

THE FRUITS OF THE

# *Spirit*



A DEVOTIONAL BY  
THE F3LLOWSHIP









# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT FORWARD

*It was a season of uncertainty.*

My family and I were precariously balanced between our old home in Florida and a “new-to-us” farm in North Carolina. We had money on the line, a strict deadline and a house that didn’t want to sell. And God wasn’t showing up. At least it felt like that from my perspective.

I don’t know if you’ve ever been in a situation where the future is nebulous, like facing down the entry of a dark cave, wondering what perils are ahead. This kind of uncertainty wears at the soul, at your relationships, and your emotional processing. While we waited for our house to sell, I remember entering a great slump; my marriage was tumultuous at best, my temper with the kids was short, and my home life was shaky. I felt like everyone was handing me problems and I was running out of drawers to put them in. I was like Bilbo, when he had held onto the evil ring for too long: “all thin, sort of stretched, like butter that has been scraped over too much bread” (Tolkien, 1937). I had a wake up call when one of my kids came to me for connection and all I wanted to do was shut down. “*I don’t have the emotional bandwidth for this!*”, I thought. Ironically, during this time, we were planning our launch of season three of *The Fellowship* podcast, centered on fruits of the Spirit. It hit me driving in the car, my child sitting expectantly beside me, that ironically, fruits of the Spirit were what I needed to bring to the situation in that moment.

I sat there in despair, thinking “*I don’t have love, joy, patience, and gentleness (don’t even mention self control) in this moment. I can’t show up! I can’t be who they need me to be!*”

That’s when I felt something in my inner heart lightly rumble and a gentle touch on my conscience. “*Kathryn, you don’t need to bring those things here. I can give them to you.*” I stopped my reeling, my hands on the wheel, my eyes facing the horizon like someone awakened out of a stupor. How had I forgotten this? How had I forgotten to call on Christ to help me show up for the people I love? Even when it wasn’t fair, even when I felt like I couldn’t meet my own needs let alone theirs, I finally realized: *I didn’t need to*. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul encourages us to draw on Christ’s love when our fragile humanity may want to shut others out. “I say then walk by the spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desires of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16).





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT FORWARD

Paul goes on to remind us of our responsibility in Christ, to “restore others with a gentle spirit”, and “carry one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6: 1-2). And the good news is we don’t have to do it alone. Jesus is right there next to us, the one who carried the weight of the world’s sin, reminding us that He will give us the strength to share His spirit at times when we are bereft, worn, or lacking. That is what the Fruits of the Spirit study is all about. Here at *The Fellowship*, we don’t know what season you are in: we are sure you have faced immense challenges and pain in life. Maybe you are even facing them now. We want this study to remind you that you are not alone. We want this exploration of the Word to encourage you to call on Christ’s love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, and yes, even self control, when your reserves are dwindling and life feels too much. We hope you will dive in with us as we learn how to tap into and share His amazing gift.

Welcome to the Fellowship.

*In Community,*

Kathryn, Robert, & Stephen



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

## STUDY SUGGESTIONS

### *Overview*

The inspiration behind this devotional and study guide has been years in the making! When we finally landed on the fruits of the Spirit as the focus of our third season of *The Fellowship* podcast, we knew it was a perfect opportunity to dive into the creation process. There are a few items we want you to know before you begin that we think will help you get the most out of the study.

### *1. Use it as a Fellowship Podcast Companion...or not!*

We designed this devotional to be a companion to our third season of the podcast **OR** a stand alone devotional/study. We will be launching episodes every two weeks on Sunday, so you will have two weeks to engage in each fruit of the spirit if you want to follow along.

### *2. Purpose Over Pace*

Yes! We know there is a lot of reading involved! Some days will be shorter/longer than others. Go at your own pace. The fruits are not to be completed in one day and we didn't want to put unnecessary structures on how you flow through a topic: you may finish it in one day, five days, or two weeks. Lean in and soak it up in the way that works best for you.

### *3. Find your Community*

Community is one of the elements of Bible study that makes it fun, approachable, and applicable. We empower you to find a friend, colleague, or family member to participate alongside. We also encourage you to connect with us on social media as we will be posting questions and ideas related to the study.



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT LOVE



GREATER **LOVE** HAS NO ONE THAN THIS:  
THAT HE WOULD LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.

**JOHN 15:13**



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# LOVE



**GREATER LOVE HAS NO ONE THAN THIS:  
THAT HE WOULD LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.**

**JOHN 15:13**

Love is one of the most spoken-about virtues, yet one of the least understood. In our culture, it often gets reduced to emotion, attraction, or preference. We love things that make us feel good, comfortable, and seen. But the love of God—the love the Spirit produces in us—is something entirely different. It's not reactive, but proactive. It's not conditional, but sacrificial. And most importantly, it is not reserved only for those who are easy to love – it's actually quite to the contrary.

The kind of love that is being cultivated in us is a reflection of the love demonstrated toward us. This sowing of seed (His Word) carries with it the purpose of bearing the most important of any fruit, and the ultimate fulfillment of God's entire Law: to love Him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. This whole-hearted commitment, this pure devotion, is rooted in selfless, sacrificial love. Make no mistake: no quality fruit is produced overnight. This kind of fruit is being painstakingly cultivated and nurtured in us, as it ultimately leads us to willfully surrendering all that we desire, and instead pursue what He desires for us.

John 3:16, one of the most well-known verses proclaims the kind of love God shows toward us: He so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son. He didn't give from His abundance, His extra, His "easy." No, He gave what was most precious to Him – His Son, His only begotten Son. This form of love is exactly what He is building in us: it is sacrificial, willful and entirely against what our nature would ever want for us.

For most of my life, even into adulthood, I didn't understand love – I mean *really* understand it. At least, not in the healthy, selfless, sacrificial way. It wasn't until I met and married my wife, Micaela that I started to realize that I really could be quite selfish. Before I met her, I chased after the feeling. I chased after validation, affirmation, and a sense of belonging. Simply put, I sought after fulfilling me first. My priority and focus wasn't so much on the idea of putting the needs of others before mine, and boy did this make for some bumpy episodes early in our marriage. God used (and is actively using) my wife to show me my brokenness, my pride, and my selfishness. He used marriage, a covenant of ultimate love and a picture of Christ with His Church...to show me what I so desperately needed to learn. I must seek fulfillment, validation, affirmation in HIM, and through this identity-founding, reflect His love toward others...even those we sometimes may not "feel" like loving.





FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# LOVE



GREATER **LOVE** HAS NO ONE THAN THIS:  
THAT HE WOULD LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.

**JOHN 15:13**

When Jesus calls us to love, He points not just to affection or kindness—but to the kind of love that lays itself down, even for the unlovable. That is Agape love. Why should I love? Because He first loved me. And He gave up everything for me...even His own life. What an inspiration! What a perfect example of what our fleshly nature absolutely despises.

In Love,

*Stephen*



FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# LOVE



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THAT HE WOULD LAY DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.

**JOHN 15:13**

## Word Study

Greek  
**ἀγάπη**  
agape

### Definition(s)

affection, good will, love, benevolence,  
brotherly love

Key Uses  
(NT 116 times)

Galatians 5:22, John 14:21, John 13:34

## Digging Deeper

*After reviewing the etymology of the word, how has your understanding deepened or changed?*

*What trends or patterns do you see in some of the key usages of agape? What do these patterns reveal about God?*



FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# LOVE



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**JOHN 15:13**

## Exploratory Reading

John 15:13; Luke 6:27; 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

## Questions to Chew On

*Who is someone in your life right now that is difficult to love? How might the Spirit be calling you to love them through agape?*

*In what ways does selfless love challenge your current understanding or practice of love?*

*What would it look like to love others from a place of surrender, not self-effort?*





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# LOVE



GREATER **LOVE** HAS NO ONE THAN THIS:  
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**JOHN 15:13**

*Father,*

Your love is perfect, holy, and undeserved—and yet You pour it out freely. Thank You for loving me even when I was hard to love. Fill me with Your Spirit so that I may love others with that same grace. Help me to see beyond offense, personality, or pain, and to love with a heart that mirrors Yours. Teach me to lay down my comfort, my pride, and my expectations, that Your love might be made visible in me.

