

EXPLORING

The



Fruit of the

Spirit



*Love God & others
in the power of the
Spirit*

Women's Bible Study
October – December 2021

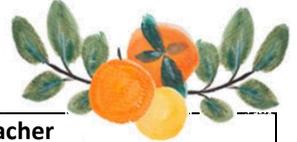
Bearing Fruit for Every Good Work

We cannot grow, learn, or produce the fruit of the Spirit on our own. We can only develop the fruit by maintaining an intimate relationship with the Spirit of God. As we walk with God, He develops in us the fruit of the Spirit. Let's take a close look at the fruit of the Spirit – living proof that the Spirit dwells in us!

We will look at what happens to our thoughts, emotions, and actions when we live each day in intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Let's dig into God's Word to let it convict and encourage us and see how the Holy Spirit reproduces the character of Christ within us.

Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better.

Colossians 1:10, NLT



Schedule

Wednesdays, October – December 2021

Date	Lesson	Teacher
Oct 6	Intro & Galatians Overview	Carla Jones
Oct 13	Live by the Spirit	Carla Jones
Oct 20	Love	Diane Folk
Oct 27	Joy	Meghann Blankenship
Nov 3	Peace	Elain Moske
Nov 10	Patience	Amy Witschey
Nov 17	Kindness	Patricia Bettis
Nov 24	<i>Singing</i>	N/A
Dec 1	Goodness	Megan Shreve
Dec 8	Faithfulness	Judy Corey
Dec 15	Gentleness	Ginnelle Dowdy
Dec 22	Self-Control	Paige Bradley
Dec 29	<i>Singing</i>	N/A

To be most effective, this study invites your personal involvement. Each week contains 5 daily lessons which will require 15-30 minutes to complete. If you spend time in the Word of God each day, He will change your life. Our classes each week are on Wednesday evenings with various women leading each class. When we gather on Wednesdays we will discuss what we have learned in our personal study and expound upon it. So for each week, you will do the "Day 1" lesson on the Thursday before our Wednesday class, etc.

Each daily lesson begins with a scripture marked with . Try writing each day's verse on an index card. Writing scripture is a great way to let God's word sink into our hearts.

References & Resources:

1. John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Galatians* (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute, 1987)
2. Spiros Zodhiates et al, *The Complete Word Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992)
3. James Strong, *Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary of the Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers)
4. *The Fruit of the Spirit: How the Spirit Works In and Through Believers* (Rose Publishing, 1984)
5. Elizabeth George, *A Woman's Walk with God* (Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 2000)
6. Darlene Schacht, *Abundance: Bearing Fruit for Every Good Work* (Manitoba: Time-Warp Wife Ministries, 2021)
7. Beth Moore, *Living Beyond Yourself* (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2007)



Most quoted
scriptures use
the NIV Bible

WEEK 1 Introduction



Over the next 3 months our goal is to learn about, grow in, and experience the Holy Spirit. We will be studying the book of Galatians, concentrating on **Galatians 5:22-23**.

While we are focusing on these 2 verses, please keep in mind that **John 14** tells us that God gives us the Holy Spirit to be in us – Christ in us, the hope of glory.

Galatians

Staying true to context is a vital part of any Bible study; so, we'll begin our study with an overview of the wonderful book of Galatians. Paul wrote the letter to young Christians in Galatia who were in danger of losing their freedom in Christ. Galatians tells us how to be filled with the Spirit and free from the bondage of sin.

Many Hardships

Tomorrow we will dive into chapter 1 of Galatians. Today let's get acquainted with the area of Galatia and the people to who Paul wrote the letter to. On Paul's first missionary journey, he and Barnabas established 4 churches in the Roman province of Galatia (modern day Turkey). We can read about these 4 churches in **Acts 13 & 14**.

 Read **Acts 13:14-47** and write down the sequence of important events in the nation of Israel:

 Strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. (Acts 14:22)

 Read **Acts 13:48-14:23** What are the names of the 4 Galatian cities on this missionary journey:

 What is the good news and bad news of **Acts 13:49-50**?

Good News:

Bad News:

 Let's take a closer look at **Acts 13:50**. This verse has an important message for us to learn.

- Who did the Jews purposefully incite first? _____
- How did Paul describe these women? _____
- What did these women stir up? _____

God entrusted women with the gift of influence. This gift can be wonderful or terrible depending on how used. This quality is highlighted at the very beginning of our heritage. To whom did the serpent go to when he sought the ruin of Adam and Eve (**Gen. 3:1**)? _____

Do you suppose the serpent believed that Eve could talk Adam into anything? Consider the power of feminine influence. God made women the bearers of children and in most societies women assume the greatest role in childrearing. Our schools, daycares, Mom's Day Outs, and children's Bible classes are overwhelmingly staffed and taught by women. With divorce rates soaring, millions of children grow up without fathers in the home. Mothers possess incredible influence. For better or worse, your own self-esteem has probably been influenced most by the hands and mouth of your mother.

How do you use the powerful gift of influence? At its best it teaches, nurtures, encourages, exhorts, evangelizes, and disciples. At its worst it cripples and kills. The line between influence and manipulation is very fine. Influence is so easy for women to use, maybe that is why God exhorts us to "gentle and quiet" spirits. We must think before we speak and act. The Bible warns us about this not because we are so lowly, but because we possess such an awesome gift. How do I use the gift of influence in my home? In my church? In my workplace? When you consider your capabilities, both positive and negative, do you see the extreme necessity of learning to live in the Spirit?



How did the disciples respond to the persecution in **Acts 13:52**?

Do you think you would have responded the same way Paul and Barnabas did in **Acts 14:2-3**? Why or why not?



How did Paul respond to the persecutions in Lystra (**Acts 14:19-20**)?

Fill in the blanks: **Acts 14:22** NIV " _____ the disciples and encouraging them to _____ to the faith. We must go through many _____ to enter the kingdom of God,"

What does this verse teach concerning the popular "prosperity gospel" of health and wealth based on the depth of a person's faith?



Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? Or am I trying to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ. (Gal. 1:10)

Pleasing God

Paul had great spiritual tenacity. After being stoned and left for dead, his heart still ached for the lost people of Galatia and for the spiritual protection of the new believers. Paul cared so much for these new churches: he nurtured them, admonished them, and even had some strong words for them. Take a few minutes to slowly and thoughtfully read aloud **Galatians 1**. Reading aloud allows both your heart and ears to absorb God's word.



Look through **Galatians 1** again & answer the following questions:

- Why did Christ die for us (v4)?
- Why was Paul astonished or amazed (v6)?
- On what basis does Paul claim his gospel is true (v11-12)?

- One of the proofs of God's power is the evidence of a transformed life. Paul shares his testimony with the Galatians in verse 11 - 24. Note that God did not save Paul from poverty but from prosperity! He had been a man of both position and purpose.
 - How did Paul describe his position (v14)?
 - What did Paul see as his purpose (v13)?
 - When did God set Paul apart (v15-16)?

Easy Targets

Paul feared the infiltration of lies and false doctrine in this young church. And not just young Christians are susceptible to false teachers (**Matt 24:24**).



What does Peter identify as the motivation of false teachers (**2 Peter 2:3**)?



God's word suggests 3 major characteristics that make us easy targets for false teaching:

1. How can we guard against false prophets (**2 Peter 2:1-2**)?
2. What hard to admit reason is there for being led astray (**2 Cor. 11:3-4**)?
3. What does **Gal. 1:10** say makes us an easy target?

Few things on earth cause as much unhappiness as trying to win the approval and affirmation of people. The apostle Paul knew that seeking people's approval can lead to sin.

- What were we enslaved to before we met Christ? (**Rom 6:19-23**)?
- To what are we enslaved in Christ?
- What does Isaiah say would have been the result if Israel had been obedient (**Isaiah 48:17-19**)?
- In what way do we need to seek God (**Jer 29:11-13**)?
- What will be the basis for rewards from Christ (**Rev 22:12**)?



For you: what would it mean to seek only God's approval?



Crucified

Begin today's study by thoroughly and carefully reading **Galatians 2**.



Describe what you see as the major theme of this chapter:



I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal. 2:20)



Why did Paul oppose Peter?

Did you ever think that once the disciples were baptized and received the Holy Spirit that they suddenly became flawless? This is a great reminder that they fought the same battle with the flesh that we do!

Let's focus on **Galatians 2:20**. Get an index card or other paper and write out this verse. What does it really mean to be "crucified with Christ"? The phrase means identifying with Him in His death in such a way as to allow Him to live through you. Christ chose to walk this path to His death and at the end proclaimed, "It is finished!" In parallel, we must also choose to walk the path of the cross to allow the Spirit of Christ to live through us. We must make daily decisions to be crucified with Christ for victory in our daily battle with sin.



Credited Righteousness

As we continue to lay the foundation for our study of the fruit of the Spirit, carefully read **Galatians 3**. The temperature in Paul's letter is rising! He strongly admonishes them because of their attempts to add works to faith to earn salvation. The former Jewish believers were trying to convince the Gentile believers that in addition to believing in Christ they had to also be circumcised and keep the law. The simplicity of the gospel had become a stumbling block.



What does **Ephesians 2:8-9** say about our salvation?

Grace and Faith: Two crucial building blocks of our salvation. The Greek word for grace is "*charis*". According to *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Spiros Zodhiates et al, pg 1469)² "*charis*" means:

That which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, favor, acceptance, for a kindness granted or desired, a benefit, thanks, gratitude. A favor done without expectation of return; the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and benevolence of the Giver; unearned and unmerited favor...God's grace affects man's sinfulness and not only forgives the repentant sinner, but brings joy and thankfulness to him.



Reread the definition of grace. In the definition, underline or highlight the words that speak to your heart. Why did you choose those words?

The Greek word for faith is "*pistis*" and it means "firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality...Objectively meaning that which is believed." (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, pg 1162)²



Write **Galatians 3:6** on an index card and then answer:

- On what basis did God credit Abraham with righteousness? _____
- On what basis is righteousness credited to us (**Rom 3:22-24**)?

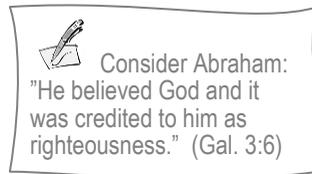


Read **Galatians 3:15-29**

- Did the law do away with the promise (v15)?
- Who was the "Seed" who received the promises with Abraham?
- How does the Law contribute to bringing us to Christ (**Rom 3:20**)?

Paul is trying to teach the Galatians about God's unfolding revelation. **1 Peter 1:10-12** beautifully demonstrates how God revealed His great salvation step by step. **Galatians 3** reveals this progressive revelation:

- ❖ God exclaimed the *Promise*: I will bless a people for My name's sake! (**Gen 12:1-3**)



- ❖ God exposed the *Problem*: All have sinned and fall short of My glory! (**Rom 3:23**)
- ❖ God extends the *Prescription*: God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (**2 Cor 5:21**)

Day 5

Abba, Father

Take your time and read **Galatians 4** aloud. Look for a prevailing theme.



What did you identify as the theme of this chapter?



Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." (Gal. 4:6)

Today our study will focus on understanding the parent-child relationship we've been invited to share with God.



Look carefully at verse 6 and write it down on an index card. Then answer the following:

- Because we are His children, where did God send the Spirit of His Son?
- According to **Romans 10:8-10**, what vital part does the heart play in salvation?
 - Another "member" of your body also plays a vital role in salvation according to these 2 verses. What is that body part and what must it do?
- Before whom was our confession made (**1 Tim 6:12**)?
- What specific confessions did Christ make in **John 18:36-37**?
- When did you publicly confess Christ as Lord?
- What is recorded in **Matthew 1:1-17**?

