fruit of love (and all of the fruit of the Spirit) is produced by the Spirit.

Rooted in Love

If the Spirit of God in us produces fruit in our lives, how do we enjoy His love to us and share His love with others?

Ephesians 3:16-19 powerfully states, “I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge — that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

When we are rooted and establish in love, we have the power of Christ. I love the emphasis on the Trinity within this portion of Scripture. Through His Spirit in our inner beings, we have strength. Christ’s love is



wide, long, high and deep. We can be filled to the measure of the fullness of God. God the Father, Son, and Spirit are loving us and leading us to love others.

A tree grows and produces fruit because it is tended to regularly. If we have a desire to grow in our love for the Lord and for others, then we need to tend to our relationship with Him. This means that we go to Him by reading His Word, praying, worshipping Him in song and words of praise, serving Him, and sharing the gospel.

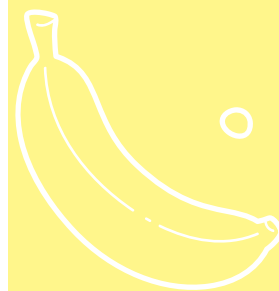
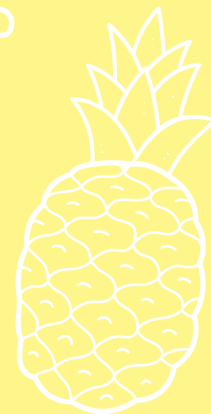
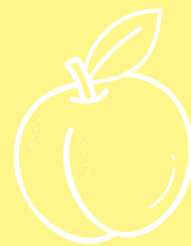
Often in our daily time with God, it can look like He is not doing much in us. However, we might look at a tree one day and then suddenly overnight notice growth and leaves as spring begins. There is a lot of work going on under the surface in our hearts – this would be the roots. Roots are responsible for delivering the nutrients to the branches in order for them to produce fruit. We may look at a tree and think, “Wow those are gorgeous branches and leaves,” when in actuality the leaves and branches are strong and vibrant because of the roots.

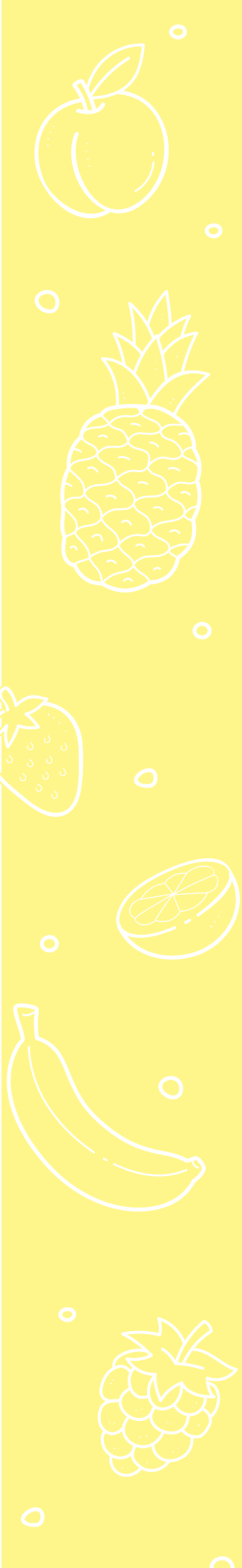
When other people witness your life, do they see the fruit of love? Or do they see a stagnant and dry tree? Are you taking time to go to the Source of love Himself? We cannot live and show agape unless we experience and receive it for ourselves. Jesus was a love offering poured out like a drink for us. His love is perfect. His love casts out fear. His love is unending.

A Different Kind of Love

What distinguishes love from the Spirit versus general love in the world? Love through the Spirit is different from the world’s love. Christ follow-

If we have a desire to grow in our love for the Lord and for others, then we need to tend to our relationship with Him.



A vertical yellow bar on the left side of the page contains white line-art illustrations of various fruits: an apple at the top, a pineapple, a strawberry, a slice of citrus, a banana, and a raspberry at the bottom. Small white circles are scattered throughout the bar.

ers who are living on mission each day will love well in their words, actions, and goals by depending on God. This does not mean that those who reject Jesus cannot love, but it comes down to the source of that love.

The reason and purpose of a believer loving others is to glorify God and to love others. Have you ever met someone who just radiated Christ's love? There is something different about them. Our prayer as believers should be that those around us see Jesus in us. No, we will not display Him perfectly, that is why He needed to come and save us. However, we can celebrate His forgiveness in our lives and be repentant to love like Jesus by His Spirit.

Genuine love of a Christian is very powerful and a wonderful springboard for gospel conversations. The way we love in our demeanor, in truth, in comfort of others, service, and in prayer can be life-changing for onlookers.

Why do you believe that the fruit of love is mentioned first? I think this was no accident. Some observe that love is foundational for the rest of the fruits of the Spirit. Jesus Himself said in Mark 12:30-31, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

As we look to the Spirit to help us bear love in our lifetimes, may we humbly receive His agape love and request that He would empower us by His Spirit to love in a way that produces beautiful fruit in our own choices and daily decisions.

Week 2: Joy

There is a woman named Joy who attends my local church body. She serves the congregation regularly in hospitality, in women's leadership and as a greeter. Anytime I see her, I cannot help but smile. She was named very accurately. She shines with a bright smile, encouraging words, and a fun personality.

Joy has not always had an easy journey. She and her husband never had the opportunity to have children of their own. In an area that could easily seem void, Joy has stepped in to be a blessing to others who have children. This is not normal; this is Spirit-filled living. Joy is not just an active church member, she is also a doula, prayer warrior, and delivers meals to new moms. She is living out the fruit of the Spirit, joy.

The fruit of joy does not always include happiness. We can be happy and have joy, however Scripture also shares that we can have joy in affliction and suffering too. This is not humanly possible, but with God, all things are possible. Let us take time to study what joy from the Holy Spirit is in the life of a believer.

Joy in the Greek

The Greek word found in Galatians 5:22 is chara. Strong's Concordance teaches that chara means "gladness, joy." It is closely connected to the word chairó which is a farewell, to be glad, rejoice, or to be calmly happy. We see the word glad tied to the word joy.

In Psalm 32, David expresses his gratitude for God's forgiveness. Psalm 32:11 says, "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous ones; And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart."

Psalm 40:16 says, "May all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; May those who love Your salvation continually say, 'The Lord be exalted!'"

Joy from the Lord does cause gladness and rejoicing in His gift of salvation.

Shout for Joy

Throughout the Bible, we see the phrase, “shout for joy.” The truth is that when we have joy in Christ, it leads us into celebration. If someone witnesses their favorite team win a game, the crowd shouts for joy in victory. How much more will we who have been saved from wrath and eternal punishment celebrate that Jesus has set us free? He has brought all who believe in Him to forgiveness and reconciled us to God. Hallelujah!

“May those shout for joy and rejoice, who take delight in my vindication; And may they say continually, ‘The Lord be exalted, Who delights in the prosperity of His servant.’”

Psalm 32:27

“May all who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; May those who love Your salvation continually say, ‘The Lord be exalted!’”

Psalm 40:16

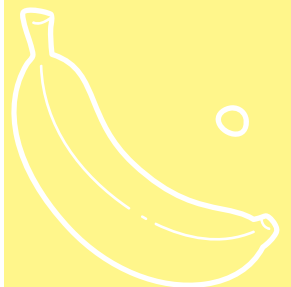
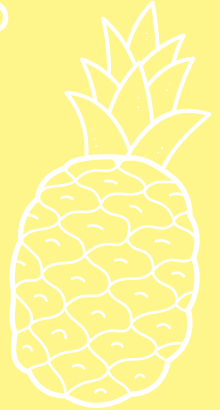
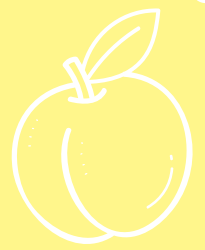
“But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness.”