In Jesus' name, *Amen*

## Reflections / Prayer Journal

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD. HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER. GIVE THANKS TO THE GOD OF GODS. HIS LOVES ENDURES FOREVER. GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD OF LORD: HIS LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.

**PSALM 136: 1-3**

Teach me...

Reveal....

Change...

Help me to....

**Notes:**

# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# JOY



THOUGH THE FIG TREE SHOULD NOT BLOSSOM, NOR FRUIT BE ON THE  
VINES...YET I WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD. I WILL TAKE JOY IN THE GOD  
OF MY SALVATION.

**HABAKKUK 3:17-18**





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# JOY

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**HABAKKUK 3:17-18**

Joy is more than a passing feeling— it is based upon a conviction which travels to the deepest parts of our being. It sustains us through sorrow, grows stronger through faith, and prevails against the fiery arrows that are hell-bent on causing us to give up, to give in, to collapse and quit. It is the very evidence of our confidence and hope, which are in Christ.

Now, as my dear friend Robert would say, “Stephen, that’s such a Christian answer.” So, roll up your sleeves with me, and let’s go on a little journey to unpack this.

When I think about joy outside of the context of the fruits of the Spirit, I immediately think about “what makes me happy.” Good food, watching an intellectually-stimulating film, or even catching the latest Marvel movie with a plot that actually delivers (don’t get me started on the travesty that is Secret Invasion). I consider the “joy” I experience spending quality time with my wife, my family, or when my high school English students finally “get it” when reading Shakespeare’s Macbeth. But, all those experiences can be had without the transformative power of the Holy Spirit. These experiences are replicable, and focus on what makes me happy. I don’t think this is the same as the kind of joy that is produced as a result of the Holy Spirit’s work in us. No, that kind of fruit seems far more supernatural, unnatural, and perhaps even counterintuitive. Much like how we are called to love in a way that is quite contrary to what our nature would prefer, I think the kind of joy that comes from the work of the Holy Spirit in us will lead us to respond to life quite contrarily to how we might feel we want to respond.

As a fruit of the Spirit, joy is cultivated by the Spirit, not manufactured by us. It grows as we abide in Christ and trust in the Father's love. Of course, to cultivate such a deep and seemingly invincible sense of joy often comes from encountering extreme situations. Paul wrote about joy while imprisoned. David sang of joy while surrounded by enemies. Jesus spoke of joy knowing He would face the cross. Joy isn’t a denial of suffering—it’s the assurance that God is with us through it all.

I want to share a little bit of my personal story, and how God is teaching me to find joy in all things, in all seasons. Early in 2024, I was diagnosed with kidney disease, of an autoimmune origin. This began a long and frustrating journey in pursuit of answers, and hopefully, some sort of cure. Symptoms worsened, and I started gaining a lot of water weight as a result of my kidneys not working properly. Fast forward a few months to June, and I had gained almost 50 pounds resulting from retained water fluid.



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**HABAKKUK 3:17-18**

My legs were swollen almost to the point of not being able to bend. My stomach started to swell, my arms were pitting. Man, it was uncomfortable, and quite honestly, a little scary. Fast forward a couple more months: I had switched doctors, was on a different and more rigorous treatment plan, and was consulting with a doctor who sought to find and treat the root of the issue, not just the symptoms. Finally, symptoms started to resolve! Finally, a glimmer of hope. I was referred to several specialists to rule out certain possibilities of root causes, since we hadn't yet found what might have caused the kidney disease in the first place. After a few more months, I had lost most of the water weight, and almost felt like I was returning to normal. Things were looking pretty good, but the tests continued.

One morning, I felt something in my armpit that was like a pulled muscle. It was sore, like I slept on it wrong. I didn't think much of it, so I didn't mention it. A few days went by, and the soreness subsided and went away. "That was weird," I thought. About a month later, the soreness returned, this time, with a noticeable knot that I could feel. My physician was concerned, and after a biopsy, it was confirmed to be a malignant melanoma – skin cancer. As it turns out, this particular cancer very likely caused my immune system to "misfire," attacking cells produced by the kidneys, which look incredibly similar to cells produced by melanoma. Indeed, the kidney malfunction was actually signaling the presence of any even deeper issue!

By now, you might be wondering "what on earth does any of this have to do with joy?" I believe joy is rooted in trust. When we trust completely in God's promises, and commit fully to loving and following Him with all our strength, the byproduct is quite profound. We don't just love Him for what He gives us or what He's done for us, but because He is faithful. And if He is faithful and keeps all His promises, then we have nothing to fear and so much more to look forward to. And that is where joy is found. It sees past the present circumstances, and with hopeful anticipation, trusts that He will always provide for His children.

My all-time favorite passage in Proverbs serves as a constant reminder and source of joy when I'm confronted with difficult circumstances:

"Trust in the Lord. And do not lean on your own understanding, but in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." - Proverbs 3:5-6



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**HABAKKUK 3:17-18**

I realized I was not trusting in God for answers, for guidance, for wisdom, strength, comfort, and as my source of joy. I was placing my hope and expectation in the promises of the medical community. My eyes were fixed upon a very narrow-minded and superficial means of joy: ensuring my own physical security.

In this season, God reminds me of the little sparrow, whom He created, that He cares and provides for. If He cares so much for the sparrow, how much more does He care for His own children? Thus, the Holy Spirit's work in me is shifting my focus away from my present circumstance and my lacking, and instead, toward His goodness, mercy, and wisdom. He has not and will not forsake me, just as He promises in His Word. And that is something in which to find joy.... true joy.

In the words of our Savior; "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

Joyfully Yours,

*Stephen*



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HABAKKUK 3:17-18

## Word Study

Greek

**χαρά**

chara

### Definition(s)

To rejoice or to be glad.

Key Uses  
(NT 59 times)

Luke 2:10; John 15:11

## Digging Deeper

*After reviewing the etymology of the word, how has your understanding deepened or changed?*

*What trends or patterns do you see in some of the key usages of chara? What do these patterns reveal about God?*



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**HABAKKUK 3:17-18**

## Exploratory Reading

Nehemiah 8:10; John 15:11; Romans 15:13

## Questions to Chew On

*How have you seen God produce joy in your life even when your circumstances were difficult?*

*What does it mean to have joy rooted in grace rather than performance or success?*

*How can you help cultivate joy in your spiritual community?*



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**HABAKKUK 3:17-18**

*Lord,*

Thank You for the deep and abiding joy that comes from knowing You. Teach me to anchor my heart in Your grace, not in temporary highs or fleeting emotions. Fill me with Your Spirit so that joy overflows in my life and brings hope to those around me. In Jesus' name, *Amen*

## Reflections / Prayer Journal

YOU MAKE KNOWN TO ME THE PATH OF LIFE; YOU FILL ME WITH JOY IN YOUR PRESENCE.

**PSALM 16:11**

Teach me...

Reveal....

Change...

Help me to....



**Notes:**

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT  
PEACE



WHEN PEACE LIKE A RIVER ATTENDETH MY WAY,  
WHEN SORROWS LIKE SEA BILLOWS ROLL; WHATEVER MY LOT, THOU  
HAST TAUGHT ME TO SAY, IT IS WELL, IT IS WELL WITH. MY SOUL."

HORATIO SPAFFORD, 1873

# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# PEACE

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HORATIO SPAFFORD, 1873

These cherished words were not written in a time of ease but after unthinkable loss. Horatio Spafford penned them after the tragic death of his daughters at sea. The hymn does not gloss over grief—it holds it in tension with a profound declaration of peace. This kind of peace is not manufactured by human willpower. It is not the absence of trouble, but the presence of God. It is a supernatural calm, a fruit of the Spirit that steadies us in trials and anchors us in a storm.