Beloved, the moment you believed with your heart and confessed with your mouth and were baptized into Christ Jesus our Lord, that genealogy became your own! Your heritage became a holy one. Your lineage became royalty. Your spiritual bloodline goes all the way back to Abraham! We have been added to the family of God through blessed adoption (**Rom. 8:14-16**). In our country, adoptions have a process, proceedings, costs, commitment, etc.



Turn to **Ephesians 1:3-6** and read the "proceedings" of your own adoption:

- When did God decide to adopt you?
- Through what "agency" did He acquire your adoption?
- Why did God go to all the trouble to adopt?



Lets finish our study today by noting what kind of Father your adoption has afforded you according to God's word:

- How carefully does your Father watch to know what you need (**Matt 6:8**)?
- In what way did the Father show His great love for you, and what does His demonstration suggest about His willingness to meet your needs (**Rom 8:32**)?

- How does **2 Corinthians 1:3** suggest that the Father can share your hurts?
- According to **Ephesians 2:18** is our Father distant or approachable?
- What is our Father’s attitude towards gift giving (**James 1:17-18**)?
- How does the Father regard you (**Deut. 7:6**)?

Now that’s a Father!

WEEK 2 Living by the Spirit

This week we will study a good bit of what the Bible says about the Holy Spirit. We will consider the divine nature of the Spirit, the ministries of the Spirit, and how we can walk in constant companionship with the Holy Spirit.



Bonus/Optional Assignment: In your Bible turn to the books of Luke and Acts. Note or even highlight everywhere you see the “Spirit” mentioned.

Day 1 Three in One

This week we will continue to build a foundation for our study of the fruit of the Spirit. Our goal this week is to increase our understanding of the Holy Spirit and realize His importance in our daily lives. Let’s see what **Galatians 5 & 6** say about this member of the Three in One.

 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. (Gal 5:16)

 Compare **Isaiah 40:13** and **1 Cor. 2:12**. What does the fact that the Spirit knows the thoughts of God suggest to you?

 Read **Gen. 1:1-2**; **Job 33:4**, and **Psalms 104:30**. What is the Spirit’s role in creation?

 Read **Psalms 139:7-10**. What characteristic of God does the Spirit display in these verses?
 all powerful present everywhere all knowing

 What evidence do you find in **Luke 1:35** and **Hebrews 9:14** that the Spirit is God?

 How did Jesus fulfill His ministry (**Acts 10:38**)?

According to **Romans 8:11**, where does the Spirit dwell?

In what names did Jesus command that believers should be baptized (**Matt 28:19**)?

Day 2

An Eternal Guarantee

Today we continue our study of the Holy Spirit by looking at His ministries. Read through each of the following passages and note the activity of the Holy Spirit:

- **John 16:7-11**
- **Titus 3:5**
- **1 Cor 12: 4-11**
- **1 Cor. 12:13**
- **1 Cor. 6:19-20**
- **Eph 4:30**
- **Eph 5:18**
- **2 Thes. 2: 13-14**
- **Romans 8: 26-27**



Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. (2 Cor. 1:21-22)

Day 3

Led by the Spirit

Today we are going to look at the different ways that the Spirit empowers us. Read through the following scriptures to determine each manifestation of the Holy Spirit:



Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking, and envying each other. (Gal. 5:26-27)

Describe a time when your spirit was willing, but you had no idea how to pray. How did God eventually respond to meet your needs in that matter?

- What does the Spirit do with the words of Jesus (**John 16:12-15**)?
- We are _____ by the Spirit (**Gal 5:18; Rom 8:14**).
- Which of your needs does the Spirit meet (**Rom 8:16**)?
 - security assurance of salvation
 - blessing abilities/talents
- **Romans 8:26** says the Spirit helps us to _____ and Holy Spirit helps us in our _____.
- List ways **1 Cor 12:1-11** describes the Spirit meeting the needs of the church & individual believers:

- The Spirit gives gifts, but Gal. **5:22-23** states that He develops _____ in the lives of believers.
- What does **1 Thess 5:19** and **Eph 4:30** tell us that we are not to do to the Spirit?
- The Holy Spirit can be grieved by our behaviors and actions; take a look at the verse following **Eph. 4:30**. What are we demanded to get rid of?

Have you ever held on to and nurtured the memory of a past sin? If so, what was the effect on your closeness to Christ?

Cherished sins hold us enslaved and vulnerable to Satan. God desires to pour out His blessings on each of us, but we separate ourselves from Him when we hold onto sin. Quench not the Holy Spirit; say yes to God. Grieve not the Holy Spirit; say no to sin.

Day 4

Flesh vs. Spirit

As we continue to lay our foundation for our study of the fruit of the Spirit, let's turn our attention to **Galatians 5 & 6** to see the contrast between the flesh and the Spirit.



In the 2 columns below, organize every detail these 2 chapters provide concerning the flesh & the Spirit:

THE FLESH	THE SPIRIT



From what you have learned so far, what do you believe it means to “live by the flesh”?



From what you have learned so far, what do you believe it means to “live by the Spirit”?

Romans 7:8,11 says, “sin, seizing the opportunity” oh how sin knows how to seize the opportunity. We struggle with “evil principalities” and our own flesh. Make note of the enemy identified in each passage:

1 John 2:15-17	1 Peter 5:8	Galatians 5:19
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Write out 1 John 4:4: _____

 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. (Gal. 5:17)

God has given us victory over all 3 enemies if we will follow Him in “triumphant procession” (2 Cor 2:14)! He that is in us is the key to overcoming “he that is in the world,” all that is “of the world,” and all that is of the flesh!



What has the Spirit given to us (2 Peter 1:3-4)?



Spiritually Mature

Take your time and read **Galatians 6**.



Restoration of a fallen brother or sister is a vital function of the body of Christ. According to verse 1, how does Paul describe the person who is to restore those caught in transgression?

To help us understand the phrase “you who are spiritual,” let’s look at the lesson on the spiritual man Paul included in his letter to the church at Corinth.



Read **1 Corinthians 2:6-3:3** and answer the following:

- For whom is the message of wisdom (2:6)?
- How long has God destined this secret wisdom to be ours? (check)
 - since Christ died on the Cross
 - since before time began
 - since we trusted Christ for salvation
- What does the Holy Spirit have to do with God’s plan for your life (2:9-10)?
- Why have we received the Spirit of God rather than the spirit of man (2:12)? Check one or more:
 - because we are really good people
 - so that we may understand what God has given freely
 - so that we may be empowered to live Christlike lives
- How does the Holy Spirit speak (2:13)?
- Why is one without the Spirit incapable of understanding the things of the Spirit (2:14)?
- How does Paul address the Christians at Corinth (3:1)?
- What is the outward manifestation of their spiritual immaturity (3:3)?

1 Corinthians 2:15 tells us that “the spiritual man makes judgements about all things.” The greek word here is *anakrino* which means “to discern, judge, to examine accurately or carefully.” What are the things we are to discern or judge? The “things that come from the Spirit”(2:14). The spiritual man judges things, not people! So going back to Galatians 6:1, only those “who are spiritual” should restore one who is fallen. Only a spiritual person could judge the situation without judging the sinner. God warns that the spiritual person must restore carefully and soberly “or you also may be tempted”! The spiritual woman is aware of what separates her from the carnal woman.

Sin comes easily, naturally. The carnal woman does what comes naturally from her old nature. If we are going to live as a spiritual woman, it will result from a deliberate, conscious surrender to the Holy Spirit of God. Surrender is a daily choice. An hourly choice. We are spiritual when the Holy Spirit is in control. So, how do we know if we are “in the Spirit? The answer is simple: by the **fruit of the Spirit.**



What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. (1 Cor 2:12)

Continue to Cultivate: Sometime this week while you are driving or exercising or folding laundry, listen to Tim Mackie’s *My Strange Bible* podcast on the Spirit and the fruit: <https://exploring-my-strange-bible.simplecast.com/episodes/3df850c9-3df850c9>

Today some of you are trying to complete this study, trying to stay focused, to be victorious in the face of ever-increasing odds...and you are completely exhausted. You keep working and trusting and yet still don’t see any changes in your husband, in your teenager, or your circumstances. The striving is exhausting. Please hang in there and remember two things:

1. God brings results from your obedience, you do not. Let Him do His work in His time. Keeping waiting because “those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.” Isaiah 40:31
2. You have everything you need by virtue of the Holy Spirit within you to bear your load. He had the power to speak words into being according to the Father’s will and the Son’s will, so He has the power to carry you through your burden!

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Galatians 6:9-10

WEEK 3 The Greatest of These is Love

Definition	Love is not based on emotions or feelings. It is a decision to be committed to the well being of others without any conditions or circumstances. Seeks the highest good of others.
Exemplified in Jesus	John 3:16; John 15:9, 12-14
Other Scriptures	1 John 4:7-12; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8
Greek Word	Agape (pronounced ah-gah-pey)



Today we begin the heart of our study: the fruit of the Spirit. Look carefully at **Galatians 5:22-23**. First, what is the fruit of the Spirit? The fruit of the Spirit is:

- the supernatural outcome of being filled with the Spirit
- the living proof that the Spirit of God dwells in us

Please note that the word “fruit” is singular, not plural. **Galatians 5:22-23** talks about one kind of fruit with nine different qualities, each of which we will study over the next several weeks.

Love. We talk about it. We sing about it. We praise it. We seek it and we long for it. “The fruit of the Spirit is love...” (**Gal 5:22**). God’s love is hard for us to grasp. How can we love the unlovely – not endure them, but love them? How can we truly desire the best - not just for ourselves and our friends - but for our enemies? Love challenges us. Love can frighten us and it can embrace us. Ultimately it is love that changes us so that we can become people who love. This week we will see components of love and the distinctive nature of God’s love. “For God so loved the world...”



But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22-23)



Eros: Grasping Love

God said that the first quality of the Spirit is love. We will spend this week examining this quality. We need precision in our study of love because while

our English language uses one word for *love*, the greek language had several totally different terms. We will look at these different terms this week. Today lets start with a common word used for *love* by the ancient Greeks – *eros*.

In Greek mythology *eros* love was taken from the Greek belief in a god by the same name. The word means “longing and desire.” *Eros* can be a selfish love; it asks “what can I get for myself?” It has become associated with sexual love. Human sexuality can be a destructive force in our society, but that was never God’s intention. He created physical attraction between a woman and a man. He did not intend selfish *eros*, but He definitely created the longing and desire that makes up sexual love.

Read the **Song of Songs (Song of Solomon) chapters 1 and 4**. Please do not skip this reading – it really will help you fully understand the love expressed in the fruit of the Spirit. Two different Hebrew words are used repeatedly in this book: *dowd* and *rayah*. In 1:2 and 1:4 we see the word *dowd* which means in the context, “My one beloved.” In the context of this Hebrew word, your husband is your *dowd* – your one and only lover. The other Hebrew word used in the divinely inspired description of love is *rayah* (1:9,15; 4:1,7;6:4). *Rayah* means “a female associate,” so what Solomon is saying here is “the woman of my dreams.” Sisters, physical desire is an important part of your marriage! *Dowd* and *rayah* are both specialized terms in the context of these scriptures. This type of love is acceptable towards only one person: your husband! If you are married, God gave you this gift (1 Cor 7:7).

According to these scriptures, an ongoing deprivation of your mate for inappropriate reasons could be considered a form of adultery. Describe a relationship that would be the opposite of depriving your mate. (Don't worry, you won't be asked to share your response in class!)



Read **1 Corinthians 7:3-6** and answer the following:

- Besides herself, to whom does the woman’s body belong?
- In the same way, to whom does the man’s body belong?
- What are the grounds for depriving each other?
- What are the two reasons Paul gives for a husband and wife to return to each other?

