

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

2023



LOVE



1 John
4:10-11:19

WEEK 1

Love doesn't refer to warm feelings but to a deliberate attitude of goodwill and devotion to others. Love gives freely without looking at whether the other person deserves it and it gives without expecting anything back.

Personal Reflection: Are you motivated to do for others as Christ has done for you, or are you giving in order to receive something in return?

SCRIPTURE ✱

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another... We love because he first loved us."



ASK ✱

- What do you learn about God and love in this passage?
- Where do you see Jesus demonstrating this fruit of the Spirit?
- What do you see or learn about yourself?
- What changes (thoughts, beliefs or actions) might God be calling you to make?

NOTES ✱

CULTIVATE

Jesus spoke in Matthew 13 of different types of soil. God wants us to till the soil of our hearts so that we would be receptive to the seed of his Word and bear fruit. Before digging into Scripture, prepare your heart by asking the Holy Spirit to help your heart receive and respond to His Word.

PLANT

Read the Scripture passage. Feel free to mark up the passage, highlighting key words or phrases.

MEDITATE & MEMORIZE:
Choose a key verse that the Holy Spirit reveals to you and record it below. Commit to memorizing it and spend time this week meditating on it.

GROW

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the quality of love in your life. Consider recent examples. Where did you feel like the Spirit was helping you live this out, rather than times when you allowed your natural, sinful nature to take over?

Matthew 3:8 says, "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." Is God showing you any areas where pruning is necessary so that you can bear more fruit?

NURTURE*

- Focus your mind and heart this week on the Agape love described by Paul in 1 Cor. 13. As you study, examine your motives for loving and serving others. Confess any wrong motives that the Holy Spirit reveals and pray that you would be motivated to serve others through the love of Christ.
 - God demonstrated His love by sending His Son to be a sacrifice for our sins. Loving others involves willing sacrifice without expecting anything in return. Consider how you (or your family and/or small group) could serve this week in love – not duty or guilt. Suggestions include making a meal for someone who is sick or recovering from surgery, offering a ride to someone in need or babysitting for a single mom.
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HARVEST*

We find various stories in the Bible illustrating these virtues at work in people's lives. Most importantly, these virtues were perfectly displayed in Jesus' life. Your personal story is also important, and it's a testimony to those around you. Reflect back on the quality of love in your life and note any changes that the Holy Spirit revealed to you throughout the week. Was anything convicting? Did you make any changes or take any action steps in obedience to the Spirit? How will you be different as a result?

PERSONAL *

ANSWERED **PRAYERS** *

GROUP *

I'M THANKFUL FOR *

SERMON NOTES *

JOY



James
1:2-9

WEEK 2

Joy is completely independent of good or bad circumstances. It's a supernatural gladness given by God's Spirit that actually seems to show up best during hard times. It's a byproduct of fixing our focus on God's purposes for the events in our life rather than on the circumstances.

Personal Reflection: Are you experiencing the joy of life on a regular basis or is your happiness dependent on your circumstances?

SCRIPTURE ✱

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.”



ASK ✱

- What do you learn about God and joy in this passage?
- Where do you see Jesus demonstrating this fruit of the Spirit?
- What do you see or learn about yourself?
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NURTURE*

- Joy is a decision we make to trust God's goodness. It's possible to have joy in the midst of trials because we rejoice in the Lord – not our circumstances. Perhaps you have not responded well to trials and circumstances in your life. Maybe you've found yourself complaining, growing short-tempered, and allowing anger to build up in your heart. Confess any failures that the Holy Spirit reveals. Ask God to soften your heart and open your eyes to the reasons you have to rejoice. Keep a joy journal this week. Record the reasons you have to rejoice and the reminders of God's faithfulness that you encounter in your everyday life. Remember that rejoicing is a command. "I will say it again; Rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4)
- Think about a trial you currently are facing. Spend some time in prayer and thank God for the good He is bringing about in your life through that trial. If you know someone else who is struggling, consider reaching out to encourage and support them.