The peace of God doesn't always change our circumstances—it changes us. It is a stillness that lives deeper than chaos, a wholeness that flows from the Spirit within.

Let me pull the curtain back a bit, and share a little behind-the-scenes. In 2024, I was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease and subsequently with metastatic malignant melanoma – cancer. And let me tell you, it has been a whirlwind of a journey. Countless tests, consults, scans, and even a surgical procedure that left me partially paralyzed in one area. I've spent many moments alone crying out to God, asking for answers to questions I didn't ever think I would ask. Why me? Is this *it* for me? Who will take care of my wife? In this process, He truly brought me to my knees. He humbled me...big time. I was reminded of David who was being pursued by King Saul, when he was in utter despair. In those moments, God was there. Or the Israelites, who were between the armies of Egypt and the vastness of the Red Sea. God told Moses to stand by and see the Salvation of God. When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrust into the fiery furnace, or when Daniel was fed to a den of lions...God was there, every step of the way. It's no wonder that God commands us to simply be still and know (acknowledge) that He is God. When we finally surrender our fears, anxiety, our need for answers, and submit completely to Him and His will, boy, does He show up in mighty ways. He provides us...no, he *gifts and promises* us something no earthly force, no earthly wisdom, and no amount of strength could ever take away: His perfect peace.

When we operate in our own strength, there can be a lot of angst, stress and uncertainty. And why wouldn't there be? We are weak, imperfect beings in an imperfect world. But He is greater, more powerful, and able to rescue us from the most dire of circumstances, even if rescue looks different from how we might envision it.

There's a song lyric by MercyMe that goes "I know you're able and I know you can, save through the fire with Your mighty hand. But even if you don't, my hope is You alone." This peace is supernatural. It allows us to see past the fire, the storm, the armies and certain death, and see Him through it all.



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

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**HORATIO SPAFFORD, 1873**

In Hebrew, the word for peace is Shalom – a rich and layered word meaning completeness, soundness, welfare, and peace. It encompasses harmony with God, within ourselves, with others, and with creation. It conveys not just quietness but wholeness. When Jewish people say “Shalom,” they are not just wishing someone calm—they are blessing them with a life of fullness and right relationship.

Peace is often mistaken for a feeling, but in Scripture, it is a fruit—something the Holy Spirit grows in the life of the believer. Used in Galatians 5:22, *eirēnē* means peace, quietness, rest, or harmony. It comes from the verb *eiro*, meaning “to join” or “to tie together into a whole.” It refers not just to the absence of conflict but to a sense of inner wholeness and well-being. Through Christ, what was once broken between God and humanity is now reconciled, restoring peace. The peace God gives is not based on circumstances, nor is it a passive state. It is active, guarding our hearts and minds like a soldier at post (Philippians 4:7).

Peace is the product of trust. When our hearts are rooted in the character and promises of God, we can remain calm in uncertainty, anchored in turmoil, and composed, even in pain. It doesn't mean we are untouched by life's storms, but it means we are not undone by them. The Spirit reminds us that Christ Himself is our peace (Ephesians 2:14). He has reconciled us to God, removed our guilt, and now invites us to live from a place of quiet confidence in His love.

Whether you're recovering from loss, in the midst of a cancer battle, or in-between jobs, know this: God is in control. He has you. He always has, and always will. May His peace that surpasses all understanding be given to you, too.

In whatever season you find yourself, may He give you His perfect peace.

*Stephen*

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# PEACE

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HORATIO SPAFFORD, 1873

## Word Study

Greek  
**εἰρήνη**  
eirene

### Definition(s)

peace, quietness, rest, or harmony; security, safety, prosperity

Key Uses  
(NT 243 times)

Romans 5:1; John 14:27

## Digging Deeper

*After reviewing the etymology of the word, how has your understanding deepened or changed?*

*What trends or patterns do you see in some of the key usages of eirene? What do these patterns reveal about God?*

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HORATIO SPAFFORD, 1873

## Exploratory Reading

Phillipians 4:7; Isaiah 26:3; Colossians 3:15

## Questions to Chew On

*When in your life have you experienced peace in the midst of difficulty?*

*What does it look like to "let the peace of Christ rule in your heart"?*

*Are there areas where you are trying to control outcomes rather than trust God?*



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HORATIO SPAFFORD, 1873

*Father of Peace,*

Thank You for the gift of Your presence, which brings a peace the world cannot give; the peace that surpasses all understanding. When circumstances overwhelm and my soul feels restless, remind me that You are near. Help me to surrender anxiety, fear, and control, and instead trust fully in You. Let Your Spirit grow peace in me—deep, steady, and lasting—so that I might reflect Your calm presence in a restless world. In Jesus' name, *Amen*

## Reflections / Prayer Journal

IN PEACE I WILL BOTH LIE DOWN AND SLEEP, FOR YOU ALONE, LORD,  
HAVE MADE ME DWELL IN SAFETY.

PSALM 4:8

Teach me...

Reveal....

Change...

Help me to....

**Notes:**

# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# PATIENCE



Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed,, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

**JAMES 1:2-4**





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**JAMES 1:2-4**

Imagine wanting a child so bad, but time and again your efforts are fruitless. You've tried everything. For years you try but to no avail, nothing. You watch as friends and loved ones begin their families, while you wait. Little ones wrapped in their swaddling blankets looking up at their parents giggling. Toddlers scampering about the house. Time continues to pass, and your efforts continue to be delayed. Your expectations dashed. You patiently wait. Praying. Following doctor's orders. You've tried every suggestion. Every home remedy. Only to learn the prime years for having a child have passed. Then God comes along and tells you at 75 years old you are going to be a father of a great nation and that your descendants will outnumber the sand. How is this going to work?

Recall a time you had to wait for something. Test results. A specific thing you ordered. The arrival of something. Or someone. An interview. How did you wait? Did you complain the whole time? Quietly? Anxiously?

In Genesis we get the story of Abram. There is not much of a backstory other than Abram being a descendant of Shem and son of Terah. Immediately we see Abram is chosen by God (Genesis 12). He speaks to Abram directly. He is an example of faith (Hebrews 11:8-19). The first interaction we have with Abram is the Lord speaking to him and giving him a promise. He tells Abram to leave his country and relatives and to go to the land that he will show him. And that God will make him into a great nation. That he will be famous and a blessing to others. And Abram did as the Lord instructed. Abram is blessed with silver, gold, sheep, goats, and cattle. He is told he will be given so many descendants that like the dust of the earth, they cannot be counted (Genesis 13:16). "Look up into the sky and count the stars. That's how many descendants you will have." And Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD counted him as righteous because of his faith" (Genesis 15:5-6). For 75 years they waited and now there is certainty. The Lord promises descendants, yet Abram must remain patient.

Years pass and I imagine at this point Abram is getting impatient as is his wife, Sarai, so much so that she makes an impatient suggestion. She suggests that Abram have a child with their Egyptian servant Hagar (Genesis 16). Imagine that conversation and justification for the actions Abram and Sarai were about to take. She takes the promise into her own hands. Along comes Ishmael 11 years after the promise, but this isn't the child that the Lord had promised.





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**JAMES 1:2-4**

After even more time elapses, Abram is renamed Abraham and Sarai is now named Sarah. Abraham is now 100 and is promised a son next year. He is to be named Isaac (Genesis 17). A 25-year promise! And we get impatient waiting for toast.

How often do we go against God's promise? Sometimes our anticipation gets the better of us and we make poor choices. We take things into our own hands much as Sarah did. A consequence of Ishmael's birth was contempt from Hagar, and hostility from Ishmael against all his relatives (Genesis 16). We must learn to seek God in the waiting. Patience is not easy. But the Holy Spirit strengthens us by giving us this blessing, this fruit of the Spirit.