1)

2)

Sisters, Satan is out to destroy the church, which is best accomplished through destroying the family. He is looking for ways to tempt you. Let’s make sure our marriages are not vulnerable to attack. Satan will use every opportunity. The enemy of our flesh will attack us.

What if you are asking “*But how can I make myself feel desire for my husband if I just don’t?*”. Pray. Pray that you thrill to his touch. God can change your heart and give you healthy desires to your mate if you let Him.

There won’t be a question for group discussion from this day’s study. It may be too much of a temptation to share things that should rightfully remain in the private place of our marriages. But please share them with God! He is the ultimate marriage counselor.

2

Philos: Friend Love

God illustrates a second kind of love to us in His word - *philos* - it is a general term usually defined as “the love one has toward a friend or companion.” The word can simply mean “friend.”



Look up each of the following passages. What do you learn about *philos* from each of these Scriptures?

- **Luke 14:10** When a person has *philos* love for another, in what position does she place her friend?
- **Luke 15: 8-9** How do friends respond to each other’s joy/sadness?
- **Luke 21:16** What sad fact do you gather about friends?
- **Luke 23: 8-12** What caused Herod and Pilate to become friends?
- **1 Peter 3:8** Peter exhorts us to what kind of love?

In Christ, we are “blood relative”, sisters. How should our kinship affect our relationship?

- How does **Galatians 6:10** tell us to treat fellow believers?



Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. (1 Peter 3:8)

In the case of Herod and Pilate, the common interests were evil in nature. The catalyst of friendship is not always positive! Have you ever made a friend under the wrong conditions? What were those conditions, and how did the friendship prove to be a negative influence on one or both of you?

3

Agape: Caring Love

The Greek word used for love in Galatians 5:22-23 is *agape*. *Agape* is not a feeling or relationship based on common interest, but it is fueled by the highest interest. God commands us to *agape*. God included in His Word a beautiful discourse describing this unique kind of love. Read **1 Corinthians 13**. As you read through the chapter, keep in mind that every use of the word love or charity is the Greek word *agape*. Complete the chart using vs. 4-8:



It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (1 Cor 13:7-8)

Agape is...

Agape is not...

Today we will begin to look at 15 characteristics of agape love from the chart you made.

1. Agape is **patient**. The Greek word for this English interpretation is *makrothumia* meaning “a person who is able to avenge himself yet refrains from doing so.” Read **Romans 12:17-21**. What response of God does **Proverbs 25:21-22** add to Paul’s words in Romans? _____
2. Agape is **kind**. The Greek word for kind is *chresteuomai* which generally means “to show oneself useful.” In week 7 of our study we will focus on kindness.
3. Agape does **not envy**. The Greek word *zeloo* means “to be zealous” and has the connotation of a passionate jealousy. Allowed to simmer, envy always ends in some form of action. The same word is used in **Acts 7:9**; in this verse, what act did envy/jealousy spur? _____
4. Agape does **not boast**. The Greek word *perpereuomai* comes from the root word meaning “braggart.”
 - a. Why did God choose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise (**1 Cor 1:27-29**)?
 - b. What is the only grounds for boasting (**1 Cor 1:31**)?
5. Agape is **not proud**. What negative consequences resulted from pride in the following:
 - a. **2 Chron. 26:16**
 - b. **Psalm 10:4**
 - c. **Prov. 11:2**
 - d. **Dan 5:20**
 - e. **Obadiah 3**
6. Agape is **not rude**. Rude means “to behave in an ugly, indecent, unseemly, or unbecoming manner.” When the Holy Spirit is at work in us, He bears a sensitivity toward that which is indecent and obscene. If we participate in the obscene or indecent, we hinder our ability to exercise *agape*. **Phil. 4:8** gives us great guidelines to ensure the ability to exercise agape is not stifled in us. What kinds of thoughts are listed in this verse?

Proverbs 13:10 says “Pride only breeds quarrels.” The last time you quarreled with someone, was pride involved on your part?

Day 4

Characteristics of Agape

Today we will continue to look at 15 characteristics of agape love from the chart you made on **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**.

7. Agape is **not self-seeking**. **2 Timothy 3:2** explains that in the last days people will become lovers of themselves.
8. Agape is **not easily angered**. Since this type of love is not self-seeking, it can have the effect of helping us be slow to anger. Many times we are angry as a result of our perspective of how we are



Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins. (**1 Pet 4:8**)

personally affected by a situation. What does **Psalm 145:8** tell us about God's anger?

What does **Prov 15:1** tell us the key for dealing with anger is?

How does your reaction affect stressful situations (**Prov. 15:18**)?

How can you make life miserable for yourself and others (**Prov 21:19**)?

Why is the company you keep important (**Prov. 22:24-25**)?

9. Agape **keeps no record of wrongs**. Read **Psalm 103:10-14** and give an example of God's agape toward you:

Heb 10:16-18 describes God's ability to forgive and forget! Praise God – He keeps no record of wrongs! Do you?

10. Agape does not delight in evil but **rejoices in truth!** King David experiences the pain of exposed truth, but even as it hurt he found that freedom and gladness soon followed. Read **Psalm 119:29-32**. How would your life be different if you could passionately embrace the words and attitude of this psalm?

11. Agape **always protects**. The Greek word for protects is *stego* and it means "to cover over in silence." When we exercise agape love to someone we would never expose her faults to others. What a beautiful word picture: covering her with a cloak of love so her faults can't be seen. **1 Peter 4:8** perfectly expresses *agape* love in terms of helping us choose what to ignore or tolerate with grace. What does *agape* do? _____
-

12. Agape always **trusts**. The Greek word for trust is *pisteuo* which essentially involves having trust in someone.

13. Agape always **hopes**. The Greek word for hope is *elpizo* which means "to expect with desire." To hope in someone means to always trust them and to expect the best (not the worst – that's malice) from them. Paul sent Titus to the Corinth church with great hope that he would see why Paul loved them. Paul expected the best from them!

14. Agape always **perseveres**. Today we'd say it "hangs in there." Think about this: *Do you enjoy long-term relationships? How easily are you discouraged in a relationship?*

15. Agape **never fails**. The Greek word for fails is *ekpipto* which means "to be without effect, to be in vain." Hopefully this characteristic most of all encourages us towards agape love. *Agape* is never without effect. *Agape* is never in vain!

If He hasn't already, at some point God will call you to love a very difficult person with *agape* love. Rejoice that your obedience will never be in vain! Agape is always effective! *Agape* is divine love. It originates with the heart of God.

Day 5

Agape in Action

Today lets look at one more characteristic of agape.



Compare **Romans 5:8, 1 John 3:16, and 1 John 4:19.**

Write two factors these verses have in common:

Agape sacrifices. *Agape* is always demonstrative – it is more

a response (action) than a feeling – it always shows. *Agape* cannot help but be expressed because that is its essence. And as the expression(action) comes, the joy and affection will follow.



Carefully ready **John 17**. Then on the lines below write specifically how Christ shows His love in each of these verses:

- V. 6
- V.8
- V. 9
- V.12
- V.19
- V. 22
- V. 23
- V.24
- V.26

Because Christ loves us, He does those things for us. He demonstrated His precious, unspeakable love to us. It is love beyond comprehension.

Write **John 13:34-35** on a note card. How will we be known as Christ's disciples?



Read **1 John 3:11-24**. Note everything you learn about the demonstration of agape:

How can we know that we belong to the truth and set our hearts at rest in God's presence (v. 18-19):



Read **1 John 4:7-21**. Where is the only place you can receive *agape* (v 7)?

How do we know that we live in God and He lives in us (v. 13,24)?

What is the relationship between the Holy Spirit and love (see also **Rom 5:5**)?

Read **Matthew 22:36-40** then below write out the command found in **1 John 4:21**.



A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

WEEK 4 The Joy of the Lord is our Strength



Definition	Gladness not based on circumstance. Joy is more than happiness. It is not based on financial success, good health, or popularity. By believing in God, obeying His will, receiving His forgiveness, participating in fellowship with other believers, ministering to others, and sharing the Gospel, believers will experience joy.
Exemplified in Jesus	Luke 10:21; John 17:13
Other Scriptures	John 16:22-24; 1 Peter 1:8-9
Greek Word	chara (pronounced kah-rah)

This week we will investigate the second characteristic of the fruit of the spirit - joy! It is a beautiful source of attractiveness to a broken and needy world. Joy can touch the deepest part of the heart. We need joy and our world needs Christians who evidence the fruit of joy! Watch or listen to the *Bible Project's* word study on joy: <https://bibleproject.com/church-at-home/joy/>

Day 1 Joy's Foundation

The Greek word for joy is *chara*. *Chara* is the most common word translated joy in the English New Testament. It means "joy, rejoicing, gladness – enjoyment, bliss." In many ways it means "to celebrate." This week we will look at five reasons in the Bible for *chara*. Today we will begin with the primary reason and the rest of the week we will look at the other four as icing on the cake!



Send me your light and your truth, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. (Psa 43:3-4a)

 Read **Luke 10:17-20**. Christ's words to the 72, returning from their mission, reveal the first and most important reason for joy.

Why were the 72 joyful?

What was their greatest reason for rejoicing?

 What was the source of David's joy (**Psalms 51:12**)?

 Read **Hebrews 12:18-24** and then answer the following:

- What is the city of the living God called?
- Describe the assembly:
- Whose names are written in heaven?

 Now turn to the book of **Revelation** and answer the following:

- **Rev. 7:10** To whom does salvation belong?
- **Rev. 13:8** What is the record of names called?
 - To whom does the record belong?
 - What names are not written in the book of life?

- **Rev. 17:8** How long have names been written in the book of life?
- **Rev 3:5** What does Christ say about those who overcome?
- **Rev. 21:22-27** In your own words describe the New Jerusalem:
- **Rev 20: 11-15** From what have we been saved?

 Let's try to adjust our perspective so that our joy may be full in our salvation! Read **Psalm 39:4-7**.
How long will we be here on this earth?

- According to what we have studied, how long will we be in heaven?
- According to today's study, by what "record" or "reservation" will we enter the kingdom of Heaven?
- What does the Psalmist call his God (**Psalm 43:3-4**)?

God is our **Joy!** What do you enjoy most about God?



Discovering Joy

Today we will look at the second catalyst of joy – discovery. Read the following passages and note while each is very different, they have something in common: things hidden. You may want to read some of the verses before and after each verse to get a better context.

- **Matthew 13:44**
- **Matthew 28:8**
- **Luke 1:44**
- **Luke 2:10**
- **Luke 10:21**
- **Luke 24:52**

Each of these verses describe joy resulting from discovery. Each of these references describes the discovery of one perfect treasure – Christ Jesus. In each of these passages the locations and circumstances are different but there are two common things: the discovery of Christ and the joy of the discoverer.

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds.” **James 1:2** Lets read into God's Word to see where other believers considered it “pure joy” to face trials.



Read **Acts 16:16-40**. Why were Paul and Silas arrested?
How did Paul & Silas respond to their arrest and chains?
How did God respond to their praises?
What was the end result of Paul & Silas' imprisonment?

 At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. (Luke 10:21)

 How did Paul consider everything else to compare to the “surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:8)?

 According to Acts 7:54-60, what was Stephen’s condition?

 Write out Jeremiah 29:13

*“What kind of joy is this: to count it a blessing to suffer”
– Stephen Curtis Chapman*

Restoration Joy

Joy is not only a response to our salvation and our continual discovery of the One who saved us, but also a response to restoration.

 Read Psalm 71:1-24 and answer:

- What kind of relationship did the psalmist have with God? Why?
- What are the psalmist’s fears (v 1,4,9-12)?
- Is there bitterness in the psalmist’s words?
- From what is the psalmist seeking restoration (v20)?
- What will be his response to restoration (v.22-24)?