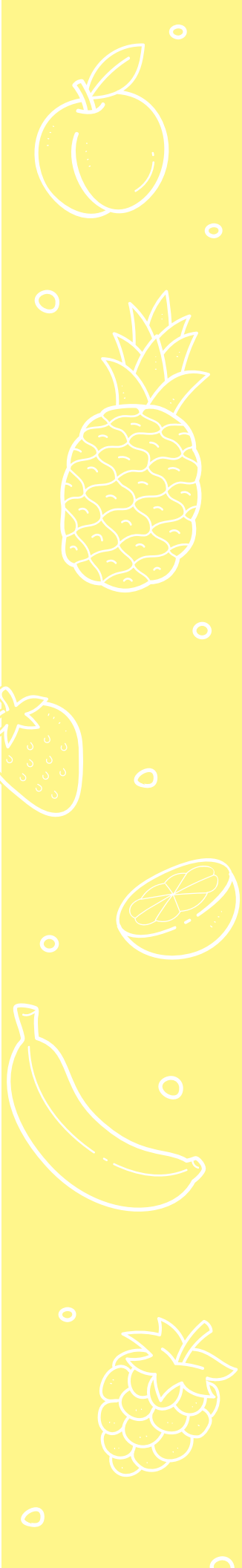
Isaiah 65:18

This Is the Day

When can we have joy? Psalm 118:24 says, “This is the day which the Lord has made; Let’s rejoice and be glad in it.”

Today, we are called by Scripture to rejoice and be glad. Each morning when I go into my son’s room to get him out of his crib, I sing “Rise and shine and give God the glory, glory.” This is taken from Isaiah 60:1. I want to train my boy to wake up with a purpose, knowing that he can glorify our risen Savior each day.





How do we have joy on the days when we feel weary, broken, or angry in life? This is where we return to the concept that joy is not just a feeling. Joy is a fruit, a product of having the Holy Spirit in your life. The Spirit never changes. The joy is always there for us to access, just like any fruit of the Spirit. However, some days it is more difficult to allow God to multiply joy in our lives. These are the times when we pray and ask the Spirit to fill us up and help us to choose joy when we do not feel like it, or honestly even want it.

Salvation Leads to Joy

We read of a beautiful Scripture found in Luke 15:7 which says, “I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need of repentance.”

Heaven has joy when one person accepts Jesus. As souls are redeemed across the world, we are confident that heaven is glad and celebrating in joy. Salvation leads to joy. The gospel of Jesus leads to joy. In Acts 13, Paul takes his first missionary journey. While he is teaching to the Gentiles about Jesus’ resurrection, many rejoiced and believed in Christ. Unfortunately, they encountered persecution. But then they simply moved on to the next place. Interestingly enough Acts 13:52 ends the chapter, “And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.”

What makes you different from everyone else around you? I would argue that the life of a believer will have a joy that is not of this world. Yes, we all have a variety of personalities with areas of strengths and weaknesses, but if we have the Holy Spirit, we should be producing joy (John 15:5). The disciples continually were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

It is one thing to have the Holy Spirit in your heart, but it is another to be filled up by the Holy Spirit each day. We have two options: to live by the flesh or to live by the Spirit. (Romans 8:4-6) The evidence of the Spirit in the life of a Christian is fruit. One of the fruits of the Spirit is joy.



Our joy is a testimony of the work of Jesus in our lives and a witness to the unbelieving world around us.

Think about a believer you know who has had consistent joy even in disappointment, injustice, sickness, or death. What about this person has been a good witness for Christ?

2 Corinthians 13:9 says, “For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete.”

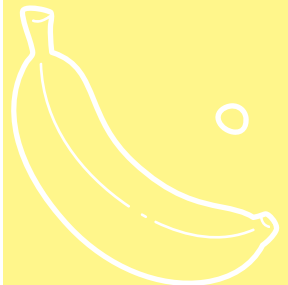
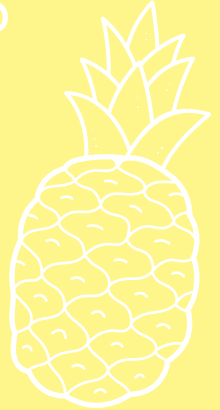
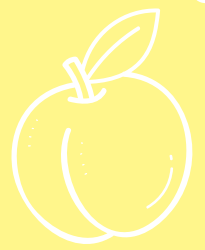
Through Christ, We Can Experience Joy

Maybe you are feeling weak right now. Talk to God about it. Tell Him how hard life is, but invite His Spirit in you to enable worship and thanksgiving in the midst of it. Glorify Jesus for the hope you have in Him. Ask Him to help you to have joy in the resurrection even if you are not happy in the current moment or are carrying your cross today.

Hebrews 12:2 says it well, “Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Jesus suffered with the joy set before Him in mind. Maybe right now does not feel joyful or hopeful. However, when we are in Christ, we can share in His joy. Jesus focused on the future in heaven. He set his mind on things above. We too, have His Spirit and the ability to do this as well. No matter what trials or celebrations, joy is available to us and can be multiplied.

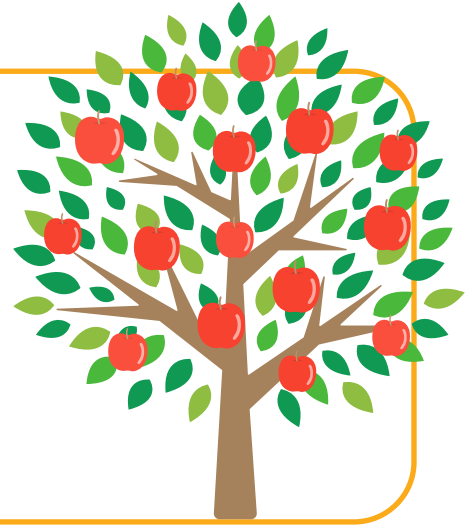
One day, Revelation 19:7 tells us that we will be glad and rejoice, giving honor to Jesus because the marriage of the Lamb will come and we, the church, will be ready to enter eternity with our Savior. For now though, we can hold on to this future hope and celebrate the joy of salvation that we have today and forever.



Week 2: Study Questions

What does it look like to “choose joy,” even in trying times? List out both the joyful things in your life, and God’s promises to focus on when life gets hard.

Verse to meditate on: Psalm 16:11





Week 3: Peace

Do you have peace in your life today? Peace is one of those things that people crave. We hear it in phrases such as: “World peace,” “Peace out,” or “Don’t disturb the peace.” However, what truly is peace?

Jesus said in John 14:27 that He left His peace with us. “Peace I leave you, My peace I give you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor fearful.”

Today as we study the fruit of peace, may we remember that this is a peace different from what the world offers. Many things leave someone feeling peaceful, but only the Spirit can leave a person peace-filled.

Peace in the Greek

The Greek word found in Galatians 5:22 is eiréné and it occurs 92 times in the New Testament. It is likely from eiro; a verb which means: “peace; by implication, prosperity.” It is also seen as a noun according to the New Testament Greek Lexicon, meaning, “A state of national tranquility, peace between individuals, security, and salvation.”

Other verses where we see eiréné (peace) include:

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

Luke 2:14

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33

“Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

Philippians 4:9



Peace is such a deep theological concept and we are only going to cover the tip of the iceberg today. However, as we ponder the variety of ways the fruit of peace plays out in our lives, we are going to specifically observe its meaning in tranquility, security, and reconciliation.

Tranquility

There is an actual sense of tranquility in the life of a believer. When a Christ follower is living by the Spirit and not the flesh, we witness words and decisions that are peaceful. This means that a Spirit-filled life leads one to be a peacemaker. Having tranquility does not mean that you are always at the spa, never endure hardship, or never encounter conflict. Tranquility is a state of confident rest which stems from identity in Christ. I am at peace in my soul because I have Jesus and because I have Jesus I can have His peace provided in every moment.

2 Corinthians 3:17 says, “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

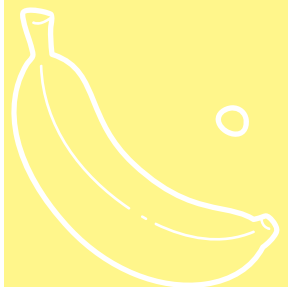
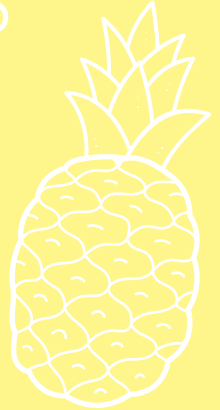
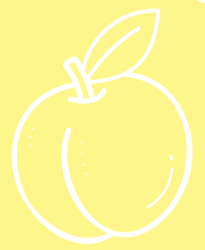
Jesus has set all believers free in Him. His Spirit leads to our freedom. His Spirit produces the fruit of peace. The life of a believer does not have to be quiet, but the presence of a believer will exhibit stability and rest in the Savior.