My wife, Stacy, and I were married for 12 years when we finally decided to have kids. We always knew we wanted children but wanted to wait until we were done with college and established (whatever that means)! So, at age 32, we planned to have our first child. We tried for 6 months and after multiple negative pregnancy tests, Stacy finally was pregnant. We were so excited and began all the fun planning and daydreaming that comes along with that special time. How would we decorate the room? What books would we read to them? Disposable or reusable diapers? What kind of parents would we want to be? Sadly, two months into the pregnancy we miscarried.

Fear and doubt began to creep in. I remember sitting on the couch with Stacy the day of the miscarriage holding her in my arms, both of us in tears. Why us? Why did this happen? I wanted an explanation. Eventually we tried again, and we conceived Jamie, our son. All in all, our son's conception took about a year. That year felt like forever. When you are going through something, it is hard to be patient.

The Bible has countless examples of patience. Moses with Pharaoh. Moses with the Israelites in the wilderness. David waiting to become king. The Jewish people waiting for their Messiah. Life is waiting. Anticipation. Why is this so difficult for us? We fixate on the waiting when we are in a challenge. Anticipation plays with our expectations. We think about the what ifs. Patience, like faith, is the assurance of things hoped for (Hebrews 11:11). Patience is only needed in the present. After the time of waiting is over, we think of God's goodness. When a lump was found on my kidney, and I had to wait for ultrasounds and MRIs. When the doctor thought I had cancer and I had to wait to see a specialist. When we were expecting our first child. All examples of difficulty in waiting. But afterwards I don't remember the waiting; I only find recognition of God's goodness.



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT PATIENCE



Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed,, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

**JAMES 1:2-4**

We must learn like Abraham to be patient in the waiting. Not only did Abraham wait 75 years to have a child, but he also then waited an additional 25 years after the promise. 100 years! Do you have that kind of patience?

In the peaks and valleys may your patience develop as you turn to Him,

*Robert*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT PATIENCE



Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed,, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

**JAMES 1:2-4**

## Word Study

Greek

**μακροθυμία**

makrothymia

Definition(s)

Long-suffering, endurance, steadfastness; tolerant and even-tempered perseverance; to persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles; to be of a long spirit, not to lose heart

Key Uses  
(NT 14 times)

Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 1:11; Romans 2:4;  
2 Peter 3:8-15

## Digging Deeper

*After reviewing the etymology of the word, how has your understanding deepened or changed?*

*What trends or patterns do you see in some of the key usages of makrothymia, patience or patient? What do these patterns reveal about God and his character?*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT PATIENCE



Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.

**JAMES 1:2-4**

## Exploratory Reading

Genesis 12-22 (Abraham's story); Genesis 37-50 (Joseph's story); Exodus 5-12 (Moses waiting on Pharaoh); Exodus 12-18 (Israelites in the wilderness); 2 Corinthians 4

## Questions to Chew On

*How has the Lord used moments of waiting to teach you something? What did you learn?*

*How are we called to wait upon the Lord? (Psalm 27:14, Isaiah 40:31, Psalm 130:5-6, Lamentations 3:25, Psalm 62:5, Psalm 46:10, Psalm 37:7)*





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# PATIENCE



LET US DRAW NEAR TO GOD WITH A SINCERE HEART AND  
WITH THE FULL ASSURANCE THAT **FAITH** BRINGS...LET US  
HOLD UNSWERVINGLY TO THE HOPE WE PROFESS, FOR HE  
WHO PROMISED IS **FAITHFUL**.

**HEBREWS 11:22-23**

*Heavenly Father,*

Thank you for your love. Thank you for walking with us during times of difficulty. During times of waiting and anticipation we ask that you allow us to hear Your voice clearly. Direct us to your Word. Provide wise counsel through your body. We thank You for walking with us and empowering us with your Holy Spirit.

*Amen*

## Reflections / Prayer Journal

LET THE MORNING BRING ME WORD OF YOUR UNFAILING LOVE, FOR I HAVE PUT MY  
TRUST IN YOU. SHOW ME THE WAY I SHOULD GO, FOR TO YOU, I ENTRUST MY LIFE.

**PSALM 143:8**

Teach me...

Reveal....

Change...

Help me to....

**Notes:**



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# KINDNESS



Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

**ROMANS 2:4**





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# KINDNESS



Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

**ROMANS 2:4**

My mother used to say, “A kind word turns away anger.” (Proverbs 15:1) Or perhaps you are more familiar with the phrase, “you catch more flies with honey.” Or “if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.” Excellent little nuggets of advice but more often than not, hard to follow. Recall a time when a colleague may have said something snarky, or a student at your child's school said or did something hurtful to your child, or a time when maybe your expectations were not met. How did you respond in those moments? Were you slow to speak? Were you slow to anger? Were you quick to listen? (James 1:19)

We find the need to defend ourselves usually at the expense of somebody else. We live in a society where people are expecting the worst from one another. We live guarded lives. The moment there is a confrontation we feel the need to diminish or blame others. We want revenge. Justice. Where is our kindness? Where is mercy? Where is love?

When I was in middle and high school I had a list of people that hurt me, my friends, or my family members. On this list was many people, anyone from the kid that bullied my little brother and I was too small to do anything about it, to the contractors that wouldn't pay my father after he completed a job, to the drunk driver that killed my friend, to an older student that abused his power. I vowed that if I had the chance to get them back, I would. I desired justice. I wanted them to experience a consequence for what they did. I did not understand grace. I did not get mercy.

But if we look at the model in the Bible we never see things happen that way. Most people, believer or not, are familiar with the story of the good Samaritan. This is *the* example of love and kindness. The parable begins with an expert in religious law testing Jesus by asking about how to inherit eternal life. Jesus responds by asking how he sees it. The man responds by stating that one must love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself. “Right!” Jesus told him. “Do this and you will live!” But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A Jewish man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# KINDNESS



Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

**ROMANS 2:4**

But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii[a] and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." And Jesus said to him, "You go, and do likewise."

In this story we have two people that have a history of hatred for one another. Yet the Samaritan man was being used as an example of kindness, and of what love should really look like. Not only did the Samaritan bind his wounds, he allowed the Jewish man to sit on his own donkey and brought him to an inn to recover. The Samaritan also paid the innkeeper to care for the man. The expert in religious law was looking for a way to avoid loving everyone, hoping my neighbor only meant those that go to my church. Or work at my job. Or live in my neighborhood. But Jesus used this to show that everyone is our neighbor. Our kindness must extend to all.

The Messiah told us to love others as He loved (John 13:34). Arguably a much better method than to love others as I love myself. Some of us have problems with that. Self-deprecating behaviors and negativity aside, I might have difficulty loving others but the reality is God sent an example of kindness, so we should know how to be kind! We must not just listen to God's word. We must do what it says. (James 1:22)

Kindness manifests itself in our actions. How do we treat others? Are we really loving others the way Jesus did? What does that even look like? When they were hungry, did you feed them? When they were thirsty, did you give them something to drink? When they were strangers, did you take them in? When they were naked, did you give them something to wear? When they were sick, did you visit them? When they were in prison, did you go to them (Matthew 25:31-46)?

Jesus came so we could live, not some bitter resentful life, but a rich and abundant life (John 10:10), one in which we love others as He loved us. James tells us faith without actions is dead. Our kindness should overflow in every interaction. Our kindness should reflect our heavenly Father's love and kindness.

May His love and kindness manifest through  
you in all you do.