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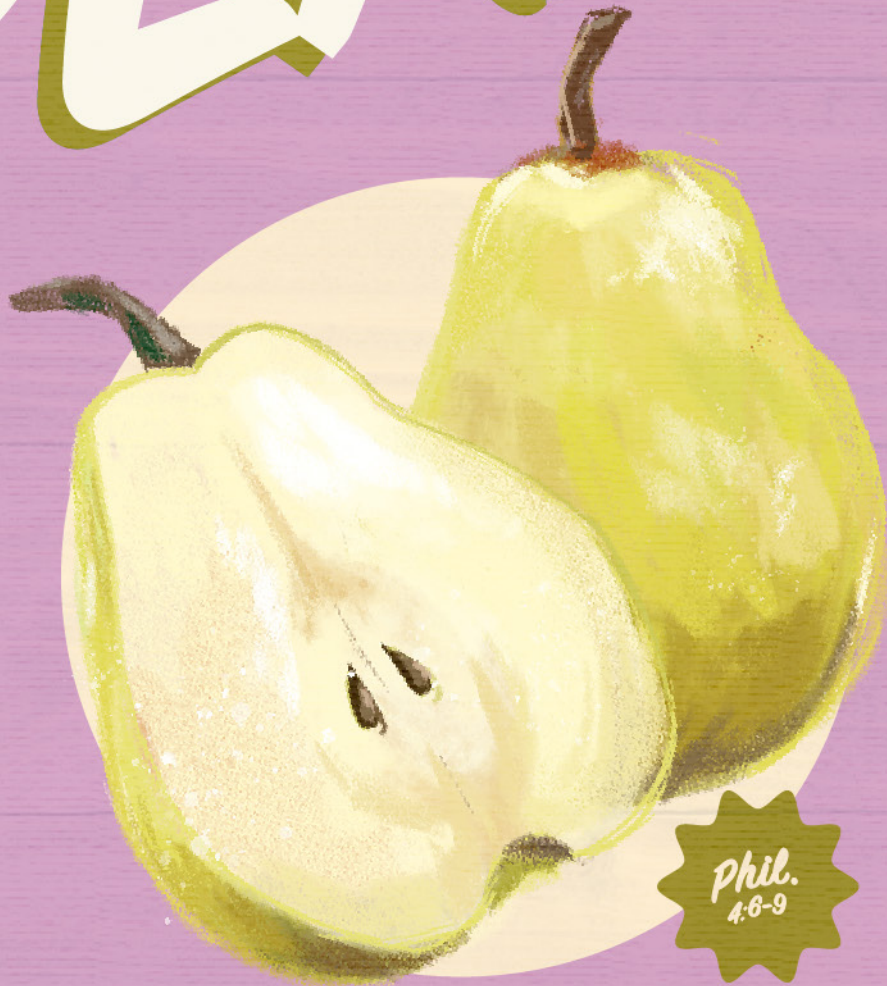
ANSWERED **PRAYERS** *

GROUP *

I'M THANKFUL FOR *

SERMON NOTES *

PEACE



Phil.
4:8-9

WEEK 3

Peace is a sense of wholeness and completeness that we experience as we spend time in the presence of God. We are able to rest in knowing that our Good Father is in control of all things.

Personal Reflection: Are you easily frazzled by life's trials or do you easily experience "the peace that surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:6-7)?

SCRIPTURE

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 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."



ASK

- What do you learn about God and peace in this passage?
- Where do you see Jesus demonstrating this fruit of the Spirit?
- What do you see or learn about yourself?
- What changes (thoughts, beliefs or actions) might God be calling you to make?

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Matthew 3:8 says, "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." Is God showing you any areas where pruning is necessary so that you can bear more fruit?

NURTURE*

- Developing a Lifestyle: This week, be intentional in talking to God about everything, including specific areas in your life where you are lacking peace. Be intentional to bring your concerns to the Lord all day long. Confess your worries and anxious thoughts. Ask Him for wisdom and peace. Praise Him for His help. Record your story below, noting any changes that you noticed in your peace levels throughout the week.
- Meditate on Philippians 4:6-9. Ask God to install a 4:6-9 alarm in your heart that will alert you every time you entertain a thought that doesn't match this verse. When you find yourself stuck in a situation you can't change, ask God to help you focus on what is true and to find good even in your difficult circumstances.

HARVEST*

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GROUP *

I'M THANKFUL FOR *

SERMON NOTES *

PATIENCE



James
5:7-11

WEEK 4

Patience implies suffering, enduring or waiting. We are called to wait patiently for God; to endure patiently for God; to endure patiently in the midst of various suffering, wrongs and evils and to patiently bear injustices in this world. We are able to wait on God because we trust that He is sovereign in all circumstances, working to bring about His plans and purposes.

Personal Reflections: Are you easily set off when things go wrong or irritated by interruptions or people? Or, are you more likely to respond in loving, patient way?

SCRIPTURE

“Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord’s coming is near. Don’t grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.”



ASK

- What do you learn about God and patience in this passage?
- Where do you see Jesus demonstrating this fruit of the Spirit?
- What do you see or learn about yourself?
- What changes (thoughts, beliefs or actions) might God be calling you to make?

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NURTURE*

- Gut-Level Prayer: Sometimes when you're suffering, praying can be difficult – especially if you're trying to mind your manners with God and pray correctly. Remember that prayer is open and honest communication with God. Follow Job's example and let God know just how miserable you are – just how angry, sad, scared or confused you may be. Tell Him exactly how you feel. You aren't fooling Him by trying to keep a secret from Him.
- What things are you impatient about in your life this week? Come up with a plan to turn those things over to God (without grumbling or complaining) this week. Share with a trusted friend, family member or your small group. Record your story in the Harvest section below.

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PERSONAL *

ANSWERED **PRAYERS** *

GROUP *

I'M THANKFUL FOR *

SERMON NOTES *

KINDNESS



Eph.
4:32

WEEK 5

Kindness is the giving of oneself for the good of another person.

Personal Reflection: Is it your goal to serve others with kindness, or are you too focused on your own needs, desires or problems to let goodness of God overflow to others?