Security

This leads us into security. Have you ever been around someone insecure in their relationship? Have you ever been the person who was insecure in a relationship? It’s not a pretty sight. It is exhausting, unpredictable, and messy. There is a lack of confidence and trust. We were not secure the moment Adam and Eve sinned in the garden. Our confident relationship with God was compromised by our own disobedience. This led to wobbly territory.


“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”

Matthew 27:24







Jesus calls Himself the Rock in Matthew 21:42-43. He says that the kingdom will be “given to a people who will produce its fruit.” How interesting that after sharing how He would be the Cornerstone, Jesus shares that He would give the kingdom to people who would produce fruit. The Holy Spirit has secured the lives of all believers in Jesus. Through Him we produce this fruit.



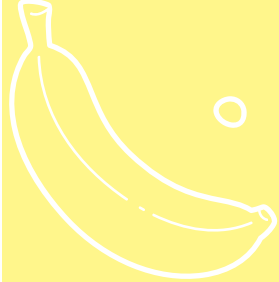
We can have peace in the power of the cross and resurrection of Jesus. We can have peace in the confidence of our eternal home in Heaven. We can have peace in the sealing of the Holy Spirit as a downpayment for our future (Ephesians 1:14-16).

Many times, we do not display peace in our lives because we lack security. Think about nations who do not trust one another. They are unstable and cause rumors of war. Or companies that have questionable leadership leads to whispers about layoffs. Or a young child squeezing a parent’s hand to walk, holding on so tightly, afraid that he will fall?




In the armor of God, one weapon is referred to as the “shoes of peace” (Ephesians 6:15). Jesus has commissioned us to rest in our relationship with Him and to walk forward with the shoes of peace. Walking implies movement and having purpose or direction. Being secure in our identity as children of God empowers us to live by His Spirit and walk in peace.

Reconciliation



Unfortunately, our sin has kept us away from God. He is perfectly holy and we are unholy. Since we are sinners, we are in need of a Savior who can reconcile us back to God. Only God Himself could do this by taking on the form of a man and living and dying in our place (Philippians 2:7). Jesus is the Mediator between us and God (1 Timothy 2:5).



Consider how you have felt when a relationship was broken? Did you feel shattered? Unstable? Lost? Overwhelming hurt? Whatever it may have been, how did (or would have) reconciliation made a difference?



If you do not have peace in your life and you have never personally accepted Jesus' gift of salvation, then you do not have reconciliation with the Lord. You lack peace in your life because the fruit of peace stems from reconciliation with God.

Take a moment right now. Stop reading and tell Jesus that you have sinned against Him. Ask Jesus to forgive you for your sins and tell Him that you accept Him as Savior for your life. Ask Him to come into your heart and thank Him for His free gift of salvation and eternal life in heaven. If you prayed that prayer, please tell someone in your life who is a believer in Jesus. They can celebrate and begin this journey of new life with you!

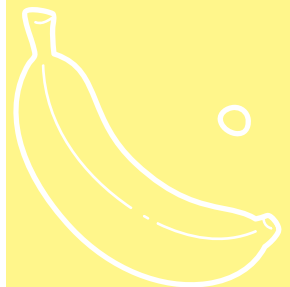
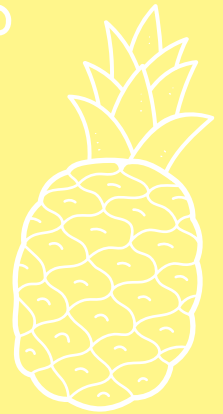
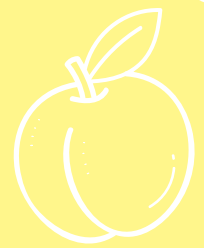
If you have Jesus as your Savior, let this be a reminder of the covenant that He made with us. You and I did not do anything to reconcile the relationship. It was all Jesus. He gave us His righteousness.

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation."

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

If you feel like the fruit of peace is not very present in your life, consider this, the enemy has always been a fruit thief. Think back to the garden of Eden. He wanted to steal the relationship of peace and persuaded the woman to take the fruit and eat with her husband. Just like he was stealing fruit back then, Satan wants to steal your peace. He wants to tell you the lie that you are not tranquil, secure, or reconciled. However, Jesus tells you that you are all of these things.

Peace is a beautiful and complex fruit that is produced by the Holy Spirit. We have access to it every moment of every day. Our salvation is secure. Our souls can rest in our great God. May He fill you up with His peace today and always.



Week 4: *Patience*

People often joke that you should never pray for more patience (or forbearance). Why would we request roadblocks and waiting in our lives? When was the last time that you prayed for patience? We should desire to produce all of the fruits of the Spirit, and patience is one of them.

Praying for patience does not guarantee we are going to sit in hour long traffic or never get a turn at the checkout line. Even if those things happened, we know that desiring to have lives that are Spirit-filled and emulate Christ are worthy of our pursuit. Today we will study the fruit of patience.

Patience in the Greek

The Greek word found in Galatians 5:22 is makrothumia. It means, "Patience, long-suffering." Patience involves suffering, and Jesus was a man who suffered much (1 Peter 4:1). We, as believers, are invited into that suffering with Him.

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me'" (Matthew 16:24). Personally, I do not like the word long connected with suffering. I prefer short and over. However, what is the greater work of the Spirit within us when He gives us more time? The longer our child has the tantrum, the more we realize that we cannot parent well without His help. The longer the wait for our dream job, the more grateful we are when we have the opportunity. The longer we go through sickness, the more humble we become in the process.

Lack of Patience Can Lead to Other Sins

Impatience can lead us to a multitude of sins. A few that come to mind include:



- Hurtful words
- Evil thoughts
- Bitterness
- Stealing
- Adultery
- Rage

Pastor John Piper once said, “Impatience is a form of unbelief. It’s what we begin to feel when we start to doubt the wisdom of God’s timing or the goodness of his guidance. It springs up in our hearts when the road to success gets muddy, or strewn with boulders, or blocked by some fallen tree.”

Just this morning I took my toddler son out into the garage to put on his shoes that were in the car. I had to get my purse with the keys to unlock the car. As I carried him with me to place the purse back inside of the house, he melted down, screaming and kicking. He wanted to go outside right then and thought that I was taking him back inside. But I simply needed my purse to be in the house. I told him what I was doing as he protested, and then finally after I closed the door and we headed out to the yard, he calmed down.

My son wanted his way right then. However, I knew things that he did not. I needed to protect my purse and my car from being stolen. Sure, the odds of that are low, but I needed to be wise.

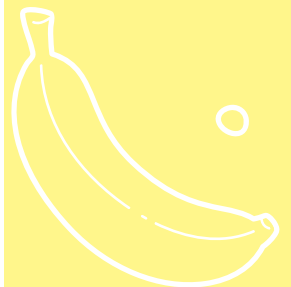
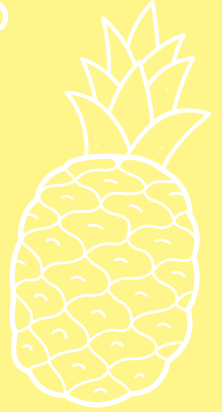
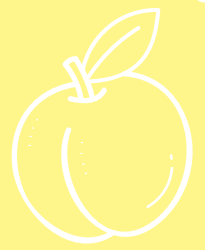
How often will we protest at God for a seemingly frustrating, long-suffering situation?

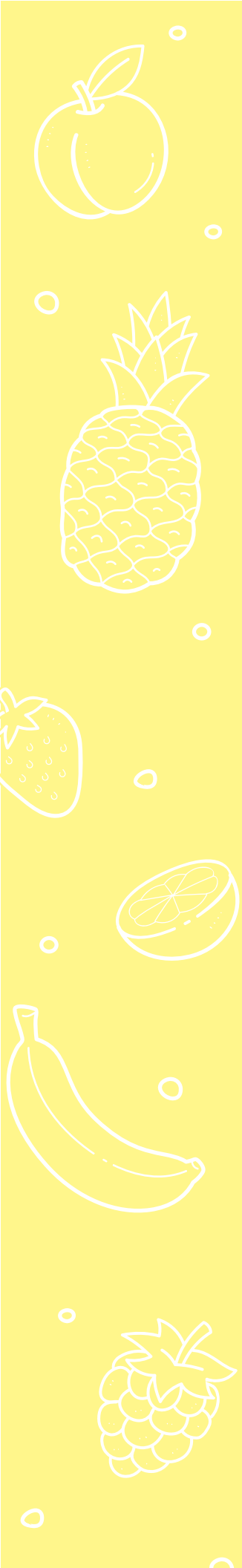
We wrestle with thoughts such as:

“Why is He taking so long to answer the prayer the way that I want?”