*Robert*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# KINDNESS



Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

**ROMANS 2:4**

## Word Study

Greek

**χρηστότης**

chrestotes

Definition(s)

Kindness, moral goodness, integrity, virtuous, good, pleasant, benevolent

Key Uses  
(NT 10 times)

Romans 2:24, Romans 11:22, Ephesians 2:7, Luke 6:35, Ephesians 4:32,

## Digging Deeper

*After reviewing the etymology of the word, how has your understanding deepened or changed?*

*What trends or patterns do you see in some of the key usages of chrestotes or kindness? What do these patterns reveal about God?*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# KINDNESS



Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

**ROMANS 2:4**

## Exploratory Reading

Ephesians 4, Ruth 1-4, Luke 10:25-37, Matthew 25:31-46

## Questions to Chew On

*In what ways is your kindness currently being challenged or how has it been challenged in the past?*

*What do the readings reveal to your heart about how we are to live our lives?  
What do they reveal about your struggles with kindness?*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# KINDNESS



Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

**ROMANS 2:4**

*Heavenly Father,*

Thank you for your holy Word, Your love letter to us. The stories of your kindness are consistent in your Word. Your mercy and kindness are evident. Lord, give us strength to be walking examples of your love and kindness. When we are challenged by individuals that test us, empower us. Remind us of your example.

*Amen*

## Reflections / Prayer Journal

LET THE MORNING BRING ME WORD OF YOUR UNFAILING LOVE, FOR I HAVE PUT MY TRUST IN YOU. SHOW ME THE WAY I SHOULD GO, FOR TO YOU, I ENTRUST MY LIFE.

**PSALM 143:8**

Teach me...

Reveal....

Change...

Help me to....



**Notes:**



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# GOODNESS



FOR YOU WERE ONCE IN DARKNESS, BUT NOW YOU ARE  
LIGHT IN THE LORD. LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT (FOR THE  
FRUIT OF THE LIGHT CONSISTS OF ALL **GOODNESS**,  
RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND TRUTH).

**EPHESIANS 5:8-9**





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# GOODNESS



FOR YOU WERE ONCE IN DARKNESS, BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT IN THE LORD. LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT (FOR THE FRUIT OF THE LIGHT CONSISTS OF ALL **GOODNESS**, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND TRUTH).

**EPHESIANS 5: 8-9**

*You've got to be kidding me*, I thought as I walked my dogs in our subdivision one Saturday morning. We were stopped at an intersection, ready to cross the street when a blue truck came barreling through the stop sign. The dogs and I jumped back as the man revved his engine, his windows down, and proceeded to drive like Mario Andretti down the community road to his house. I yelled some unladylike language towards his exhaust and sat there and steamed, my Italian temper getting the best of me. *Oh no. He wasn't getting away with this!*

I watched where he turned and proceeded to follow his truck, my German Shepherds trying to keep pace as I patrolled in military fashion down the road. I found the culprit parked in a driveway I pass on a regular basis. I considered knocking on the door, but felt that was too confrontational. I thought for a moment, took out my phone, and snapped a picture of the house and the truck. I went to our community's Facebook page, wrote scathing commentary about his "reckless driving" and how I would get the police involved if I saw him drive in our community again. I posted my blurb and the photo, hoping to feel a satiated sense of justice and triumph upon hitting send.

It never came.

Instead, I instantly felt a sensation of hiding and guilt. *Why do I feel this way?*, I thought. He deserved the admonishment and it needed to be addressed. *But maybe not in the way you handled it*, said my heart's voice.

Interestingly enough, the word Paul uses for goodness when relating to the fruits of the Spirit is *agathosyne*. *Agathosyne* means "uprightness of heart and life." The word uprightness makes me think of someone standing in the open, face forward, not slouched or hiding, with purity of heart and intention. No wonder I didn't feel awashed in "goodness" from my retaliatory actions. I had taken what should have been an upright, in-person conversation, and turned it into a back channel spectacle. I was hiding behind the veil of the web and it didn't feel *good*.

This situation made me think of how often we find ourselves hiding in the darkness of our anger, fear, frustration, or self-proclaimed righteousness. The term *agathosyne* is only used four times in the Bible. In Ephesians 5:9, Paul refers to it as "fruit of the light." This analogy is such a poignant reminder that uprightness or goodness requires us to step out of the slumber of the dark.



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# GOODNESS



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**EPHESIANS 5: 8-9**

When we come face to face with another person, and see them through God's lens (or the fruit of the light), it is hard to dismiss them as purely bad. If we look deep enough, we see their humanity. And guess what? It looks familiar!

I love the song *Relate* by For King and Country, simply because it is a reminder of our shared humanity. The lyrics say it all:

*'Cause I've been real, I've been fake  
Been a sinner, been a saint  
I've been right, I've been so, so wrong  
Yeah, I've made my mistakes  
I don't know what it's like to be you  
You don't know what it's like to be me  
What if we're all the same in different kinds of ways  
Can you, can you relate?*

In John 4, the Samaritan woman at the well is not a story of goodness. She wasn't quite living an "upright" life. After having several husbands and living with someone she wasn't married to, the cultural implication of the time considered her an adulterer. She was hiding behind the sins of her past, hoping no one would notice. But Jesus did. And He chose her anyway to spread the news of His coming. I can just imagine her face as she realized who He was, as His profferment of living water finally clicked, and her countenance transformed. He was choosing her not because she was good, but because He was. This story is a reminder that we, like the woman at the well, do not need our own reserves of goodness to be considered worthy. Being upright does not mean doing everything perfectly, but keeping our faces lifted up to God for guidance and inspiration. To reflect *His* goodness to others.

This doesn't mean people won't frustrate us or that we shouldn't hold others accountable; it's just about taking a good look in the mirror before we do. Because goodness doesn't come from us, yet God chooses to pursue us and use us anyway. He is the in-flight captain speaking, reminding us to get into an upright position, so we can handle the turbulent takeoffs and landings of life.

So the next time that blue truck California-cruises through my stop sign, I'll be ready for that face to face conversation. Because, frankly...I can relate.





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT GOODNESS



FOR YOU WERE ONCE IN DARKNESS, BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT IN  
THE LORD. LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT (FOR THE FRUIT OF THE  
LIGHT CONSISTS OF ALL **GOODNESS**, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND TRUTH).

**EPHESIANS 5: 8-9**

So the next time that blue truck California-cruises through my stop sign, I'll be ready for that face to face conversation. Because, frankly...I can relate.

May His goodness nurture your heart,

*Kathryn* ♥



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# GOODNESS

FOR YOU WERE ONCE IN DARKNESS, BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT IN THE LORD. LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT (FOR THE FRUIT OF THE LIGHT CONSISTS OF ALL **GOODNESS**, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND TRUTH).

EPHESIANS 5: 8-9

## Word Study

Greek

**ἀγαθωσύνη**

agathosyne

Definition(s)

Uprightness of heart and life; goodness; kindness; virtue or beneficence

Key Uses  
(NT 4 times)

Romans 15:14; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9;  
2 Thessalonians 1:11

## Digging Deeper

*After reviewing the etymology of the word, how has your understanding deepened or changed?*

*What trends or patterns do you see in some of the key usages of agathosyne? Based on these trends, what does goodness mean to your heart?*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT GOODNESS



FOR YOU WERE ONCE IN DARKNESS, BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT IN THE LORD. LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT, (FOR THE FRUIT OF THE LIGHT CONSISTS OF ALL **GOODNESS**, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND TRUTH).

**EPHESIANS 5: 8-9**

## Exploratory Reading

*John 4: 1-42; Proverbs 3: 27-35*

## Questions to Chew On

*In what ways have you experienced the goodness of God in your life?*

*After engaging in the readings, what are some ways you can challenge yourself to reflect God's goodness?*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# GOODNESS



FOR YOU WERE ONCE IN DARKNESS, BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT IN THE LORD. LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT (FOR THE FRUIT OF THE LIGHT CONSISTS OF ALL **GOODNESS**, RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND TRUTH).

**EPHESIANS 5: 8-9**

*Heavenly Father,*

I see Your goodness all around; in the smile of loved ones and the simple beauty of a flower. Thank you for sharing your heart and for always pursuing mine. Please help me share the story of Your goodness with others, so that they may see Your face and know that You are the way, the truth, and the life. In Your holy name,

*Amen*

## Reflections / Prayer Journal

MAKE YOUR WAYS KNOWN TO ME, LORD; TEACH ME YOUR PATHS. GUIDE ME IN YOUR TRUTH AND TEACH ME, FOR YOU ARE THE GOD OF MY SALVATION.