 Read Philippians 3:10. What did Paul say he most desired?
What 2 matters did Paul see as parts of “knowing Christ”?

1. The power of His _____
2. The fellowship of _____

 How long does Peter say we must suffer (1 Peter 5:10)?
What does Peter say will follow our suffering?

 Read Psalm 85:4-7. What caused people’s need for restoration?
What is the response of the restored sinner?

 In Jeremiah 31:18 discipline preceded restoration. “The Lord disciplines those He loves, and He punishes everyone He accepts as a son. Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness” (Heb 12:6-7,10). Look carefully at Jeremiah 31. Locate at least 10 promises regarding the joy of restoration and write them below:



Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, you will restore my life again...My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to You. (Psalm 71:20,23)

Day 4

Abiding Joy

Read **John 15:1-17** and then answer:

1. Why does the gardner prune the branches?
2. How is the branch cleaned?
3. How does a branch bear fruit?
4. What is the key to effective prayer?
5. How can we glorify the Father?
6. How should we respond to Christ's love for us (v9)?
7. How can we remain in His love (v10)?
8. Why has Christ told us to remain in Him (v11)?

Christ teaches us how to tap into His reservoir of joy to our fill: REMAIN in Me! The Greek word for remain is *meno*, which means "to abide, dwell, live." Let's dig into what it means to abide in Christ.

Ruth chose to abide with Naomi (**Ruth 1:11-18**). Ruth had no idea about the future, she just knew that she must be with Naomi. As we remain in Christ, we need the attitude and determination of Ruth. God's word impels us to abide in Christ (**Jn 15:3,7,10**) and when His words abide in us and we obey His commands we will abide in Him.

In **1 Kings 17-19** we read about Elijah at a high point confronting and defeating the prophets of Baal, but right after this he runs away in fear of Jezebel and fell into depression. Elijah wasn't living in sin, but he had lost his joy. All of us can be at risk of loosing our joy. Here's a few lessons we can learn from Elijah of things that can put us at risk of loosing our joy. **We may loose our joy...**

1. **When our outpour exceeds our intake.**
2. **When our talk exceeds our walk.**
3. **When we become "wonders junkies"**
4. **When we are exhausted.**
5. **When we feel alone.**

Allow God to restore your joy. Let God train you so that receiving and obeying His word becomes our "high" and then we will know the full expression of His joy. Where can we find true joy and pleasure (**Psalm 16:11**)?

Day 5

My Joy and My Crown

Read each of the following verses and answer its question. Note what you discover about joy as well.

1. **Romans 15:30-32** Why did Paul wish to be rescued from the unbelievers in Judea?
2. **Romans 16:19** Why was Paul full of joy?
3. **2 Corinthians 2:3** What did Paul desire to do when he arrived in Corinth?



You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. (Ps 16:11)



Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints. (Philemon 7)

4. **2 Corinthians 7:4** What was the basis of Paul’s encouragement and confidence?
5. **2 Corinthians 7:7** What news increased Paul’s joy?
6. **Philippians 1:25-26** Why did Paul desire to remain with the Philippian Christians?
7. **Philippians 4:1** What did Paul call his “joy” and “crown”?

I am so thankful God has given us each other! We are catalysts of joy for one another! The joy of the body of Christ, His church! God designed it this way, He does not want us to be disconnected – He gave us each other to enjoy.



What do you enjoy most about the body of Christ?

Write out Heb. 10:24-25



Read **Psalm 51:12-13**; How does our joy impact others?

Joy not only comes from the body of Christ, but also adds joy to the body of Christ. Our joy makes us soul-winners. The world is searching for joy. If all they want is happiness (a positive response to external things), why can’t they find satisfaction? If you got true internal joy people will be asking you how they can get it too. When someone asks about the hope in you, be ready with an answer (1 Peter 3:15). Joy keepers are soul-winners!

Bonus Assignment this week: Enjoy the body of Christ! Find a specific way to do it, be creative, and then praise God for the blessing and privilege of the church and fellowship!

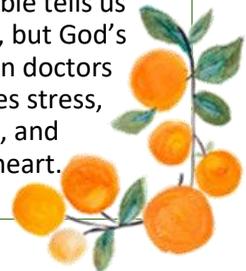
Count it all joy, sisters!

*“The secret of joy is Christ in me,
not me in different circumstances”*

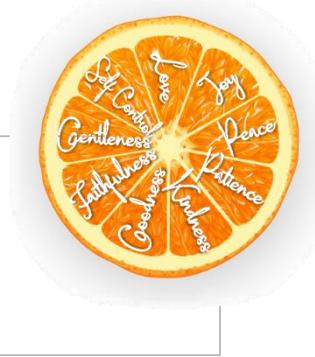
– Elisabeth Elliot

Did You Know

Joy is good for your health. The Bible tells us that laughter is the best medicine, but God’s not the only one saying that. Even doctors will tell you that laughter reduces stress, boosts your immune system, and increases blood flow to the heart.



WEEK 5 Peace Be with You



Definition	Contentment, unity between people; Peace is a state of assurance, lack of fear, and sense of contentment. It is fellowship, harmony, and unity between individuals. Peace is freedom from worry, disturbance, and oppressive thoughts.
Exemplified in Jesus	Isaiah 9:6-7 "Prince of Peace....and peace there will be no end."
Other Scriptures	Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 14:33; Philippians 4:6-7
Greek Word	<i>eirene</i> (pronounced eh-rey-ney)

This week we will study the third characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit produced in the christian. Peace. Everybody needs it; very few seem to have it. Let's see what the Word says about this precious commodity.

 The way of peace they do not know. (Isa 59:8)

Life without Peace

The book of Job considers the vital relationship between peace and the soul. Read **Job 1-3** and answer the following:

- What kind of man was Job (1:1-5)?
- What kind of father was Job?
- In Job 1:6 who made a petition before God? _____ Where had he been (v7)?
- What was Satan doing as he roamed the earth (**1 Pet 5:8**)?
- Why did Satan say Job had been faithful to God (1:9-11)?
- What calamities occurred in Job 1:17-20?
- What was Job's response to the calamities?
- What was Job's second test (ch 2)?
- How did Job's wife react (2:9)?
- How did Job's friends respond to his loss (2:11-13)?
- Reread **Job 3:1-26** and write a one sentence synopsis of Job's feelings:

Fill in the blanks: "What I _____ has come upon me; what I _____ has happened to me. I have no _____, no quietness; I have no rest, but only _____." **Job 3:25-26**

 Write below a circumstance that challenges your peace. Now pray to God asking Him to give you His peace this week in the area of your greatest need. Pray for insight and growth in God's peace.

AD 2

The Price of Joy

Yesterday we looked at life without peace. God's peace is key to spiritual, mental, and emotional wholeness. For the rest of this week we will study peace—its importance in the heart of God and how this same peace is applied to the hearts of Christians.



But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace... (Eph 2:13-14a)

Fill in the blanks:

“For unto us a child is born, to us a Son is given,
and the government will be on His shoulders.

And He will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, _____ . **Isaiah 9:6**

Do not suppose that I have come to bring _____ to the earth. I did not come to bring _____, but a _____.

Matthew 10:34

Do these two verses contradict each other? Let's dig into His word. The Greek word for sword is *machaira*, which means knife, and its antonym is *eirene* (peace)!



Read **Matt. 10:32-42** to get the context of this passage.

Who was He desiring to divide with the sword?

What is His “sword” (Eph 6:17)?



What do **John 14:27**, **Luke 24:36**, **John 20:19**, and **John 20:26** have in common?



Read **Col. 1:15-23**. How did God make peace?

Now that we have been reconciled to God, how does Christ present us in God's sight?

What happened to usher us from the sword of division to the peace of reconciliation? The cross! We could not experience peace with God until the fullness of the Godhead made peace with death.



Read **Ephesians 2:11-22**. Verse 18 shares the good news resulting from the result of our peace with God.

What does access to the Father mean to you?

AD 3

Peace in the Life of Christ

The death of Christ purchased our peace with God. Today we will begin to observe the nature of God's peace and how we receive it.

- Whose peace have we been given (**John 14:27**)?
- How does **Phil. 4:7** describe the peace of God?



Lets look at a portrait of peace in the life of Christ. Read **Luke 2:41-52**.

- How old was Jesus when He “stayed behind in Jerusalem”?
- How long did it take His parents to find Him and what was He doing when they found Him?
- What was Jesus' mothers response when they found Him?
- Why wasn't Jesus worried (v 49)?



Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. (John 14:27)

Most 12 year olds would have been worried when the sun set. Where to sleep? What to eat? Even though Christ was all alone, He was found in perfect peace.

 Lets look at another portrait of peace in the life of Christ. Read **John 6:1-15**. Why did Christ withdraw into a mountain?

Christ had perfect peace in provision. He didn't fret, he didn't ask someone to plan a pot-luck. Let's look at some basic steps He took to extend the peace of God's provision to the crowd:

1. He made them aware of their need.
2. He took what little they had.
3. He placed them in a posture to rest in His provision. He commanded them to "sit down" and only fed those who were "seated".
4. He gave them immeasurably more than they could ask or imagine (**Eph 3:20**).

 Christ was perfectly at peace with the needs of His followers bcause He had confidence in His Father's provisions. According to the following verses, what did Christ know about God that gave Him peace in time of need?

- Matthew 6:8-10 _____

- Matthew 6: 25-32 _____

- Romans 8:32 _____



More Portraits of Peace

Read **Matthew 14:22-33** . This occurs immediately following the feeding of the 5000.

- Why did the disciples get into the boat and head to the other side and where did Christ go?
- When did Jesus go out to them? [Note: He was already there by evening (v 23) and the fourth watch of the night was between 3am and 6am. He prayed for awhile!]
- How did Jesus approach the boat and how did His disciples react?
- Why should the disciples have no fear (v 27)?
- What were the circumstances surrounding the time that Peter walked on the water and what were the circumstances when he began to sink?
- According to this passage along with Matt 17:7 and 28:1-6, what is the only basis for fearlessness?



The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17)



Read **John 11**.

- How did Christ feel about Mary, Martha & Lazarus?
- Why did Jesus wait several days before returning and why was He glad that He was not there before Lazarus died?

- How did Mary and Martha each react to Jesus not being there (v21,32)?
- Why was Jesus moved (v38)?
- What is the outcome of believing God (v38,40)?

Christ had peace in aloneness, in provision, in the storm and peace in the wait and tears.

Day 5 Peace Prerequisites

Read **John 18:1-11**.

- Where were Jesus and His disciples going and what route did they take?
- How did Judas “know the place”?
- Who went with Judas to the grove and how were they armed?
- What reaction did the soldiers have when Christ replied “I am he”?
- What was Christ’s only request of the soldiers (v8)?
- How did Peter respond?
- How did Jesus rebuke Peter?
- What action followed the rebuke (**Lk 22:47-51**)?



The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. (Rom 8:6)

We see the Greek word for sword, *machaira*, again in **John 18:10**. Jesus told Peter “No more of this!” (**Luke 22:51**) because the time for peace had come. The peace of the cross.

He has greeted us “Peace be with you”. I want peace in aloneness, in provision, in the storm, peace in the wait and tears, peace in Your plan, and even peace in my death. How can we have such peace?

Prerequisites for Peace:

1. What made Jesus the one uniquely qualified to bring reconciliation (**Col 1:19-20**)?
2. To whom does peace belong (**John 14:27**)?
3. According to **Romans 15:13** and **Galatians 5:22** how does God give us peace?
4. Read **Romans 8:6** outloud. What does the verse describe as the key to peace?
5. Read **Isaiah 26:3**. What is the mark of a person who will have perfect peace?
6. What are the instructions Paul gives us in **Phil 4:6-7** for maintaining peace?