“God, I am supposed to be going this direction, why are you taking me this way instead?”

“Jesus, do you even hear me or see me right now?”





We are the “spiritual toddlers” when our impatience gets the best of us. We react as if it is a life-or-death situation, but Jesus is just stopping by the kitchen on our way to the backyard. He is so faithful. He is with us. He sees things that we cannot understand. When He asks us to be patient, it is for reasons like refining us more into His image, building character and steadfastness in our lives, becoming testimonies to others, and growing our faith in Him regardless of our circumstances.

“But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

James 1:4

Eternal Perspective

2 Corinthians 4:17 says, “For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

How can our troubles be called “light and momentary?” We face sickness, unmet longings, thorns of sin, relational brokenness, grief, and more. Our troubles seem endless and overwhelming. Our prayers appear to be unanswered. Our patience is running thin. That is the problem. Our own patience will never get us through. We have to rely on Spirit-filled patience.

Did you expect to suffer less as a Christian? Sometimes, I think I don’t always realize what I have signed up for. Most of the first disciples were martyred for their faith in Jesus. People lose families, jobs, friends, financial security, all for the sake of Christ. We battle demonic forces. We battle our own sin nature. It can be exhausting. It can seem long. However, Jesus already has given us the victory. We have won.

On days when our patience is running low, may we have the boldness to cry out to God and ask Him to provide us with the fruit we are not living out and frankly do not even desire. Patience is hard. Patience is stretching. But patience is good and patience is holy.



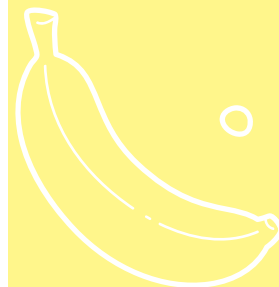
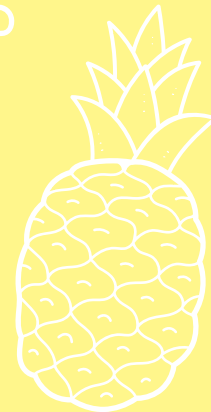
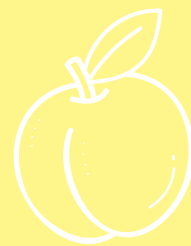
Many times, I find myself trying to be patient for my own dreams or desires. When the Spirit of God and His Word guides me, I am reminded that my dreams are valuable to Him, but He is the ultimate dream. I have everything that I need in Him. Right now, I do not have to wait on the Messiah, He has already come. I do not have to wait for the Spirit, I have Him. I do not have to wait for freedom, it is mine.

When I am tempted to be impatient, may I remember and thank God for all of the ways that He has already provided for me. There are so many things that I do not have to wait for anymore. His salvation is here. His mercy is now.

“And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”

1 Peter 5:10

Your waiting and patience may not feel like “a little while” right now. However, when you have Jesus, you can cling to the hope that He is the God of all grace and will restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. Your patience will be rewarded. Your long-awaited Savior will return. We do still eagerly await the day when Jesus will come back for us. Until then, we can rely on His strength to live out the fruit of patience each day for His glory and a testimony of His love for the world.



Week 5: Kindness

Kindness is a word that can often mean different things to different people. If I were to ask you what kindness means, what would you say?

I once served in the Kindness room for the children's ministry at our church. They named each room after a fruit of the Spirit. I found it humorous that each room really connected with any area that is needed for that room. For instance, the newborns were love, the 2's named patience, and my classroom – the 3's – was named kindness.

At the age of 3, children are really discovering their voices and desiring more independence. Often unkind words or actions were performed by these children. I had in the back of my mind to model kindness to them. They needed to experience and see the genuine love of Christ shown to them.

Today, we will continue our study on the fruit of the Spirit. I recently received an encouraging email with the great reminder that the word fruit is singular. I want to affirm that all of these characteristics are accessed by the Holy Spirit. We have all of them because we have Jesus. They are all the fruit of a Christian's life. Today we will focus on the specific area of kindness in our lives.

Kindness in the Greek

The Greek word found in Galatians 5:22 is *chrēstotēs*. It means, “gentleness, goodness, kindness. From *chrestos*; usefulness, i.e. Morally, excellence (in character or demeanor).”

Chrēstotēs appears in two other Scripture verses:

“Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.”

Romans 11:22



“But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Titus 3:4-7

Kindness Is a Noun

The word kindness is a noun. It is something that a person possesses. God is kindness; there is no unkindness found in Him. The amazing part of the gospel is that we are unkind. We have thought, lived out, and said unkind things in our lives. We are sinful. God is not. He has thought, lived out, and said kind things.

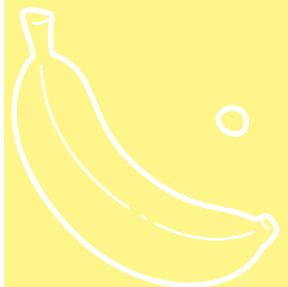
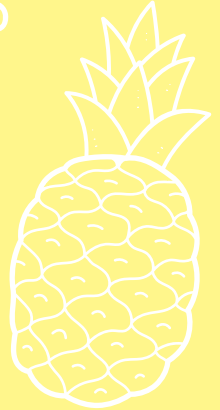
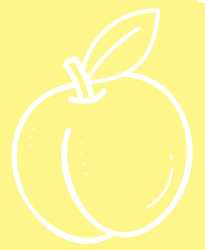
You might be thinking about times in the Bible when God has disciplined or even wiped out much of humanity because of evil. How could He still be kind? Since kindness is a noun, it is who He is and it leads Him to action.

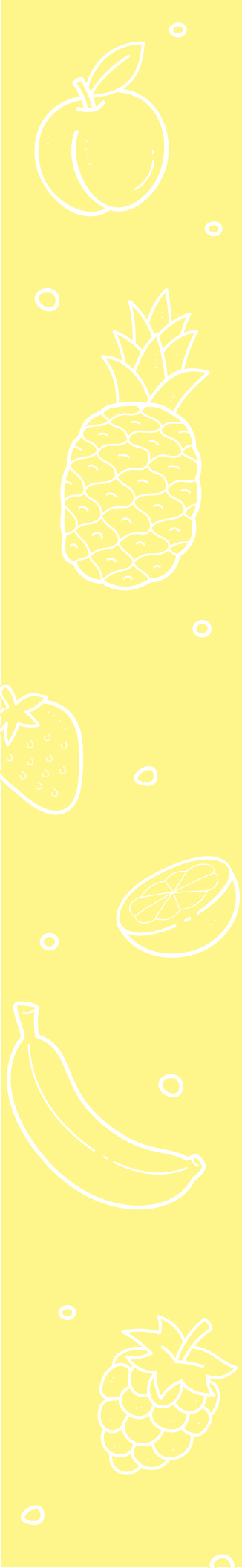
Kindness is justice. Think about a horrible legal case that you know of right now. What injustices have taken place? Kindness and sternness are revealed in Romans 11:22. He is kind, but He is also stern. He is stern because He is kind. Just as He is love, but He is just.

Kindness Leads to Action and Good Deeds

Titus 3:4-7 reveals the kindness of God through the gift of salvation to all who believe in Him. It beautifully says in verse 4, “But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared.”

His kindness came to us. Jesus, the incarnate deity, came to earth to show us the greatest act of kindness and love on the cross at Calvary. Death was defeated and not only that, by the Holy Spirit we too can have access to the fruit of kindness. We can live out and be kind to others in a way that is out of this world. This means that we can live with





attitudes of willingness, character and discipline. We can go out of our way to bless other people with our time, words, finances, and prayers.