**PSALM 25: 4-5**

Teach me...

Reveal....

Change...

Help me to....



**Notes:**



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# FAITH



LET US DRAW NEAR TO GOD WITH A SINCERE HEART AND WITH THE FULL ASSURANCE THAT FAITH BRINGS...LET US HOLD UNSWERVINGLY TO THE HOPE WE PROFESS, FOR HE WHO PROMISED IS FAITHFUL.

**HEBREWS 11: 22-23**





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# FAITH

LET US DRAW NEAR TO GOD WITH A SINCERE HEART AND  
WITH THE FULL ASSURANCE THAT **FAITH** BRINGS...LET US  
HOLD UNSWERVINGLY TO THE HOPE WE PROFESS, FOR HE  
WHO PROMISED IS **FAITHFUL**.

**HEBREWS 11:22-23**

I've heard it. You've heard it. I'm pretty sure we have all experienced the beseeching platitude of "Have faith. Everything will be okay!" Despite the best intentions of our attempted soothers, sometimes the act of "having faith" is a little easier said than done. Typically when we are called to have faith, things are not always going as we hoped. Often, the "Of Mice and Men" moments occur when our carefully crafted best-laid plans yield metaphorical (or sometimes literal) caved in walls, roof fires, faulty plumbing, and cracked foundations. Mounting trials can often lead to doubt, frustration, sadness, and even a fist raised to God asking "What are you doing here?!" No, faith is not easy. But it was never meant to be.

Let's take a step back for a moment and dive a little deeper into the word "faith." Paul's usage of the word faith in Galatians 5 is the Greek word "pistis," a noun that is translated as "moral conviction of the truthfulness of God; assurance, belief, fidelity." We may be quick to dismiss this definition as simplistic, but there is so much to unpack here. First, faith is not the belief that "everything will be okay." According to Paul, faith is the conviction deep inside ourselves of the truthfulness of God, His promises, and His nature. God doesn't promise us that everything will work out exactly as we planned, but He does promise us that His plans are good: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." (Jeremiah 39:11). This reminds me of the scene from *The Lion, The Witch, & the Wardrobe*, where Lucy and Susan are about to meet Aslan. The concept of meeting a lion is a little overwhelming (as we can imagine), and they question whether he is safe:

"Aslan is a lion- the Lion, the great Lion." "Ooh," said Susan. "I'd thought he was a man. Is he quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion"... "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver ... "Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you." (Lewis, 1950).

Sometimes God's plan takes us the wild way, the unsafe way. I can't help but think of the story of the Israelites in Exodus: they waited 400 years to be delivered from Egyptian rule, only to endure a litany of plagues, a capricious ruler, and a circuitous escape path that only led them to a dead end! They were probably thinking, "God...what on earth are you doing here?! This could have been so much simpler!" But when God takes the long way, He always has a plan and His plan is always for our growth and benefit. God avoided the short escape route from the Egyptians because he knew the Israelites could not face war.



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# FAITH



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WHO PROMISED IS **FAITHFUL**.

**HEBREWS 11:22-23**

Their faith story with God was too new, as of yet, and He knew they would flee and return to Egypt. God's plan accounted for their weakness and was ultimately designed to grow their relationship with Him. Imagine that moment, backed up against unassailable odds, when the Israelites have nowhere to turn, and God creates a path through the sea. That's pretty amazing stuff. Everything led up to that moment so He could show the Israelites that He would fight for them. The plan wasn't safe (traversing through the open seas never is), but His plan was good and it worked in their favor.

As the Israelites modeled, sometimes faith is the hardest when we see situations by our humanness, rather than God's greatness. When Paul outlines the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5, he is specifically talking about the spirit versus the flesh. Paul warns us that our humanness can often lead to immorality, hatred, anger, and strife (Galatians 5: 19-21). But when we walk by the Spirit, we will reap eternal life from the Spirit (Galatians 6:8). In His final moments with his disciples, Jesus left a few lasting words that also share insight regarding the Spirit:

"If you love me, you will keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn't see or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you." (John 14: 15-17).

You see, faith was never meant to be easy, because we were never meant to carry the burden alone! Since we know and are in relationship with Jesus, we carry the Holy Spirit in our hearts. So, in those moments of uncertainty, when having a deep conviction of God's plan is not easy, we can call upon the Holy Spirit to help us bear fruit in times when our faithfulness is lacking (and believe me, I've been there).

In his book, *Living Above the Level of Mediocrity*, Swindoll (1989) shares a telling story about faith:

*A traveler is lost in the desert. He is dying for a drink of water and comes across an abandoned, weatherbeaten shack. He stumbles in, desperate for a drink, and notices an old, rusty water pump a few feet away. He stumbles over to it, grabs the handles and begins to pump up and down.*





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# FAITH



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WITH THE FULL ASSURANCE THAT **FAITH** BRINGS...LET US  
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WHO PROMISED IS **FAITHFUL**.

**HEBREWS 11:22-23**

*Nothing comes out. Just then, he noticed an old jug filled with water off to the side with a note next to it. He read the message: "You have to prime the pump with all the water in this jug, my friend. P.S. Be sure you fill the jug again before you leave."*

*Suddenly he was faced with a decision. If he drank the water, he could live. But, if he used the water to prime the pump, he could have all the water he wanted, plus more to leave for another weary traveler. The man studied the possibilities of both options. Should he take a chance on fresh, cool water, or drink what was in the jug? Reluctantly, he poured all the water into the pump. He grabbed the handle and began pumping over and over again. Nothing came out. He tried again and then a small stream began to slowly pour from the rusted tap. He pumped some more and to his relief, fresh, cool water flowed freely. Eagerly, he drank his fill, refreshed for his journey.*

*Then he filled the jug for the next traveler. He filled it to the top, popped the cork back on, and added this little note: "Believe me, it really works. You have to give it all away before you can get anything back."*

Faith is not about holding on to what we know, but trusting God in the unknown. And in our desert moments, when it feels like the only things we are holding onto are doubt, scarcity, and fear, we can unclench our fists, prime the well, and rest in His promise that He will be the water that sustains us on our journey.

I pray His faithfulness is evident in your life today,

Kathryn ♥

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# FAITH

LET US DRAW NEAR TO GOD WITH A SINCERE HEART AND  
WITH THE FULL ASSURANCE THAT **FAITH** BRINGS...LET US  
HOLD UNSWERVINGLY TO THE HOPE WE PROFESS, FOR HE  
WHO PROMISED IS **FAITHFUL**.

**HEBREWS 11:22-23**

## Word Study

Greek

**πίστις**

pistis

Definition(s)

Persuasion, credence; moral conviction (of religious truth, or the truthfulness of God), especially reliance upon Christ for salvation, and by extension the Gospel truth itself--assurance, belief, believe, faith, fidelity.

Key Uses  
(NT 243 times)

Matthew 17: 20, Mark 5: 34, Luke 8: 25, Luke 7: 50

## Digging Deeper

*After reviewing the etymology of the word, how has your understanding deepened or changed?*

*What trends or patterns do you see in some of the key usages of pistis or faith?  
What do these patterns reveal about God?*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# FAITH

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**HEBREWS 11:22-23**

## Exploratory Reading

Exodus 6: 1-13; Exodus 12-14; Daniel 6; Proverbs 16

## Questions to Chew On

*In what ways is your faith currently being challenged or how has it been challenged in the past?*

*What do the readings reveal to your heart about your personal faith journey?  
What do you need to let go of to have complete trust in God's plan?*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# FAITH

LET US DRAW NEAR TO GOD WITH A SINCERE HEART AND  
WITH THE FULL ASSURANCE THAT **FAITH** BRINGS...LET US  
HOLD UNSWERVINGLY TO THE HOPE WE PROFESS, FOR HE  
WHO PROMISED IS **FAITHFUL**.