Our peace with God is translated into the peace of God through the Holy Spirit and is accelerated in us when our mind is focused on Him.

God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing. --CS Lewis

WEEK 6 Resisting in Patience



Definition	Slow to speak and slow to anger; Patience is slowness in avenging wrongs. It is the quality of restraint that prevents believers from speaking or acting hastily in the face of disagreement, opposition, or persecution. Patience is bearing pain or problems without complaining.
Exemplified in Jesus	1 Timothy 1:15-17 "...His unlimited patience..."
Other Scriptures	Proverbs 14:29; 15:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; James 5:8-9
Greek Word	<i>makrothumia</i> (pronounced mah-krow- th ew-me-ah)

This week we will study a form of patience (*makrothumia*) that is driven by mercy. Because God has mercy on us, He shows us an incredible patience. And because we want to become like Him, we will reflect His patience to others. Patience is inspired by mercy, devoid of confrontation, and evidence of the presence and power of our Holy God.

Day 1 Divine Hope

In **Galatians 5:22** the word patience is the Greek word *makrothumia*. In other places in our Bible the word patience is from the Greek word *hupomone* and is often translated "endurance" or "perseverance."

- What inspired the endurance of the Thessalonians (**1 Thes 1:3**)?
- Which Bible character had *hupomone* (**James 5:11**)? _____ What were a few of the situations/circumstances through which Job persevered?

 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. (Heb 10:35-36)

Why did Job remain faithful? What was his motivation? **Hope.**

- Read **Job 23:8-10**. When Job could not find God, in what did he take comfort?
- What works together for good of those who love Him (**Romans 8:28**)?
- The refining process is not usually comfortable, but what is our hope/expectation (**Rom 8:29**)?
- How are we being transformed into His likeness (**2 Cor 3:18**)?
- Read **Job 19:25-27**. In what was Job ultimately placing his hope?

In each of the following passages, write what appears to be the hope inspiring patience:

- **Hebrews 10:35-36**
- **Hebrews 12:1-2**
- **James 1:2-4**

- 2 Timothy 2:10
- 2 Timothy 2:12

Are you having trouble with a situation or circumstance? Based on today's study, what hopes do you possess to help you persevere through this trial?

Write out Colossians 1:27

Day 2

Be Still, Be Filled

In **Genesis 6** we see that God waited 120 years while Noah preached righteousness! Why did God wait that long? What prompted God's promise to never flood the earth again? God's promise was prompted out of patience, but what prompted His patience? Fill in the blanks:

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his _____, as some understand slowness. He is _____ with you, not wanting any one to _____, but everyone to come to _____."

2 Peter 3:15 "Bear in mind that our Lord's _____ means _____!"

We are saved because mercy prompted God's patience. God's patience means salvation! On a piece of paper write out **Genesis 8:22**; **Lamentations 3:22-23**; and **Psalms 30:5**. Meditate on the truth from God's word that the same patience of God that ushers in the dawn of every morning of your life also means your salvation. Pray to God in response to these truths and share your thoughts towards Him.



The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. (2 Pet 3:9)

Day 3

Lest You Be Judged

As we continue in our study of patience toward others that results from being filled with the Holy Spirit, we see God use the method of contrasts to teach us more about patience: patience vs. judgement. Today let's allow God's Word to put us to the test and reveal if we are quenching the Spirit of patience by fanning the flame of judgement. Study each of the scriptures below and write the reason(s) we must not judge one another:

- Romans 2:1-4
- Matthew 7:1-5
- James 4:11-12
- John 8:14-18



Therefore, let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister (Rom 14:13)

 What was David's attitude toward judgement after his sin of pride (**2 Sam 24:14**)? What does this verse say to you?

Understand that today's study is not referring to the absence of discipline in the church or the home. This study focuses on the actions far more frequent than restoration: the quick mental and verbal judgements we make toward one another. We have no idea how deeply imbedded this sin may be in each of us until we ask God to expose it. Pray today that God will give you an awareness of the sin of judgement and give you a sense of conviction over your tendency to condemn.

Day 4

Have Mercy!

Today's study will be devoted to discovering the ingredient of mercy that inspires Biblical patience.



Read **Matthew 18:15-35**. Everytime you see the word patience in this passage, it is the same Greek word, *makrothumia*, that we've learned to be a fruit of the Spirit.

- What question prompted the parable?
- How much did the servant owe the king? How much did the fellow servant owe?
- What was the response of the king when he heard about the confrontation between the 2 servants?

Three important terms comprise this parable: forgiveness, patience, and mercy. Both servants begged for mercy. The king granted mercy and forgiveness. The first servant responded only with judgement.

Forgiveness, Patience, and Mercy

The Greek word most often used in the New Testament for forgive is *aphiemi*, which means "to let go from one's power, possession, to let go free, let escape." (Zodhiates, 299)

- Who and what must we forgive (Luke 11:4; Mark 11:25)?
- Why must we forgive? We must forgive because God's word tells us to. Read **Luke 6:37** and **Matthew 6:14-15** then mark each statement true or false:
 - _____ God links His forgiveness of us to our forgiveness of others.
 - _____ God forgives us and does not expect us to forgive others.
 - _____ When we condemn others, we are condemning ourselves also.

We must forgive for our own sakes. Look back at the parable of the merciless servant and note the final punishment of each servant. The one who will not forgive always suffers more than the one not forgiven. We also must forgive so that we do not provide Satan with opportunity to take advantage.



Read **2 Corinthians 2:10-11**. In what ways do you think Satan takes advantage of you when you won't forgive?



Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Col 3:12-13)

Day 5 A Clean Slate

- Read **Ephesians 4:30-32**. What does unforgiveness do?
- Write **1 Tim 1:15-17** on a note card. Why did Paul consider himself to be the perfect choice?

Christ displayed unlimited patience towards Paul who then displayed unlimed patience towards others. Paul was capable of great forgiveness because he had received great forgiveness.

- Read **Luke 7:36-50**. "But whoever has been forgiven _____ little." (v. 47) In your own words write what you think this verse means:
- How does **Colossians 3:13** tell us we are to forgive?

In order to figure out how we are to forgive others, we must know how God forgives us. Look up each of the following scriptures and write down what you learn about God and His forgiveness:

- **Psalm 85:2-3**
- **1 John 1:9**
- **Psalm 103:12**
- **Psalm 130:3-4**
- **Jeremiah 31:34**

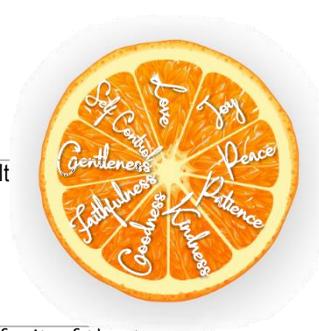
Write out **James 5:7-9**



Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Tim 1:15-17)

"Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him." 2 Peter 3:15

WEEK 7 The Cords of Kindness



Definition	Merciful, Sweet, Tender; Kindness is an eagerness to put others at ease. It attractive temperment that shows friendly regard.
Exemplified in Jesus	Titus 3:4-5; Ephesians 2:6-7
Other Scriptures	Proverbs 11:16-17; Jeremiah 9:23-24
Greek Word	<i>chrestotes</i> (pronounced krey- stah -teys)

By this point in our study, you have already discovered that each quality of the fruit of the Spirit is divine. They are impossible goals for the unbeliever; attainable (but not automatic) graces for the true follower of Christ. The week we will study the 5th quality of the fruit of the Spirit: kindness.

The Greek word for kindness is *chrestotes* which means “tender concern for others. It has nothing to do with weakness or lack of conviction”, rather it is “the genuine desire of a believer to treat others gently, just as the Lord treats him.” (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Galatians*, pg 168)

1 The Nurturing Parent

We hear a lot about God’s sovereignty and judgement, but what about His tenderness and kindness? You can know God, but not truly relate to Him. Our God has a tender heart. One of His names is *El Shaddai* which means “Father of sufficiency, our God, the nurturing Parent.”

Read **Genesis 16:1-15** and then answer the following:

- What was Sarai’s first problem (v1)?
- How did she attempt to solve her problem?
- What was Sarai’s second problem (v5)?
- What promise came with the angel’s instructions?
- What name did Hagar give God?

Despite Sarai’s scheming and trying to fix things herself, she still did not have the son she desired! Still today women are the problem-solvers and we try fix things our own way; when we do that, we help ourselves to many disasters! Read **Genesis 21:1-21** and answer:

- In spite of Sarah’s sin, how did God “fix” her problem?
- What caused Sarah’s anger at the feast in Isaac’s honor? (Note: Sarah weaned Isaac that day. She was probably already in an emotional, moody state!)
- Why did Hagar distance herself from her son?
- What did God tell Hagar to do?



“Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight.” (Jer 9:23-24)

This is such a tender story. Long before Christ drew a woman to a well, God drew a well to a woman. God's heart broke for this mother and son facing the scary possibility of death. He heard their tears and unleashed His loving kindness. He refreshed and restored them and vowed to abide with them as the boy grew, just as a loving father would.

If you are a hurting parent right now, allow God to open your eyes as He did Hagar's so long ago. Let Him refresh you at the well of the Living Water. You are richly loved, do not give up. Pray today that you can glimpse God's tender heart.



Read **Isaiah 12:2-6** and write a letter to the Father telling Him how you feel about His kindness and unfailing love.

Bonus Assignment: You probably know a mother who needs some encouragement. Right this moment give her a call, send her a thoughtful card, or drop by with a favorite snack and chat. Let her know that you are praying for her – then do it. She will be blessed and so will you!



Healing Kindness

If God shed such grace on Ishmael, how tender would His heart be to His own holy nation, His chosen people? Today lets see more of God's kindness – His tender heart and His nurturing Spirit.

 I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. (Hosea 11:4)



Read **Deuteronomy 7:6-9** and then fill in the blanks: "The Lord your God has _____ you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His _____, His _____."



Read **Isaiah 49:14-16** and respond:

- Have you ever felt forgotten by God? When?
- Who will forget her child before God will forget His?
- What assurance do we have that God will never forget His children (v.16)?



Read **Zephaniah 3:14-17** and then write out verse 17:



Read **Hosea 11:1-4**. Imagine the beautiful word picture of Father God teaching His children to walk. How does scripture say He led them and how were these cords tied?

What does **Psalms 81:10** tell us about God's nurturing Spirit?

What does **1 John 3:1** reveal to you about our Father's love for us?

Do you allow God to nurture you? Do you understand that He takes delight in caring for you?

Day 3

A Tenderhearted Savior I

Today let's peek into the tender heart of Christ. He invites us through His Word to behold the *chrestotes* of Christ in His tenderness towards children.



"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." (Matt 19:14)



Read **Matthew 18:1-9**

- What question prompted Christ's call for the child?
- How did Christ illustrate the "greatest in the kingdom"?
- Reread v. 5 and then compare it with **Mark 9:36-37**. What additional information does Mark's account give us regarding Christ and the child?

I imagine that Christ had such a gentle touch. He could have easily healed by thought or words alone, but most of the time He chose to touch. He touched the blind man (Matt 20:32-34), he touched the dead child that she might live (Mark 5:41). Christ demonstrated love, "He took her by the hand."

- Is it possible to make another person sin (Matt 18:6)?
- What is Christ's warnings in v. 7-9?



Read **Matthew 19:13-15**

- Why were the children brought to Christ?
- Who rebuked those who brought children?
- Why do you think Christ responded to the disciples the way He did?

Day 4

A Tenderhearted Savior II

Let's continue to peek into the tender heart of Christ. He invites us through His Word to behold the *chrestotes* of Christ in His tenderness towards the individual.