SCRIPTURE



"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

"But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.

If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."



ASK

- What do you learn about God and kindness in this passage?
- Where do you see Jesus demonstrating this fruit of the Spirit?
- What do you see or learn about yourself?
- What changes (thoughts, beliefs or actions) might God be calling you to make?

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NURTURE*

- Who is an enemy in your life – someone who has been unkind, mistreated you or hurt you? Consider one or two ways that you can show them kindness this week (and do it!). Pray that Christ's lovingkindness will fill you so that you can love them.
- Ask God to bring to mind a time when you were recently unkind to someone – perhaps a family member, friend or co-worker. Plan an act of kindness toward that person this week.

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ANSWERED **PRAYERS** *

GROUP *

I'M THANKFUL FOR *

SERMON NOTES *

GOODNESS



Matt.
5:16

WEEK 6

Goodness is an expression of love to others by doing good; using your own resources to relieve their need and seeking their welfare in every possible way. Works are an expression of goodness in three ways: First, they are done according to right standards according to biblical Truth. Second, they are done with right motives – love for God and others and gratitude for God’s grace. Finally, they are done with right purpose – God’s glory.

Personal Reflection: Does your life reflect the goodness of God? Do you desire to see others experience God’s goodness through you?

SCRIPTURE ✱

“In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”



ASK ✱

- What do you learn about God in this passage?
- In what ways do you see the Fruit of Goodness demonstrated in the life of Jesus?
- What has been the impact on others when you choose not to do good in a situation? How might it have been different if you made a different choice?
- What changes (thoughts, beliefs or actions) might God be calling you to make?

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NURTURE*

- Galatians 6:9 says, "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary." Read 1 Peter 3. How do these passages encourage you to not grow weary in doing good?
- Take time to pause, reflect and pray. How can you nurture the characteristic of goodness in your life and then live it by doing good works?

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PERSONAL *

ANSWERED **PRAYERS** *

GROUP *

I'M THANKFUL FOR *

SERMON NOTES *

FAITHFULNESS



Matt.
25:21

WEEK 7

A faithful person is reliable. They can be counted on to keep their word and stay true to their commitments. They have a strong sense of stewardship, realizing that all they have comes from God and they will one day answer to him for how they have used their gifts and talents. God's faithfulness to us, with the help of the Holy Spirit, helps us move toward greater levels of faithfulness as we become like Christ. As we become more and more like Christ, those around us will begin to experience and see us as increasingly reliable and trustworthy.

Personal Reflection: Are you true to your word and commitments? Are you faithfully using your God-given gifts and talents?

SCRIPTURE ✱

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’”



ASK ✱

- What do you learn about God and faithfulness in this passage?
- Where do you see Jesus demonstrating this fruit of the Spirit?
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NURTURE*

- What is an area of your work or family where you have not kept your word? Prayerfully make a fresh commitment to show up, complete a task as promised or reach out to someone you have put off for a long time.
- What are your God-given gifts and talents? Consider ways you can faithfully use them to serve God and others this week.

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I'M THANKFUL FOR *

SERMON NOTES *

GENTLENESS



Matt.
11:29-30

WEEK 8

Gentleness (meekness) is often misunderstood as weakness, but it is not without power. Just like our Savior, Jesus, it is characterized as strength under control. It's the kind of life that is characterized by a lack of hard-heartedness, unforgiveness and harshness in correction.

Personal Reflection: Do you come across as harsh and headstrong or does the gentle grace of God flow through you to others? As the Lord has dealt gently with you, how have you learned to do the same with others?

SCRIPTURE

“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”



ASK

- What do you learn about God and gentleness in this passage?
- Where do you see Jesus demonstrating this fruit of the Spirit?
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NURTURE*

- Have you recently been harsh with someone? Ask God and that person for forgiveness.
- Ask God to help you use the Spirit's power to respond with gentleness in every situation this week. Record your story in the Harvest section.

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I'M THANKFUL FOR *

SERMON NOTES *

SELF-CONTROL



Prov.
25:28

WEEK 9

Scripture tells us that our fleshly desires are continually and constantly at odds with God's Spirit, always wanting to be in charge. Self-control is the exercise of inner strength, under the direction of wise and sound judgment, with the help of the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit that allows us to both think and act in ways that are pleasing to God.

Personal Reflection: Do you allow fleshly desires to control your life, or do you allow the Spirit to direct you in your thoughts, words, and deeds? Is there an area of your life where you are “out of control” right now and you need the power of the Holy Spirit to help you?

SCRIPTURE ✱

“Like a city whose walls are broken through is a person who lacks self-control.”



ASK ✱

- What do you learn about God and self-control in this passage?
- Where do you see Jesus demonstrating this fruit of the Spirit?
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NURTURE*

- In what area do you most often seek instant gratification? This week, ask God to give you strength to consistently resist that "foolish desire" so that you may reap the long-term benefits. Record your story in the harvest section.
 - Scripture commands us to teach self-control to each generation. How can you be a better example of this quality to someone younger than you?
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*Grace Covenant
Church*