**HEBREWS 11:22-23**

*Gracious Father,*

Having faith in times of uncertainty is not easy. During the times when my trust in you stumbles, please comfort my heart with Your loving presence and help me to remember that Your plans are higher than my own. Please give me strength on the journey to lean on your promises. In Your faithful name I pray,

*Amen*

## Reflections / Prayer Journal

LET THE MORNING BRING ME WORD OF YOUR UNFAILING LOVE, FOR I HAVE PUT MY  
TRUST IN YOU. SHOW ME THE WAY I SHOULD GO, FOR TO YOU, I ENTRUST MY LIFE.

**PSALM 143: 8**

Teach me...

Reveal....

Change...

Help me to....



**Notes:**

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# GENTLENESS



YOUR BEAUTY SHOULD NOT COME FROM OUTWARD  
ADORNMENT...RATHER, IT SHOULD BE THAT OF YOUR INNER  
SELF, THE UNFADING BEAUTY OF A **GENTLE** AND QUIET SPIRIT,  
WHICH IS OF GREAT WORTH IN GOD'S SIGHT.

**1 PETER 3: 3-4**



YOUR BEAUTY SHOULD NOT COME FROM OUTWARD ADORNMENT...RATHER,  
IT SHOULD BE THAT OF YOUR INNER SELF, THE UNFADING BEAUTY OF A  
GENTLE AND QUIET SPIRIT, WHICH IS OF GREAT WORTH IN GOD'S SIGHT.

1 PETER 3: 3-4

There is so much to be done!

I sat at my desk at work, looking at the to-do list in front of me. My work and home life had somehow mutated and I was staring at my merged responsibilities with wide eyes. There was my daughter's birthday party to shop for and a professional development seminar to plan. The house needed to be cleaned for a dinner party that weekend, and the dogs were due for a vet appointment. The laundry was building up and I had a deadline for a funding request to meet. There was a new teacher who was having tech problems and I had a meeting this afternoon with administration. No problem, I thought. I've got this. I applied a new coat of lipstick, slid my feet into my high heels under my desk, and marched out of my office ready to conquer and trample anyone who got in my way.

This pace was my *modus operandi*; I was no stranger to frenetic energy and making sharp turns around the corners of life. In fact, when my husband met me he said I reminded him of the girl from the song *Short Skirt, Long Jacket* by Cake:

I want a girl who gets up early  
I want a girl who stays up late  
I want a girl with uninterrupted prosperity  
Who uses a machete to cut through red tape  
With fingernails that shine like justice  
And a voice that is dark like tinted glass  
She is fast, thorough, and sharp as a tack  
She is touring the facility and picking up slack

Yes, I took pride in that resemblance. I was a person who got things done!

When I got home that afternoon after picking up the kids, I gave my husband a cursory greeting and went into hyperdrive. Work out, walk the dogs, make dinner, clean up, pack backpacks, prep for work tomorrow. By the time we got the kids to bed and sat down together, I was dizzy from my spinning. I could feel the limits of myself stretching, but not in a good way. I leaned into my husband and started crying. Just a few tears at first and then the dam broke. "I can't keep up!" I said. He was quiet for a minute. "Kat, why don't you ask for help?" he countered sincerely. "You know, you don't always have to have it together all the time. Sometimes it is a gift to allow others to step in."



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1 PETER 3: 3-4

I froze, mascara running unbecomingly down my face. *Why didn't I ask for help?* I wish I could say this situation was a first time occurrence, but that would be vastly inaccurate. In truth, this cycle of “over productivity and crash” has happened many times in my life. And each time, it was rooted in pride. I was trying to measure my worth by actions and productivity. Unfortunately, the casualties ended up being my peace and relationships. My gentleness.

The word for gentleness as a fruit of the Spirit is the Greek word *prautes*, which means mildness, humility, or meekness. The word meekness gets a bad rap in its modern day connotation. We hear the word “meek” and think of wallflowers, doormats, and mousy personalities. However, its usage in the Bible couldn't be farther from that lukewarm depiction. Paul gives us an example of the characteristics of meekness when he advises how to deal with someone who has done wrong: “Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit. Carry one another's burdens” (Galatians 6: 1-2). There is nothing passive or easy about carrying someone else's load. It requires strength of spirit and tenacity.

The balance between gentleness and strain is the direction we are facing. Are we giving peace and care to others by leaning into relationships, or are we bringing unrest and tension through our selfishness and striving?

The story of Martha and Mary is a prime example. (And yes, I am often a Martha). Jesus came into a town and was invited into Martha's house. We can imagine her wide eyes, knowing the Messiah was going to eat at her table, partake of her offerings, and lounge in her facilities. *Pull out the wine, finish the laundry, bring out the bleach!* And there was Mary, her sister, sitting at Jesus' feet, being present for her Savior. I know I would be annoyed. But when Martha asks Jesus to chastise Mary, He tells her something interesting. He says, “Martha. You are consumed with all of these things, when only one thing is necessary. Mary is at peace. She made the right choice.” The difference between the two women in this moment was Mary's gentleness. To Mary, it wasn't about progress, image, or self. But about leaning into a moment with her Messiah. She chose what was greater.

Jesus gives us a roadmap of a humble spirit in the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12). Here He turns everything we thought we knew about success on its head.



Two dandelion seed heads are positioned on the left and right sides of the page, with their seeds blowing away in the wind. The background is a light, textured green.

# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# GENTLENESS

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1 PETER 3: 3-4

He attributes the Kingdom of God to the poor, sustenance to the hungry, laughter to the mourning, and belonging to the exiled. He gives hope to those who are hurting and humbled. He acknowledges the unique power of the acquiescence of the soul to God.

We have a hard time in our society with this concept of letting go to gain, with strength coming from vulnerability. We hold on so tightly to possessions, to our sense of rightness, to our opinions, and securities. And we are exhausted from our striving. But Jesus calls us forward into gentleness, into peace. He says, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29).

In the anthology, *Following the Call*, we get a beautiful picture of meekness from Elizabeth Elliot:

"Meekness is teachability. 'The meek will he teach his way' (Psalms. 25:9). It is the readiness to be shown, which includes the readiness to lay down my fixed notions, my objections and 'what ifs' or 'but what abouts,' my certainties about the rightness of what I have always done or thought or said. It is the child's glad: 'Show me! Is this the way? Please help me.' We won't make it into the kingdom without that childlikeness, that simple willingness to be taught and corrected and helped (Arnold, E., Bonhoeffer, D., & Lewis, C.S., 2021)."

Gentleness is letting go of the heavy burden of proving ourselves. It is being present for others. Loving those who hate us. Praying for those who mistreat us (Luke 6: 27-28). It is coming to God for air when the world threatens to suffocate us with empty promises. It is the childlike faith of sitting at the feet of our Messiah when there is still work to be done.

So, in those moments, when the stress is high, and the list is getting longer, I'm going to prioritize. I'll move down striving and achieving. Move up choosing relationships and gentleness. Put a star next to humility and "asking for help." But, really, I'm going to list only one thing as necessary. I'm going to put Jesus at the top.

May you find rest in His gentleness,

Kathryn ♥



1 PETER 3: 3-4

## Word Study

Greek  
**πραΰτης**  
prautes

### Definition(s)

mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness

Key Uses  
(NT 11 times)

1 Corinthians 4:21; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:2;  
Collosians 3: 12; James 3:13

## Digging Deeper

*After reviewing the etymology of the word, how has your understanding deepened or changed?*

*What trends or patterns do you see in some of the key usages of prautes? Based on these trends, what does gentleness mean to your heart?*



1 PETER 3: 3-4

## Exploratory Reading

Luke 6: 20-23; Luke 10: 38-42; Luke 15: 11-31; Proverbs 15

## Questions to Chew On

*After engaging in the readings, what resonated the most with you? Which examples of gentleness were the most poignant?*

*In what ways are gentleness a strength for you? A growth area? How can you glorify God through it's application?*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# GENTLENESS

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**1 PETER 3: 3-4**

*Heavenly Father,*

You have given us the greatest example of compassion and humility by sending your Son as our Savior and Deliverer. You are the gentle shepherd who leads us to green pastures and clear waters. Your presence alone let's our hearts be at peace. Please help us reflect Your loving presence to others. In your gentle name we pray,

*Amen*

## Reflections / Prayer Journal

YOU HAVE GIVEN ME THE SHIELD OF YOUR SALVATION; YOUR RIGHT HAND UPHOLDS  
ME. AND YOUR GENTLENESS MAKES ME GREAT.