"And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. (Eph 4:6-7)



Read **1 Corinthians 15:1-8**. Wouldn't you love to know every detail of Christ's 40 days on earth between His resurrection and ascension? I imagine the time was designated for priorities while attempting to prepare this group of people for His absence. To whom did Christ appear during those 40 days?

Forty days is not even 6 weeks! Lets search the scriptures to see the tender heart of Christ as he picked the people to whom He would appear:

1. **Mary**. Read **John 20:1-18**
 - a. What did Mary see when she looked into the tomb?
 - b. Who asked her the 1st time why she was crying?

- c. Who asked her the 2nd time why she was crying?
- d. Who did she think Christ was?
- e. How did Christ identify Himself to her?

2. **Mary Magdalene.** What do each of these passages tell you about her?
- a. Mark 16:9
 - b. Mark 15:40-41
 - c. Mark 15:46-47

Mary Magdalene's heart was broken. She owed Jesus her life and sanity. Mary devoted her entire existence to her Deliverer. She did not deny herself the pain of watching Him die and she did not leave Him until the stone was rolled into place. Her grief was simply because she missed Jesus. So why did He appear to her? Because Mary's Lord and our Lord is tenderhearted.

3. **Thomas.** Read John 20:24-31
- a. What did Thomas need before he would believe?
 - b. What were Christ's words to Thomas?
 - c. How did Thomas respond?
 - d. What was Thomas ready to do with Christ (**John 11:14-16**)?

Thomas has been forever marked as "doubting Thomas." Christ's appearance here was made especially for him. Why did Christ want to reveal Himself to Thomas? Because our Savior is tenderhearted.

4. **James.** Read **1 Corinthians 15:7** again.
- a. Christ appeared to James, but according to verse 5 this was not one of the 12 who had seen Him. This James is the one mentioned in **Matthew 13:55**. So, who was he?
 - b. What does **John 7:1-5** tell you about Jesus' brothers?

Jesus' brothers grew into adulthood and were separated by unbelief. Jesus appeared to James and he beautifully cried out "My brother, my LORD!" Read Acts 1:12-14 to see where this intimate encounter led. Why did Christ appear to His brother? Because He is tenderhearted and He loved him.

Do you have lost family members? Jesus' experience with His brothers shows that He knows how you feel. His heart is tender to yours as well.

Christ appeared to those who needed Him most: a mourner, a doubter, and a mocker. And out of His tenderness came belief!



Which example of Christ's heart reminded you most of a way He has dealt with you in the past and why?

Day 5

Planning for Kindness

The characteristics of patience, kindness and goodness all deal with how we treat others. Let's look at how we can walk in kindness today.



Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Eph 4:32)



God's Truth – read and answer the following:

- **Luke 6:35.** To whom does God extend His kindness?
- **Romans 2:4.** What is the intention of God's goodness?
- **Romans 11:22.** What is the opposite of God's goodness?
- **Ephesians 2:7** and **Titus 3:4-5.** What is the result of God's gentleness and kindness to you?
- **2 Corinthians 6:6** and **2 Timothy 2:24.** What qualities should characterize God's people?
- What commands does God give believers in **Ephesians 4:32** and **Colossians 3:12**?
- **1 Corinthians 13:4** What does a failure to be gentle indicate?



My Response

- Who is your life tempts you to be unkind? What interactions with people especially challenge your efforts to be kind?
- Now choose one particular person who tends to bring out the opposite of kindness in you. Design a specific plan of action using the steps below to help you exhibit the fruit of kindness in dealings with that person.



Planning for Kindness. "Kindness is the ability to love people more than they deserve." (Joseph Joubert) So...

- Pray for your enemies, those people who mistreat and use you (**Luke 6:28**). Its hard to hate and neglect a person you are actively praying for!
- Spend time with God owning up to any ill will you have towards an individual or group of people. Ask for God's help in demonstrating the Spirit's kindness to those people.
- Ask God to help you be a comforter.
- Study Jesus' life for examples of kindness and follow in His steps.
- Begin making an effort at home to live out God's command to be kind to others (**Eph 4:32**). What does your husband need? Your children? Your parents? Your roommates? What would make their life easier?
- Pray for God to fill your heart with His compassion as you walk each day and every step along the way to Him.

She opens
her mouth
with WISDOM
the teaching
OF
KINDNESS
is on her tongue.

Proverbs 31:26

WEEK 8 The Goodness of God



Definition	Generous and open hearted; Goodness is the selfless desire to be open hearted and generous to others above what they deserve.
Exemplified in Jesus	Titus 3:4-7
Other Scriptures	Psalm 23:6; Ephesians 5:8-10; Galatians 6:9-10
Greek Word	<i>agathosune</i> (pronounced ah-gah-thow- soo -ney)

This week we will examine the next quality of the fruit of the Spirit: goodness. All three persons of the Godhead are evident in the fruit of Goodness. The Father has ordained us unto good works, Christ is our living example, and the Holy Spirit helps us to achieve this.

Day 1 His Goodness

The Greek word for goodness is *agathosune*. It means “benevolent and active goodness.” It is character energized, expressing itself in benevolent, active good. It “does not spare sharpness or rebuke to cause good in others. A person may display his *agathosune*, his zeal for goodness and truth, in rebuking, correcting, or chastising.” (Zodhiates, 63)

 “We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Eph 2:10)

Last week we talked about how kindness can be “harmless as doves” but this week we will see that a large part of goodness is being “shrewd as snakes.” Kindness and goodness may differ in their employment but they pair together to make us both willing to rebuke and lovely.

 Read **Ephesians 2:1-10** and answer:

- When were we dead in our transgressions and sins?
- Who is at work in those who are disobedient?
- How does v3 define disobedient?
- When did God make us alive with Christ?
- Why did God make us alive with Christ?
- What is our present condition (v6)?
- How does God “show the incomparable riches of His grace”?
- What kind of works were we created to do?

Day 2 Created for Good Works

We’ve been saved to do God’s good works. We have not only been called to the attitude of kindness but also to energize that character into acts of good or acts of beneficence. God is telling us that we are here to do kingdom good on carnal ground. We’ve been saved to fulfill an assignment that God issued in advance.

 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (Gal 6:9-10)

 What does **Romans 8:29-30** and **Ephesians 1:5,11** have in common?

1Peter 2:9 tells us we are a “chosen generation.” Combined with the two previous verses we see that we have been predestined in Christ. **Ephesians 2:10** tells us that our works were assigned in advance. All of this together tells us that God didn’t save us so that we could look attractive on Sundays, but God saved us and left us here because He has work to do. And God has chosen to do this work through us. If we miss our mission, we will miss our purpose!

 Read **Matthew 25:14-30**. With a greater awareness of your purpose, pray to God for a fresh perspective and understanding of God’s perfect Word.

- Who has gone on a “journey” and entrusted His property to us?
- Compare **Matt. 25:15** to **1 Corinthians 12:7-11**. What is the same and what is different in both situations?

Same

Different

Note that in both passages the Master is the Giver. When we understand spiritual gifts we can say, “Look at all God wants to do to benefit those He loves and to glorify Himself.”

- What will bring the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant” from the Master?
 - great accomplishment
 - performance
 - faithfulness
 - results
- Look carefully at **Matt 25:21,23**. What are the two results of fulfilling our purpose?
 -
 -
- Do you think **Matt 25:29** is fair? Why or why not?
- What are we to guard and how are we to guard (**2 Tim 1:14**)?
- Are you doing too many things to do any one thing well for Christ? ____ If so, what can you do about it?
- In what ways can you “guard the trust” God has given you personally?



No Pain, No Gain

Today we will see one of the reasons why God only entrusts the fruit of the Spirit to those filled with the Spirit. Zeal for the good is a trust. We cannot be trusted to do good works until the Word of God does its good work in us!

 “Those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.” (Titus 3:8)



Read **Titus 3:1-8**. Look for forms of the words goodness and kindness and then answer the following:

- Write out verse 1:
- Write down the terms that describe the nature of the unredeemed person in verse 3:
- What happened when the kindness and love of God appeared?
- Who did He generously pour out on us?
- Because of God’s kindness and love to us, what must we be careful to devote ourselves to doing (v8)?
- Paul gives us a definition of good in verse 8. Fill in the blanks: “These things [that are good] are _____ and _____ for everyone.

It is important to understand that which is good, profitable, or beneficial is not always fun, easy or pleasant! The purpose of this quality of the fruit of the Spirit is to do or bring that which is most beneficial, whether or not it is that which is most popular. *Agathosune* means active goodness.



A great example of this kind of goodness is found in **2 Timothy 3:16-17**. What 4 ways does the Word of God equip us for good works?

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 3. |
| 2. | 4. |



Read each of the following examples and describe the profit coming from the painful events or circumstances:

- **Mathew 21:12-13**
- **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**
- **Acts 8:1-4**
- **Acts 18:5-6**
- **Matthew 27:50-51**

The good is not always easy.



Profit for Good

Love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness precede goodness.

God often couples kindness and goodness. Kindness provides a safeguard for misguided “goodness.” Kindness is a disposition – tenderhearted and a spirit eager to nurture.



How do Paul’s actions show kindness in **1 Thessalonians 2:6-8**?



“Love your enemies.
Do good to those who hate you. (Luke 6:27)”

This dual role of kindness and confrontation is not as confusing as it may seem. Mothers do this often – they are tenderhearted towards their children but also know that discipline is needed. Sometimes profit through pain method is needed – a few stern words, a spanking, or punishment. But what keeps a normal mother from “abusing” her unruly child? Her disposition of tenderness (kindness) towards

that child. A tender heart of love. So you see, the disposition of kindness safeguards the disposition of goodness. You must be yielded to God to be a proper vessel of goodness. Self cannot be involved because self must be crucified for the Spirit to be free in you; therefore goodness is never a personal issue, a personal platform, or for personal gain. Remember, good works are appointed, not assumed.

 Think of a time when you were either the object of goodness through a loving rebuke or the vessel of goodness to another. Did good come from the confrontation?

If we cannot accept the teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training of God's Word in our own lives then we cannot be vessels of teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in other lives. My God help us know the difference!

God knows how to produce loveliness in our lives. According to the following verses what does He do:

- **Isaiah 61:3**
- **Psalm 1:1-3**
- **Psalm 92:12-13**

Only our gracious God know how to grow us to be like Him. He wants us to be like Him. And one of those ways to be like Him is to bear His fruit of goodness.

 God's Truth: What do the following verses say about goodness?

- **Luke 6:27**
- **Ephesians 2:10**
- **Titus 2:11-14**

Why do you need the help of the Holy Spirit in producing good works (**Rom 7:18-19**)?

Choosing Goodness

As we walk through each day and its routines we will have a variety of opportunities to choose goodness. God specifies goodness and good works as a calling for us as women:

- As women we are to learn goodness (**Titus 2:5**)
- As women we are to teach goodness (**Titus 2:5**)
- As women we are to be devoted to goodness (**1 Timothy 5:9-10**)
- As women we are to adorn ourselves with goodness (**1 Timothy 2:9-10**)
- As women we are to never tire of doing good (**2 Thess 3:10-13**)



Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. (**Titus 2:5**)



Our Bibles give us many instances of goodness. Read through these samplings of goodness and answer the questions.

- *Dorcas* **Acts 9:36-41** What was she known for?
- *The Shunammite Woman* **2 Kings 4:8-10** What did she notice and then do for Elisha?
- *Rebekkah* **Genesis 24:15-20** What did she notice and how did she meet the tired, old man's needs?
- *Lydia* **Acts 16:15** Right after she became a Christian, what did she do?
- *Martha* **Luke 10:38-42; Gal 5:16** What happens when you do the deeds only of goodness without patience or kindness?