When someone is living out sinful or hurtful ways, we can show the kindness – the mercy of God – that He has shown to us. This is an impossible task in our own strength. We are only able to show kindness because we have received Christ’s kindness. Matthew 5:43-44 says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Love motivates us to be kind. We can only show acts of kindness to our enemies and those who hate us by the power of the Spirit and the Word of God changing our hearts and lives. When we realize that we did not deserve kindness from God, but punishment, we are much more aware of how small a task it is in comparison to show kindness out of His love to others. We have been given much.

Is Kindness Acceptance or Support?

A lot of times in today’s culture, kindness can be attached to the concept of acceptance and support. Everything is about “you do you” or “what you feel is truth for you.” We have a very individualistic culture. This is dangerous. It abuses kindness. It takes kindness out of the context of what God intended.

Kindness is not tolerance; kindness is truth in love. Kindness is mercy. Kindness is not above the boundaries of the law that the Lord has set into place for our good and His glory. Kindness is living out the gospel that we have all sinned and fall short of His glory, but Jesus came to us, (God in flesh) to make a way to be sin for us so we could have His righteousness.

The definition of kindness includes moral excellence. If we have no morals because each person decides his own morals, then we have no standard and there is no true kindness. Kindness is living above a standard. It is moral excellence. Moral values matter, so when anyone tries

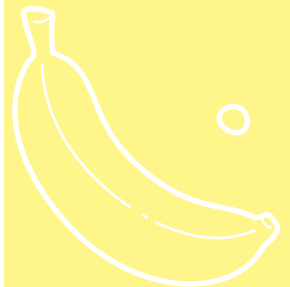
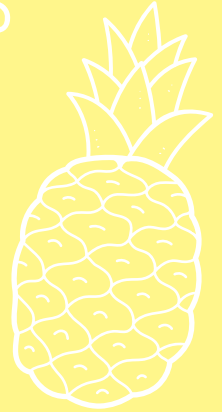
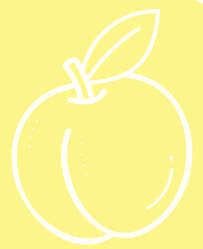


to attach a concept created by God and twists it into what they would like it to be, this is wrong. It is sin. Kindness leads to righteousness.

We can still be kind to people we disagree with though. This is the whole point of Matthew 5:43-44. Kindness is not equivalent to agreeing with someone else, it is a matter of showing sacrificial love through our thoughts, words, and deeds. This means if a man hates Jesus and you, then you can be kind to him by praying for him, saying kind words, and showing him the love of Christ. This means if someone lives opposite from God's Bible, you can still be friends, show kind deeds, encourage him and pray for him.

Romans 2:4 says it best, "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and restraint and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"

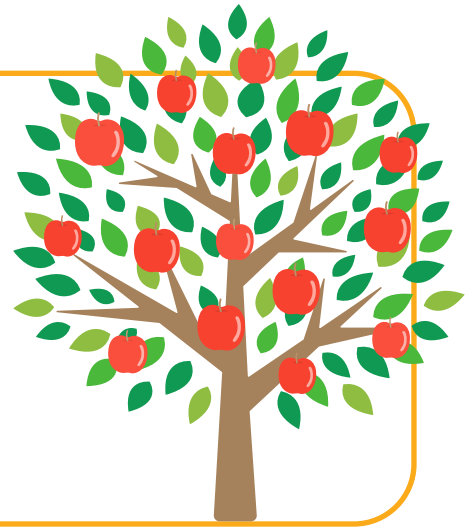
The kindness of Jesus has led us to repentance. Our hope and prayer is that when we live out the fruit of kindness to others, that it too will lead them to repentance and freedom in Christ. May His kindness be what we think on, speak out, and show to all we encounter.



Week 5: Study Questions

Where do you see examples of kindness in the Bible, or in God Himself? Who do you have in your life who could use a little extra kindness this week?

Verse to meditate on: Luke 6:35



Week 6: Goodness

Goodness is a high compliment in the life of a Christian. In fact, all of humanity is told that we were created in the image of our Creator, and it was very good (Genesis 1:31). When we think about God's intent for our design, He created us to be good. He desired that we would share in His goodness. He wanted us to live out of the identity that we were made in His image.

Today, we will explore the fruit of the Spirit, goodness. What does this fruit mean? How do we truly live this out in such an evil world?

Goodness in the Greek

The Greek word found in Galatians 5:22 is *agathosune*. It means, "to do good." It is more commonly used as "intrinsic goodness, especially as a personal quality, with stress on the kindly (rather than the righteous) side of goodness."

I find this interesting that goodness is closely tied to kindness. As we studied kindness last week, the two go hand in hand. Kindness and goodness are both qualities and actions. They are purity of heart, mind, and deed. I would argue that goodness is taking kindness to the next level. Kindness is sweet and caring, where goodness is just plain blessing someone, going out of the way to do good for another.

Jesus did this for us. He left His home in heaven to tell us that He was the Way, and to die in our places. He rose from the grave for our sins. He is good.

Agathosune is also seen in Romans 15:14, Ephesians 5:9, and 2 Thessalonians 1:11.



Goodness That Marks the Life of a Believer

When pondering the word goodness, I cannot help but think about how no one is good except God alone (Luke 18:19). Apart from the Holy Spirit inside of believers, we are not good. Many people in the world like to assume that they are good because they might have moments when they reflect the goodness of God. However, we all have sinned.

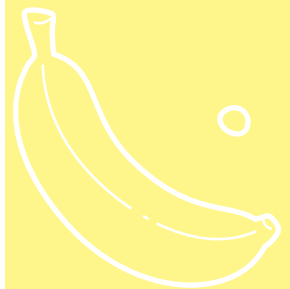
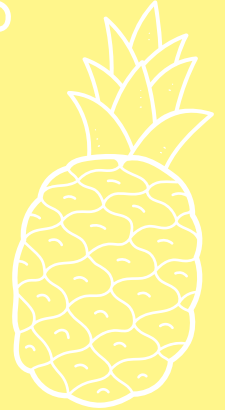
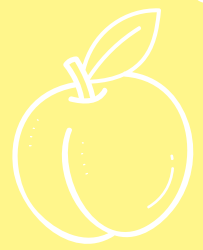
Jesus is completely good. There is no bad in him at all. When we reflect on His goodness, we know that He is forever unchanging. We are fickle human beings. There might be moments of goodness, but our flesh can quickly take over and we can operate out of evil.

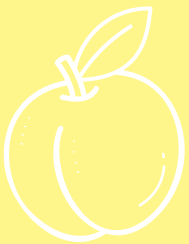
There is the famous saying, “A few bad apples spoil the bunch.” We might offer a lot of good apples in this life, but our sin spoils it. We are not good; we are corrupted by the devil and our flesh (Romans 3:23).

We have a sin nature. Even when we do something good for another, many times it is out of underlying selfishness or prideful gain. Jesus is the only one who has ever been perfectly good. He modeled goodness by sacrificing his life, not only for his friends, but for His enemies. Can we show goodness to those who do not deserve it?

I think about my own son. He can choose to be good or bad. He is only a year and half old; he does not understand right from wrong yet, but I see it within his thoughts and actions. If I tell him not to touch something, I can see the wheels of temptation turning as he looks and contemplates going to touch it. Then, I can visibly witness him going over to disobey. I see him throw a tantrum when he does not get what he wants when he wants it. He is wrestling with the present evil in his life.

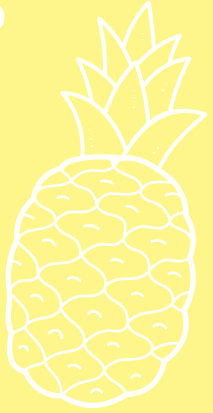
Jesus modeled goodness by sacrificing his life, not only for his friends, but for his enemies. Can we show goodness to those who do not deserve it?






He is created very good in the image of God and I love him with all that I am, but he is in a sinful world and soon enough he will come to understand good and bad.


The Spirit Produces Goodness



If we want to live out the goodness of God, we need to be filled up by the Holy Spirit every day. There is a vast difference from being saved by grace and living a Spirit-filled life. The Spirit of God can empower us to live holy lives. We do this through Him and for His glory. When we show goodness or live out righteously, those around us will see the testimonies of Christ in us. He is the hope of glory. He is the Great I Am. He is the Good Shepherd.