**PSALM 18:35**

Teach me...

Reveal....

Change...

Help me to....



**Notes:**

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# SELF-CONTROL



A person without self-control  
is like a city with broken-down walls.

**PROVERBS 25:28**





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# SELF-CONTROL



A person without self-control  
is like a city with broken-down walls.

**PROVERBS 25:28**

The word of God provides us with many examples of what happens when we lack self-control. Within the first three chapters of the Bible, we are confronted with mankind's inability to resist the temptation of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In the very next chapter, we have Cain unable to control his anger against his brother. How about Sarai wanting a child so bad she takes matters into her own hands by suggesting Abram have a child with their servant Hagar. We see that our desires and passions and pride can lead to wickedness, causing us to go against God's desires.

One story stands out as an example of a lack of self-control and the consequences it brings. King David, God's anointed king of Israel and considered a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), has restored the Israelite nation and has proven himself as a leader and man of God, yet he succumbs to temptation. The nation is at war fighting the Ammonites while David is lounging around at home. After a midday rest, David is walking around on the roof of his palace and spots a woman of "unusual beauty", Bathsheba, taking a bath. He sends a messenger to find out who she is to bring her to him. He sleeps with her and she becomes pregnant. The story doesn't end there. When her husband, Uriah, returns from battle, David tries to get him to return home "to rest." Wink. Wink. But he refuses that luxury because the rest of the men and the Ark are living in tents. David was hoping that if Uriah slept with his wife, he could pawn the child as Uriah's. Now David's lack of self-control creates further problems when he has the commander of his army place Uriah on the front lines of a battle, so Uriah is killed.

David's first problem was acting upon an urge. He could have left the roof and fled temptation, but instead, he acted upon it. Rather than asking for forgiveness or taking ownership of his actions, he has Uriah killed. David's lack of self-control has lasting consequences. The prophet Nathan relays a message from the Lord that David's own household will rebel against him (2 Samuel 13, 15, 18), David's wives will be given to another man in public view (2 Samuel 16), and the child he conceived with Bathsheba will die (2 Samuel 12). David recognizes his sin and is forgiven, but the consequences remain. For valuable insight into David's character after this event, read Psalm 51.

Contrary to David, we have the story of Jesus's temptation as an example of self-control (Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13). After His baptism and the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus like a dove, Jesus is led to the wilderness where He is tempted by the devil. Imagine being in the wilderness for forty days and nights. Jesus was most likely hungry, tired, and lonely. The first temptation is to Jesus's hunger. The second is to doubt his father's love and protection. The third temptation is earthly things (things we worship more than God).



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# SELF-CONTROL



A person without self-control  
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**PROVERBS 25:28**

In each of these temptations, Jesus's response was, "The scriptures say...." He was prepared for these temptations and was able to use self-control to avoid falling into sin. Jesus not only knew scripture, He obeyed it.

For anyone who knows my story, they know self-control was never one of my strong suits. Like David, I lacked self-control. If something felt good, I wanted more of it. From my early childhood to my 30s, I only sought my own satisfaction. Whatever tasted good, whatever felt good, I did it. And current society believes the same. Society wants us to believe we should be able to do as we wish, that we should be able to live our best life. Our happiness is paramount to anything else. The sad reality is what may bring satisfaction now may only be temporary, may lead to addiction or may have lasting consequences. Happiness does not always equal healthy.

Self-control is the ability to exercise restraint or control over one's feelings, emotions, or reactions. It is certainly not easy and is not built overnight. In the movie *Evan Almighty*, the "God" character tells the main character's wife, "If someone prays for patience, do you think God gives them patience? Or does he give them the opportunity to be patient? If he prayed for courage, does God give him courage, or does he give him opportunities to be courageous? If someone prayed for the family to be closer, do you think God zaps them with warm fuzzy feelings, or does he give them opportunities to love each other?" Self-control takes time. Fruit takes time to grow. It requires pruning and constant awareness.

If we want the fruit of self-control in us, we must live in close union with Jesus (John 15:4-5). We must submit to Him, love Him, remember Him, and imitate Him. We must learn the proper way to respond in situations needing self-control. What to do and what not to do. Like Jesus, we must recite scripture back to our temptations. Surround yourself with people that will hold you accountable and lead you on paths of righteousness.

May the Lord impart His strength as  
your self-control grows,

*Robert*





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

## SELF-CONTROL



A person without self-control  
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**PROVERBS 25:28**

### Word Study

Greek

**ἐγκράτεια**  
egkrateia

Definition(s)

self-control; the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites; disciplined; temperance; moderation or self-restraint in action

Key Uses  
(NT 3 times)

2 Peter 1:5-9; Proverbs 25:28; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27;  
1 Peter 4:7; Proverbs 16:32;

### Digging Deeper

*After reviewing the etymology of the word, how has your understanding deepened or changed?*

*What trends or patterns do you see in some of the key usages of egkrateia or self-control? What do these patterns reveal about God and/or how we are to behave?*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

# SELF-CONTROL

A person without self-control  
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**PROVERBS 25:28**



## Exploratory Reading

2 Samuel 11-24; Matthew 4:1-11; Genesis 18-19; Genesis 3;  
Genesis 25:27-34; Judges 13-16; Daniel 1-6

## Questions to Chew On

*How has your lack of self-control hurt you in the past? What do the examples in scriptures suggest?*

*What do the readings reveal to your heart about your self-control or lack of it? What do you need to do to build your self-control?*



# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

## SELF-CONTROL



A person without self-control  
is like a city with broken-down walls.

**PROVERBS 25:28**

*Heavenly Father,*

Thank You so much for your love. Thank You for walking along side us in our difficult times. Temptations are many and our spirit is willing but our body is weak. Lord, we pray for Your Holy Spirit power in us. Prepare our heart and mind to respond in difficult moments with Bible-inspired clarity. Surround us with believers that will encourage us and strengthen us. Thank you, Lord, for these opportunities of growth. May your name be glorified in them all.

In your faithful name I pray,

*Amen*

## Reflections / Prayer Journal

LET THE MORNING BRING ME WORD OF YOUR UNFAILING LOVE, FOR I HAVE PUT MY TRUST IN YOU. SHOW ME THE WAY I SHOULD GO, FOR TO YOU, I ENTRUST MY LIFE. –

**PSALM 143: 8**

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**Notes:**





# FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

## EPILOGUE

Upon inspiring others to write authentically, William Wordsworth once penned, “Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart.” This devotional is just that: the year-long inhales and exhales of our research, reflections, and experiences during the planning stage of season 3. This process has been a journey and we are so incredibly grateful that you have experienced it with us through the study of this devotional.

As we wrap up, our prayer is that the Lord has blessed you as you dedicated time to reading His Word and that you know deeply in your heart how much you are loved. We encourage you to keep digging into the Word. Stay hungry for His truth. And share the Good News with others in your community who may need hope and healing.

Thank you for taking the time to join us!

We would love to hear how this study impacted you. You can reach us through the following media sources:

**Website:** [TheF3llowshippodcast.com](https://thef3llowshippodcast.com)

**Email:** [questions@thefellowshippodcast.com](mailto:questions@thefellowshippodcast.com).

**Instagram:** @thef3llowship

**Facebook:** The F3llowship Podcast

We look forward to future discussions and hearing the insight, wisdom, and discernment you have experienced through this study!

*With Love,*

Robert, Stephen, & Kathryn

# References

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