Walking in Goodness

Oswald Chambers wrote "Christian character is not expressed by doing good, but by God-likeness. It is not sufficient to do good, to do the right thing. We must have our goodness stamped by the image and superscription of God. It is supernatural all through" (Oswald Chambers, *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, p53). This is a great reminder that our goal is to grow in godliness, not just to crank out good works. Pray for God's stamp on your heart as you cultivate goodness in your life. Here's a few steps to do that:

- Confess any thoughts or deeds that are not kind or good.
- Take the initiative in meeting the specific needs of others. Love is action.
- Forget your own comfort: "When God is at work in the believer, he desires to be good and to do good....It becomes clear that the good life is not comfort, but godliness." (Dan Baumann, *Extraordinary Living for Ordinary People*)
- Advance the happiness of others. "Kindness is the sincere desire for happiness of others; goodness is the activity calculated to advance their happiness" (Baumann).



My responses:

- According to **Matthew 5:45** what are some ways God practices goodness and who benefits?
- Recall the parable of the talents (**Matthew 25:14-26**) that we read earlier in the week. How does the man of means describe the servants who benefitted him? How does he describe the servant who did nothing with his money? What is the connection between wickedness and laziness? Between goodness and faithfulness?
- Think about this: why do you often not do what is good and beneficial to others?
- How does knowing that the practice of goodness is a fruit of the Spirit both challenge and encourage you?

WEEK 9 Believing Faithfulness



Definition	Dependable, loyal, full of trust ; Faithfulness is firm devotion to God, loyalty to friends, and dependability to carry out responsibilities. Faith is the conviction that even now God is working and acting on one's behalf.
Exemplified in Jesus	Isaiah 11:5; Revelation 19:11; Hebrews 3:6
Other Scriptures	Proverbs 3:3; Matthew 23:23; Revelation 2:10
Greek Word	<i>pistis</i> (pronounced piss-tiss)

Faith. Many people struggle continually to have more of it. They groan and strain and think that if they had more faith then their prayers would be answered. Have you ever stopped to think about the relationship between faith and faithfulness? Faith is not an action, it is a response. Striving for faith will leave us disappointed. But if we learn to trust in His faithfulness, we will be blessed. Lets learn of and delight in His faithfulness and because He lives in us, we too can be characterized by faithfulness.



Faith that Abounds



What words, phrases, or biblical names come to

mind as you consider the word

faithfulness: _____



"The Lord is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made." (Psa 145:13)

The Greek word for faithfulness is *pistis* which means "firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality, or faithfulness." It carries the idea of giving someone credit. Think about it: you focus your deepest faithfulness on those things that feel the most "real" to you. We believe in God and Christ, but do we simply believe Him? We will never believe God until we know that He is believable! Today we will work towards this important truth: the degree of our faithfulness is the direct result of our regard for God's faithfulness. Answer the following:

- Does God claim to be believable? What does God's statement that He is "abounding in love and faithfulness" (**Ex 34:1-6**) mean to you?

The Hebrew word for abounding is *rab* meaning "Abundant, exceedingly, full, great." It refers to both quantity and quality. That means that the faithfulness we are studying is not in small proportions but is "exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think." (**Eph 3:20**).

- How did Moses describe the faithfulness of God in **Deut. 32:3-4**?
- Check the areas of God's faithfulness (**Ps 33:4**)?
 - His thoughts
 - His words
 - His actions
 - His plans
- Read **Psalm 111:7-8**. In what areas of your life do you most need God's trustworthiness?
- Read **Isaiah 22:20-24**. Answer the following:
 - Guess which word in the passage is translated from the Hebrew word *aman* meaning "faithful"?

- God’s reference in this passage is to *Eliakim*. The name means “God will raise up.” Read Jeremiah 23:5-6. Who will God ultimately “raise up”?
- Reread **Isaiah 22:21**
 - How was the Son of man dressed (**Rev. 1:13**)?
 - What has been given to Jesus (**Matt 28:28**)?
 - The Messiah will be called, “everlasting _____” (*Isa 9:6*)
- Reread **Isaiah 22:22**
 - Where will the government be (**Isa 9:6**)?
 - Where will He reign (*Isa 9:7*)?
 - Read **Revelation 3:7** and write the words that John quoted from Isaiah:
- **Isaiah 22:23**. The Hebrew word for peg is *yathed* which means “nail.” Reread Isaiah 22:23 and insert the word “nail” for “peg.”
 - What did God do with the “written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that opposed to us” (**Col 2:13-14**)?
 - What seat of honor will God give to His Son (**Luke 1:30-33**)?
- Isaiah 22:24
 - What came to Christ through us (**John 17:9-10**)?
 - What does He give us in return (**John 17:22**)?

Wrap up today’s study by reading **2 Corinthians 1:18-22**. Because God is faithful, He said yes to us in Christ! Jesus Christ is God’s guarantee. God expressed His faithfulness to us in Christ; Christ expressed His faithfulness to us in the Holy Spirit. Only through the Holy Spirit can we, in turn, express our faithfulness to Him.

 What is something God has graciously done in your life to show Himself “believable” to you?



Keep Belivin'

Today let’s turn our focus to the faithfulness of God’s people. Read **Hebrews 11:1-39**. List the names of every man & woman listed in this “Hall of Faith”: _____



And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. (Heb 11:6)

- What is the definition of faith (**Hebrews 11:1**)?



Today we will dig into the faith of one man – Enoch.

- Reread **Hebrews 11:5-6** and list every detail you find in the verses:
- Now note every detail about Enoch you can find in **Genesis 5:18-24**:
- We see from Enoch that a life set apart as one who pleases God is one who walks with God. Why does it take faith to walk with God?

Write out 2 Corinthians 5:7

If our faith is based on sight then our faith will be based on what God does for us and how He answers prayers. What about those times when God does not work according to our wishes and expectations. What about when He allows our loved one with cancer to glorify Him through restoration in heaven and not on earth? What happens to your faith when a child dies? If your faith is based on your perception of what God is doing, then you are in for a scary ride.

- What does **Isaiah 55:8-9** tell us about God’s plans & actions?

Genuine faith walks steadfastly with God for the pleasure of His company not for His results. Enoch exercised this kind of faith.



Faith in Action

Steadfast faith focuses on who God is. Today we are going to see that faith in action. True faith always takes action. Faith transforms character. Our Christian character is dictated by our measure of faith.

“Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”
(Rom 10:17)



Read **Acts 27:1 – 28:10** and then answer the following:

- What did Paul’s eyes tell him about the voyage (27:10)?
- To whom did the centurion listen?
- After the wind turned into a “northeaster” what did they do with the ship (27:14-19)?
- Describe the condition of the boat & crew when Paul spoke (27:21):
- What did God tell Paul through an angel (27:23-24)?
- On what basis did Paul become certain of the future of the voyage (27:25)?
 - a vision faith in God confidence in the sailor’s skills calmer weather
- What was Paul’s warning in Acts 27:26?

- On what day did Paul encourage the crew to eat & be strengthened? What did they do after they finished eating?
- What did the crew decide to do (27:39, compare to v26)?
- Why weren't the soldiers allowed to kill the prisoners?
- What kind of reception did the crew receive in Malta (28:1-2)?

Truths Learned from Paul's Shipwreck

1. Feelings or perceptions cannot be the basis of faith even in the most Spirit-filled life.
2. Faith comes from listening!
3. God's deliverance came through the ship running aground!
4. God always has a destination in mind when He delivers.



Describe a time when God let you "run aground" into His will:

Day 4

Fight the Good Fight

Sometimes keeping the faith requires a fight. Today we will devote our study to learning how we can "fight the good fight of faith" so that we can live a life pleasing to God.

- Read **Ephesians 6:10-18**. Which piece of the whole armor of God does faith represent? What is its purpose?
- Read and compare **Mark 4:35-41** and **Hebrews 11:23,27** to see Satan's first weapon for weakening our faith. What was present in the lives of those with no faith but absent in the lives of those with much faith?
- Read **Psalms 3**. Describe a time when God has been a shield about you, your glory, and the lifter of your head:



"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing." (2 Tim 4:7-8)

God's word teaches us that we must be aware of the spiritual battle that wages around us and the invisible principalities, but we do not need to be afraid. We see a moment in Elisha's life that shows us the perfect reason why fear is unfounded in the life of the believer.

- Read **2 Kings 6:8-20**.
 - Why was Elisha's servant afraid?
 - What were Elisha's words to him (v16)?
 - What did God do for Elisha's servant?
 - When God opened the servant's eyes to the unseen world, what became visible to him?
 - Write **Isaiah 50:9**
 - Write **Romans 8:31**

- Read **Mark 6:1-6** to see Satan’s second weapon to weaken our faith.
 - Where were Jesus and His apostles?
 - What was the people’s response to Him (v3)?
 - “Only in his _____, among his relatives and in his own _____ is a prophet without _____.” (v4)
 - What was the result of their lack of faith?

Casual familiarity is another weapon Satan uses against us in our fight to keep the faith. New Christians have a zeal and excitement; they are often so engrossed in who Christ is that they seldom impose limits on what He can do. Those who have been Christians for awhile can fall into the trap of placing limitations....practicing safe boundaries to keep us from being disappointed and others doubtful. Mark 6 opens our eyes to the fact that you can know Christ for a long time and still not know Him well. Those who truly know Him keep inviting Him to reveal His awesome presence. Please remember, Satan will use our fears and our familiarities against us. Never stop growing, never stop knowing!

 Reflect on today’s study. Which has most hindered your faith recently: fear or familiarity? Explain:

Day 5

He is Faithful

Nothing is impossible for our God! You have not confronted a dilemma too big for Him to handle.

Read **Daniel 3:17-18** and contrast their attitude with the father’s in **Mark 9:14-32**. Faith sometimes means knowing God can, whether or not He does.

- Read **Mark 9:14-32**.
 - What specific words in v22-23 reveal the father’s lack of faith?
 - Why couldn’t the disciples drive out the evil spirit? What was the father’s plea in v. 24?
- Write the apostles’ plea in **Luke 17:5**

Christ responded to the disciples’ pleas in a miraculous way – He placed the Spirit of the One who had walked *beside* them for 3 years *inside* them for the rest of eternity!

- What is Jesus Christ called in **Revelation 1:5**?
- What is the test of the one true God (**Isa 41:21-24; 44:6-8**)?

 Read the following prophecies and their fulfillments. Then describe the subject & circumstances of each one:

- Micah 5:2 ⇨ Matthew 2:1
- Psalm 78:2 ⇨ Matthew 13:34

 Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen. (Rev 1:5-6)

- Zechariah 9:9 ⇨ Luke 19:35-37
- Zechariah 11:12 ⇨ Matthew 26:15
- Psalm 22:16 ⇨ Luke 23:33; John 20:25,27
- Psalm 22:18 ⇨ John 19:23-24
- Psalm 34:20 ⇨ John 19:33
- Amos 8:9-10 ⇨ Matthew 27:45

And these are only 8 of the at least 61 prophecies fulfilled in the Bible!

 Read the following scriptures and describe how each provides assurance in your life:

- John 14:1-7
- Acts 1:9-11
- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Sisters, He's coming back!!

 What do **Romans 3:3-4** and **2 Timothy 2:13** say to you in light of all we've learned this week about faithfulness?



WEEK 10 Gentle Giants



Definition	Humble, Calm, Non-threatening; Gentleness is a humble non-threatening demeanor that derives from a position of strength and authority, and is itself in calming another's anger. Gentleness is not a quality that is weak or passive
Exemplified in Jesus	Matthew 11:28-30; Matthew 21:5
Other Scriptures	Proverbs 15:1; 1 Corinthians 4:21; Phillipians 4:4-5; 1 Peter 3:15
Greek Word	<i>prautes</i> (pronounced prah-oo-teys)

Gentleness is a character trait that denotes a life surrendered to real power. It is the picture of a person able to express calmness in the storm. Only a gentle giant could stand before Pilate with no need to defend Himself. Jesus epitomizes the gentle giant.