When we remember John 10:11-18, it tells us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd. It causes us to ponder Psalm 23. The Lord Jesus is our Good Shepherd. He is not just called Shepherd, but Good Shepherd. A good shepherd is described in John 10:11, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” Good here is sacrificial.




John 10:14 says, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.” Good here is relational. He knows us and we know Him. Our relationship with God is good because of Jesus. He knows us fully and loves us deeply. We are the sheep of His pasture, and He cares for us.

How Are You Exhibiting and Experiencing the Goodness of God?



I love the chorus in the song, Goodness of God, which says:

*“All my life you have been faithful, all my life you have been so, so good.
With every breath that I am able, I will sing of the goodness of God.”*



The bridge then sings out that Christ’s goodness is running after us. God is good. It is part of His character just like the rest of the fruit of the



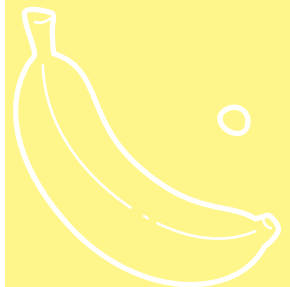
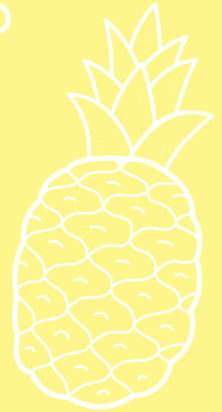
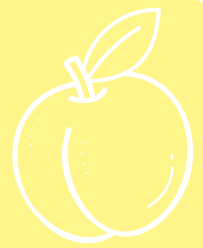
Spirit. Just like an orange grows from an orange tree, goodness comes from God. He is the foundation. His Spirit produces goodness and all of the other fruit of the Spirit.

How has His goodness transformed your own life? How have you been changed by His pursuit of you?

2 Thessalonians 1:11 says, “With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith.”

May the goodness of God motivate us to fruit-filled actions. May we be in prayer for ourselves and others as we live out our callings in this life. His power leads to fruition. I love that the word fruit is in fruition. Fruition means enjoyment or to bear fruit. His power by the Holy Spirit within our hearts leads us to the fruit of the Spirit and faithful lives. We have failed, made bad choices, and thought sinful things. However, Jesus came so that we could bear fruit and be transformed into His likeness.

Maybe you feel far from the word good. Start by remembering that God created you very good. Know that Jesus has pursued you through His goodness. Trust that the Holy Spirit is bringing goodness to fruition in your life as a believer. The goodness that we show will amaze the world because Jesus is, in fact, good.



Week 6: Study Questions

How has God's goodness transformed your own life? How have you been changed by His pursuit of you?

Verse to meditate on: Nahum 1:7



Week 7: Faithfulness

If someone says that you are faithful, that is a beautiful compliment. When I think about the word faithful, I ponder a person who is loyal, dedicated, punctual, and a true friend. Webster's Dictionary defines faithful as "steadfast in affection or allegiance, firm in adherence to promises, true to the facts, and full of faith."

These truly are only qualities that can be perfectly displayed by Jesus. Someone might have great faithfulness to a country, a boss, family or friends. However, it will never be done perfectly because we are only human. The Holy Spirit within the heart of a believer helps a person to have an "out of this world" faithfulness.

Faithfulness in the Greek

The Greek word found in Galatians 5:22 is *pistis*. It is seen many times throughout the New Testament. Why? Because faith is an essential part of the Christian life. I love how the definition above shares that to be faithful is to be steadfast. It is not easy to remain loyal to Jesus because, like Peter the disciple, we fail Him. However, He has remained perfectly faithful to us.

"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

John 15:4-5

I am pondering this verse as we discuss faithfulness because in order to be faithful as believers, we must remain in Christ. We can remain faithful to Jesus if we are abiding in Him. We humbly accept the fact that, apart from Him, we cannot have faithfulness to Him, because we can do nothing of eternal significance without Him.



“Your Faith Has Made You Well”

Many times, we read the word *pistis* in moments of healing from Jesus. The phrase, “Your faith has made you well” is spoken in Matthew 9:22, Mark 5:34, Luke 10:52, Luke 18:42, and others. Romans 4:9 teaches that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteous. Romans 10:17 teaches that faith comes from hearing. If someone has told you about the gospel, this leads to you placing your faith (and your trust) in Jesus.

Think about someone who goes skydiving. The rookie is strapped to an unknown instructor, in whom you must place a lot of faith as they take their leap together. In a greater way, we are the rookies, and though we do not see God, we know He exists. We know He loves us, He has

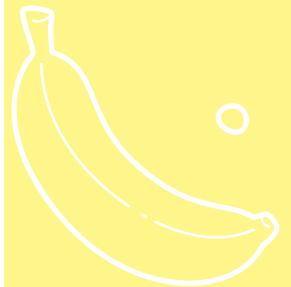
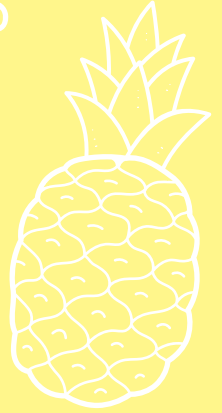
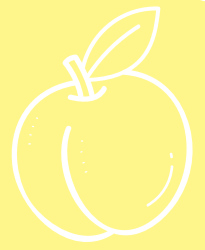
given us His Word and His life on the cross through Jesus. He gives us His Holy Spirit when we place our faith in Him. Jesus is our Healer, but we have a response to accept Him and place our faith in Him.

It is adventurous, exhilarating, challenging, and hope-filled to be a follower of Jesus.

To be faithful means to trust. If I did not trust a skydiving instructor, I would not strap myself to him. However, if I trusted him, I would go in faith, knowing that he

knows what to do to keep us safe in the unknown jump. God knows all and He is worthy of our faith. He is faithful to us, He has already shown His credentials as Savior and Lord of all. We just have to attach our lives to Him and allow Him to lead us in life’s unknowns. It is adventurous, exhilarating, challenging, and hope-filled to be a follower of Jesus.

Jesus did the work on the cross, but when we place our faith in Him, our faith makes us well. We are spiritually healed from the sickness of sin and eternal punishment. We are free and we are whole.



How Are You Growing in Faithfulness?

Faith is also a spiritual gift. Maybe you are like me and faith is lower on your list of strengths. However, when we have the Holy Spirit, faithfulness is accessible and part of our lives. We can go to Him in our weaknesses and ask Him to help us grow by being more faith-filled. When we believe in God and trust Him, we can go out and be steadfast, knowing who He is and who we are in Him.

This can also look very practical. Do you struggle with dedication, punctuality, or being true to your word? These are also areas to grow in faithfulness. As believers, our lives model our faith to others. If we are walking testimonies for Jesus, would people say that we model Him in how we value the time and investment of others? Is our world and our day-to-day about us, or about serving God and those around us? There absolutely is grace when we run late sometimes or when we have to change our minds on a commitment, however if this has become a trend in your life or mine, we need to re-evaluate the fruit of the Spirit of faithfulness.

We can pray and ask God to give us the steadfast gumption to seek Him daily and to let our yeses be yeses and our nos be nos. Matthew 5:37 says, "All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No' anything beyond this comes from the evil one."

Who is someone that is very faithful in your life? What are the qualities they show that reveal this trait of the Spirit? What are ways that you feel convicted to grow in faithfulness with the help of God? In what ways are you currently living out faithfulness?

Be Faithful through Christ

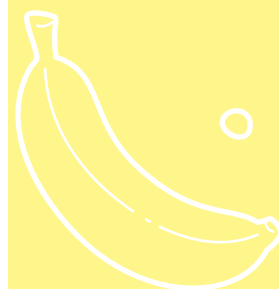
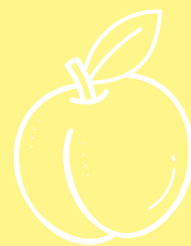
Celebrate and be willing to change. We are all being refined into the image of our Savior Jesus. None of us have been perfectly faithful, but Jesus has done it for us. I would like to end with this closing thought. Peter was the disciple through whom Jesus said He would start the

church, however Peter went on to deny Jesus three times at his death on the cross. Peter acted in fear. However, after Jesus returned from the dead, He had a redemptive conversation with Peter over breakfast. He asked him three times if he loved Him. He referred to him as his original name Simon before he was called Peter.

“He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ and he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’”

John 21:17

Maybe you need a reminder that you need to feed Jesus’ sheep by being faithful today? Remember that even if your faith has been weak in the past or you have even denied Jesus, the Spirit of the Living and Victorious Savior lives in You. We can have lives that are full of faithfulness through the help of His Spirit.



Week 7: Study Questions

When has God faithfully led you through a situation, even when you didn't know how things would turn out? How has He provided for you in your life?

Verse to meditate on: 2 Timothy 2:13



Week 8: Gentleness

I hope that my son grows up one day to be a gentleman. When we hear that term, we often think about manners such as holding the door or saying, “Please” and “thank you.” However, we also see “gentle” in the word gentleman. Many times, we think of gentleness as a quality seen in a quiet and shy woman. This is not always the case. If I were to name the top three most gentle people I know, my husband would actually be the first to fall into this honorable position.

I believe that gentleness is true strength. It is living like Jesus and not allowing emotions or stubbornness to get in the way of a surrendered life. Today, we are going to study more about true gentleness found in the Bible.

Gentleness in the Greek

The Greek word found in Galatians 5:22 is *prautēs*. It means, “Mildness, gentleness” or “gentle strength which expresses power with reserve.”

Prautēs is also found in 1 Corinthians 4:21, 1 Timothy 6:11, 2 Timothy 2:25, and 1 Peter 3:15.

I love how gentleness is shared as gentle strength. When we ponder the strongest people we know, many times it is not the most physically tough who come to our minds. It is people who have endured hardship, remained faithful, or endured in character when everyone around them failed. Strength is more than meets the eye.

Jesus Modeled Perfect Gentleness

Scripture tells us in Isaiah 53:2b, “He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him.” This is the description of Jesus, the incarnate God. There was apparent-

ly nothing flashy about his looks. People may not have thought of Him as a strong man. However, we know that He was the strongest man to ever live.

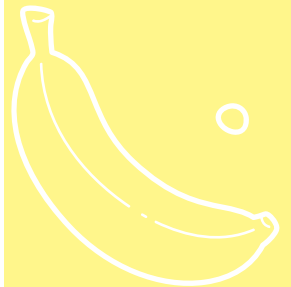
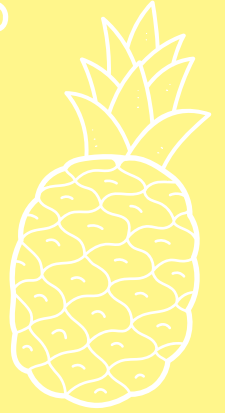
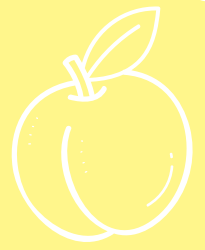
Jesus is God. He exhibited gentle strength in every sense of the Word. When a Pharisee mocked Him, He could have put him in his place, but Jesus restrained. When He was whipped without cause, Jesus could have broken the whip with one word. When he was dying on the cross and people teased Him, Jesus could have proven them wrong and lived, but He chose to die for our sins. When Jesus knew that He was the Messiah, He could have proved it point-blank when people were harsh and unwilling to listen, but He chose gentleness. He had full power with full reserve.

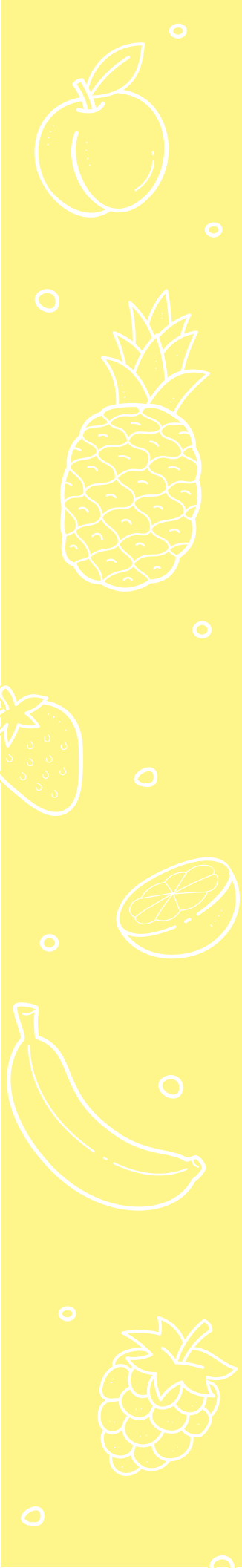
What Does Gentleness Look Like Practically?

This causes us to ponder how gentleness is a Spirit-led fruit that often appears in trying situations. When we are tested with impatience, or when we are angry, gentleness is not our natural sinful tendency. We speak out in harsh words, we use sarcasm, we speak in unkind tones, or we push and push until we get our way. Jesus was concerned with God's will. Jesus was kingdom-focused. We too, as believers in Christ, are called to have the same mindset as Jesus. His Spirit within us enables us to respond and speak in ways that are set apart from the world.

I think about parents who have children nagging and pushing them to the breaking point. It can be easy to blow up at a child and discipline in an ungodly way. I think about teachers who are given authority in the classroom and can easily abuse that power if they are not careful.

I think about leaders who have a lot of influence and responsibility with their words and actions, but fail to live in gentleness and humility. I think about myself, in all of the ways that I have failed in the area of gentleness by not taking my emotions to God, neglecting to seek to live by the Spirit, or believing that, "I cannot be gentle in a situation as frustrating as this!"





Grace meets us at the cross of Jesus. His mercy is new every morning. His Spirit is always with us. We can be filled up with His Spirit to live by His will daily.

Some opposites of gentleness found in Webster's Dictionary include: harshness, hardness, rigidity, severity, inflexibility, insensitivity, and irritability. Would any of those be said of our Savior Jesus? No. His entire life proved otherwise. Would any of those be said of you and me?

Look at that list again. In which of these areas do you feel conviction from the Holy Spirit that you are not living a gentle life? Pray and ask the Spirit to help you to die to that way of living and to cling to Him for transformation into His likeness.

We the church are called the bride of Christ. We are before Him with unveiled faces. This means that when we come to the altar, He sees us for who we truly are – a terrifying moment, however He has come to give us a new name just like a bride takes on the name of her groom. We are His forever in a covenant. Once we accept Him as Savior, we are transformed into His likeness by the work of His Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18 says, "But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit."

Gentleness is not impossible for anyone who is saved by Jesus. Gentleness is not natural to anyone, but by the work of the Spirit in our lives, we will produce more and more of it in our lives.

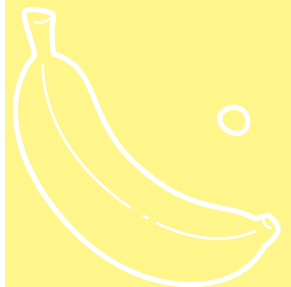
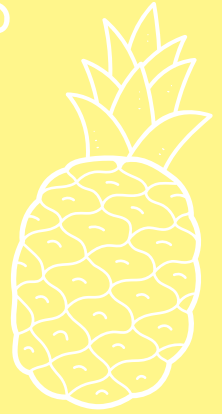
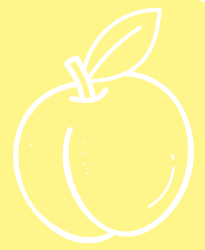
How Are You Growing in Gentleness?

Is gentleness something that comes easier to you like my husband? If so, that is incredible, keep pressing into the Spirit and allowing Him to use you for His glory. Ask God to search your heart in any ways that you are not exhibiting gentleness.

Is gentleness more challenging for you? If so, please know that we all fall short and sin. We all have struggle areas, but this is where the Holy Spirit does some of His most beautiful transformative work. Ask Him to refine you and remove the areas in which you are not gentle. Pray, learn the Scriptures, and slow down to see people around you. Everyone is going through something, we just are not always aware of it. When we live gently, we build trust to engage in gospel conversations and precious relationships. It creates a stronger witness for Christ when we live like He did in this way.

This week, think about someone you have not modeled gentleness to recently. Pray about how to apologize and move forward. Seek a new season in the relationship to start leaning on the Spirit for gentleness.

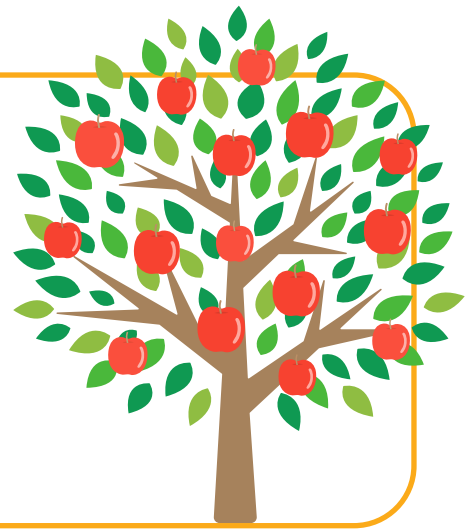
Ask Jesus to help you see the value in gentle strength, and not what the world would define as powerful and strong. Pray for eyes to see eternal value in character and a harvest of Spiritual fruit in your life, including the ever-important spiritual fruit of gentleness.



Week 8: Study Questions

In what ways can gentleness actually be strength? Write out a prayer for God to help you to prioritize gentleness in a harsh world this week.

Verse to meditate on: Ephesians 4:2



Week 9: Self-Control

“There is that donut shop again.” Passing by causes my mouth to water just thinking about the homemade fresh and fluffy maple glazed donuts or the specialty vanilla coconut one. No one quite does it like my hometown shop. If one of those donuts is sitting in my kitchen, it is not going to take much for me to eat one. My solution, you may ask? Don’t buy them, don’t bring them in the house, do not even look in the direction of the donut shop while driving by. I am completely aware that I lack self-control when it comes to one of those donuts.

I recently heard Pastor Greg Laurie share on his podcast that when we read about Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, we notice that they are already hanging out at the tree they were told not to eat from by God. Laurie comically shares how it is unwise to place ourselves in tempting situations.

Maybe it is not food that challenges you. Perhaps it is shopping, bingeing tv, social media, your work, or your temper? Whatever you cannot seem to get under control is a sin issue. We all need the help of the Holy Spirit within us.

Today, we will conclude our study on the Fruit of the Spirit with the fruit of self-control.

Self-Control in the Greek

The Greek word found in Galatians 5:23 is *enkrateia*. It comes from the other Greek word: *egkrateia*, which means “mastery, self-control.” *Enkrateia* only appears in one other Scripture, 2 Peter 1:6.

“For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you



from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.”

2 Peter 1:4-9

Self-control ultimately leads to love. This is a quality of a believer in Jesus. This is increasing in the life of a Christian. However, if we lack self-control, we are being ineffective and unfruitful. Notice it does not say that we are ineffective; our identity has not changed, but our obedience has wavered, so we miss the fruit. An apple tree that produces one apple is still an apple tree. The tree's identity has not changed, however, its effectiveness has changed.

We can become blinded and we can forget that Jesus has cleansed us from our former sins. Christ wants us to have self-control, because self-control is a side-effect of freedom.

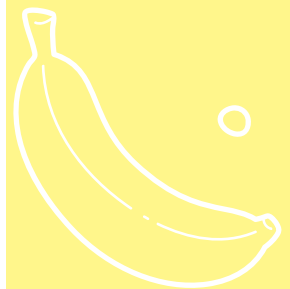
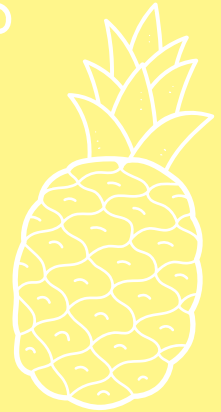
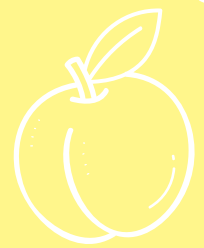
Master Sin or It will Master You


“If you do well, will your face not be cheerful? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”

Genesis 4:7

When I think of the word desire, I consider a strong passion that overtakes you. Basically, think of your most tempting situation pursuing you constantly. If that sin continues to lurk at the door and you do not master it, you will be overtaken.


This is how Christian families are destroyed by extramarital affairs. This is how someone who is depressed ends up addicted to food. This is how ignored anger leads to yelling or high blood pressure. Sin overtakes us. The enemy is a genius when it comes to enticing us and tempting us. The serpent came to Eve in an appealing way. He had her question her Creator. He tempted her with control to be “like God.” Adam and Eve






could not master their sins of passivity, pride, and lust. Instead, they sinned. They were mastered by evil.

We too, have been mastered by evil. However, Jesus has already dealt with our sins on the cross.




“The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in loving devotion. He will not always accuse us, nor harbor His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins or repaid us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His loving devotion for those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He is mindful that we are dust.”

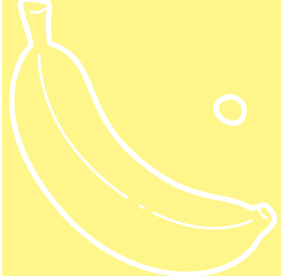
Psalm 103:8-14




The Lord is self-controlled. He loves us and is devoted to us. He has removed our sins from every angle. He is like a father who has compassion on His children. He remembers that we are dust.



Genesis 3:8-9 reminds us that God the Creator was walking in the garden. He pursued Adam and Eve with this love. He remembered that they were dust. When we let go of control and surrender to the Holy Spirit, then we can live lives of self-control.



We can show the grace of God to others when we display self-control because it is a countercultural and unnatural decision. It takes a lot of strength to say no and master our sin. Although many in the world would laugh at this lifestyle, as others look on, our self-control can be the thing that leads to curiosity and gospel conversations.



Have you ever thought if you lived with self-control, that it could be the witness that others need to experience to lead them to eternal life? Self-control was important enough to God to be one of the ways that

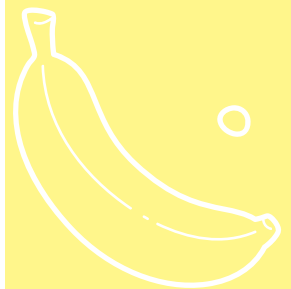
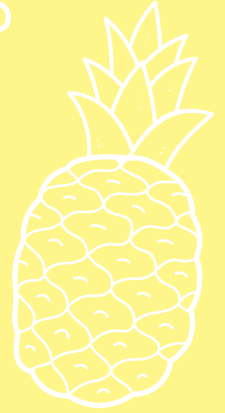
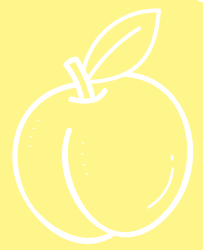


His Spirit works in the hearts of believers. The Holy Spirit is the only way that this is possible, and it is all for His glory.

How Are You Growing in Self-Control?

As we have studied self-control, may we all have a deeper appreciation for the Holy Spirit power in our lives to live surrendered to Jesus and to free us from the entanglements of sin in this world.

How can you grow in self-control this week? Where is one area where the Spirit is convicting you and desiring to help you live free? Take a moment, pray, and surrender this to the Father who has compassion on you, remembering that you are dust.



Week 9: Study Questions

Giving into temptation can feel like freedom, but it keeps us chained to our desires. What tempts you, and how can God-honoring self-control give you freedom?

Verse to meditate on: 1 Corinthians 10:13



Conclusion

Thank you for taking time to study the Fruit of the Spirit. This is a singular word, so as believers in Christ, we have access to love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. I am so grateful that our God is always working in our hearts and refining us to look more like Him each day.

Be encouraged that we are all a work in progress this side of heaven, but His Spirit is worth pursuing every day.

Emma Danzey's mission in life stems from Ephesians 3:20-21, to embrace the extraordinary. One of her greatest joys is to journey with the Lord in His Scriptures. She is wife to Drew and mom to Graham. Emma serves alongside her husband in ministry, she focuses most of her time in the home, but loves to provide articles on the Bible, life questions, and Christian lifestyle. Her article on Interracial Marriage was the number 1 on Crosswalk in 2021. Most recently, Emma released Treasures for Tots, (Scripture memory songs) and multiple books and devotionals for young children. During her ministry career, Emma has released Wildflower: Blooming Through Singleness, two worship EP albums, founded and led Polished Conference Ministries, and ran the Refined Magazine. You can view her articles on her blog at emmadanzey.wordpress.com and check out her Instagram @Emmadanzey.

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