This week we will examine the wonderful Greek word *prautes*, translated gentleness in the fruit of the Spirit. We will see in this quality the aspects of submission, humility, and teachability. Paul said it best: "when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor 12:10).

Day 1 Sacrificial Submission

Today we begin our study of the 8th quality of the fruit of the Spirit, gentleness. This beautiful word encompasses several intimate traits of mature Christians. *Prautes* is essentially the complete surrender to God's will and way in your life. It describes the resting of resistance to God which begins with that word we love to have – submission. Think of the submissive spirit of gentleness in this way: when the wind of God's will blows, *prautes* prevails when I let go of every object or security, resist grabbing on to anything that would hold me back, and ride the wind wherever or however it takes me.

 "As for me, I am in your hands; do with me whatever you think is good and right." (Jer. 26:14)

 The following passages are about lives given over to the will of God even when things seemed bleak. For each, enduring pain and suffering in the will of God was far better than risking ease outside of His faithful hands. These examples paint a portrait of gentleness.

- **Peter. John 21:15-19**
 - What command did Christ give Peter?
 - What words of prophecy did Christ speak about Peter's future?
 - What did Jesus predict would ultimately happen to Peter?
 - Combine this passage with your understanding of gentleness. How does **Acts 2:14-36** reveal the quality of gentleness in Peter?
 - He spoke with great compassion
 - His submission to Christ gave him great courage to speak
 - He became an effective preacher by listening to Jesus
- **Paul Acts 9:1-16**
 - What question did Jesus ask Paul in v4?
 - Who had Paul actually been persecuting?
 - What do v1 and v4 tell you about Christ's attitude toward Christians being persecuted?

- Why was Paul's a holy calling (v15)?
- What was Christ going to show Paul (v16)?
- What were some of the ways Paul suffered for Christ's sake (2 Cor 6:4-5; 11:24-28)?
- What did Paul's sufferings mean to Him (Phil 3:3-11)?
- What qualities of gentleness can be seen in our glimpse of Paul's life?

 Recall a time you submitted to God's will while He untangled your mess. How do you feel He dealt with you?



Selfless Humility

The second aspect of *prautes* is humility; without it we will fight a losing battle as we seek to submit to God and earthly authorities. In **Titus 3:1-2** the Greek word *prautes* is translated humility. Today's study will help us gain understanding of this important command.



Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone. (Titus 3:1-2)

 Read each of the following scriptures. Check off each passage as you read it and then write next to it the result of humility in each instance:

- 2 Chronicles 7:14
- 2 Chronicles 34:27
- Ezra 8:21-23
- Proverbs 6:3
- James 4:10
- 1 Peter 5:6

John the Baptist knew the key to Spirit-filled humility and practiced the art of humbling himself throughout his earthly life. Read **John 1:6-35** and then answer the following:

- What did John the Baptist not fail to confess (v20)?
- What did John the Baptist say about himself?
- When he saw Jesus, by what name did John call Him?
- What evidences do you see suggesting John the Baptist's humility?
- What was Christ's opinion of John the Baptist (**Matt 11:11**)?
- Now read **Luke 1:5-17**. What was the angel's prophecy concerning this special baby's future?

John was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth. What impact would the Spirit have on John's perspective of God and self? The supernatural outcome of being filled with the Spirit certainly included humility. Humility comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit. The more John the Baptist poured himself out, the more the Holy Spirit poured Himself in! In summary, John the Baptist became a humble man because:

1. He was filled with God's Spirit.
2. He learned humility by example.
3. He honored Christ.

 Sometimes the hard part is not humbling ourselves before God but humbling ourselves before others. What does **Philippians 2:3** command us to do?

 List some ways you can esteem others:

A Teachable Spirit

The third aspect of gentleness is teachability. James 1:21 tells us to "humbly accept the word planted in you," another way to say that is "be teachable!" Are we willing to be taught? Anxious to learn? Do we have teachable spirits? Let's answer these questions today through studying God's word.



"Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you." (James 1:21)

 Read **Acts 18** and answer:

- What was Paul's relationship with Priscilla and Aquilla (v3)?
- How far did Priscilla & Aquilla accompany Paul?
- After Paul left Ephesus, which Alexandrite entered the city?
- How does verse 24 describe Apollos?
- What and how did Apollos teach?
- What did Priscilla & Aquilla do for Apollos?
- How do you think Priscilla & Aquilla acquired their knowledge (vv2-3)?
- What did Apollos do with the instruction of Priscilla & Aquilla (vv27-28)?

We humble ourselves by seeking Him and bowing down before Him. At times we may need to assume a literal posture of humility before God. Sometimes our heart can be ushered to greater humility when we literally get down on our knees. When I've allowed pride to erupt in my life, I will get down on my face in my private time with Him. Physical posture can have a great impact on spiritual stature!

A true sign of teachability is being obedient to what we are taught when we “humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word....do what it says.” (James 1:21-22).



Have you ever been confronted by the fact that something you had believed all your life about God was inaccurate? How did you receive the instruction when confronted with the truth?



Read **Numbers 22:21-38**.

- Why did God oppose Balaam?
- What grievance did God have with Balaam (2 Peter 2:15-16)?
- How did Balaam finally respond to instruction (v38)?
- Have you ever had a stubborn streak like Balaam when you refused to listen to God?

**See, I am
doing a
new thing!**
Now it springs up;
do you not perceive it? **I am
making a way
in the desert
and streams
in the
wasteland.**
Isaiah 43:19

Sisters, let's work on having a more teachable spirit. God often wants to do “a new thing” (Isa 43:18-20) in our lives but we resist Him. Sometimes we don't mind something new, we just don't like the vehicle God is using to drive us to that new place. A precious part of *prautes* is being willing and anxious to learn, regardless of who He choose as our unlikely teacher.

Day 4

A Learning Experience

Today we will examine learning through our circumstances. Let's look at how the “man after God's own heart” responded to difficult circumstances.



Read **1 Chronicles 13** and then answer:

- What was David's great desire at this point in his reign (v3)?
- Why did the whole assembly agree (v4)?
- How does verse 6 describe the ark?
- How did they move the ark of the covenant?
- What kind of celebration accompanied the transportation of the ark?
- What happened when the ox stumbled & what was God's response?
- How did David react to God's judgement (v 11-12)?



Read **1 Chronicles 15:1-15** and then answer:

- What were the new instructions for transporting the ark?



“It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees. The law from your mouth is more precious to me than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.” (Psa 119:71-72)

- Why was God angry with their first attempt?
- What was the proper way to carry the Ark (v15; **Exodus 25:13-15**)?
- Why were 7 bulls and 7 rams sacrificed (**1 Chron. 15:26**)?

David was like us many times – he wanted maximum results with minimum instructions. He made an executive decision without consulting God. David’s first reactions were fear and anger, but he dealt with his emotions by going to God’s word and there he found instruction. David accepted tragedy and failure as a challenge to search God’s Word. We would be wise to do the same. **Psalm 119** has beautiful words for abiding in God’s Word, especially during difficult circumstances.

- Read **Psalm 119:28**. How has God’s Word strengthened you in the past or how can it strengthen you in the future?
- Read **Psalm 119:67**. Have you experienced affliction as a part of learning to obey God’s Word?
- Write your own paraphrase of **Psalm 119:71**
- Read **Psalm 119:92**. Do you know someone who exemplifies the words of this verse?
- Read **Psalm 119:147**. In what areas of your life do you need to put your hope in God’s faithfulness and promises?



What do the following verses tell you about instruction?

- **Proverbs 4:13** Why do we lay up God’s word in our hearts?
- **Job 22:22** How do you accept instruction from His mouth?
- **1 Thessalonians 4:8** What is the motivation for obedience?

To miss God’s word in our circumstances is to miss God!



The Ultimate Teacher

Today we will look at a vital application of *prautes*: gentleness is teaching. This is responsibility with power.

The person possessing *prautes* is the gentle giant: the embodiment of the pure, unadulterated power of the Holy Spirit and one who knows what to do with it. She knows how to properly wield the Sword of the Spirit – it is to injure Satan, not the body of Christ. We must learn to use the weapon of our warfare carefully. The truth we have been given must be passed on to others. Today we will focus on 3 commands regarding instruction. We will discover 1) that we must teach, 2) what we must teach, and 3) how we must teach.



And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will. (2 Tim 2:24-26)

- What two commands did Christ leave His disciples in **Matthew 28:19-20**?
- Notice an important distinction God draws in His Word in **Acts 15:35** and **28:31**. What 2 actions are distinct from each other?

Both of these are absolute necessities in the New Testament church. How important is it that we deepen our knowledge of God's Word?

- Read Paul's prayer in **Philippians 1:9-11**. What does it tell you about the value & necessity of teaching in the body of Christ?
- What does **2 Timothy 2:15** compare a teacher to?
- What does Hebrews 6:1 say about the need to mature our teaching and learning?

God not only commands that His people be taught, He also has specific requirements as to what they should be taught. The word teacher is found in the New Testament 58 times; 41 of those refer to Christ. He is the ultimate teacher. We are to teach as He taught.

- What was the obvious text of Christ's teaching (**John 8:28-29**)?
- What did Jesus say God's Word is and does (**John 17:17**)?
- What does **Titus 2:7-8** say about the lifestyle of a teacher?
- How are godly teachers to deal with opposition (**2 Tim 2:25**)?
- What is to be our attitude about sharing Christ with others (**1 Pet 3:15**)?
- What morsel does **Proverbs 16:21** add to our teaching?

God's teacher is the vessel while His word packs the punch. One of the most powerful lessons Christ taught was from His knees. Conclude your study today by reading **John 13:1-17**.

He is the Gentle Giant. We are all called to teach in one form or another – as a witness, as a living testimony, as a mother, as a neighbor. And as we do, remember how God's word is best served: with a pitcher and a towel.



How can you apply these truths to your own "teaching positions"?

WEEK 11 The Battle of Self-Control



Definition	Behaving well Self-Control is to restrain one's emotions, actions, and desires, and to be in harmony with the will of God. Self-control is doing God's will, not living for one's self.
Exemplified in Jesus	Luke 22:41-42; 1 Peter 2:23
Other Scriptures	Proverbs 25:28; 29:11; Titus 2:11-12; 1 Peter 4:7
Greek Word	<i>Egkrateia</i> (pronounced eg-krah-teh-ee-ah)

Any woman is a mighty warrior if she has self-control. Without it we are a slave in chains or an accident waiting to happen. Only through the self-control developed by the Spirit can we ever fulfill the promise of Jesus: "Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." (**John 8:32**) In our last week of our study together we will explore self-control. We will see people who had it and people who didn't. We will discover principles for growing in self-control, and we will end our time with a look at living the self-control of the Spirit.

Our Wall of Protection

Whether its abuse of a substance or abuse of power, the news headlines make it clear that our society is in a crisis caused by self-indulgence. Lack of self-control kills self-respect, friendships, marriages, careers, and ministries. And we've all been caught in its clutches at least once. Our struggle for self-control is ongoing, but thankfully God makes it available and attainable. The list of qualities of the fruit of the Spirit begins with love and ends with self-control. Love keeps us afloat and self-control keeps us anchored. Today we will see just how important self-control is for us.

 "Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control" (Prov 25:28)

 How do you feel about the topic of self-control (Dread, Excited, Confused, Condemned, etc.)?

- Read **Acts 24:22-27**. What 3 things did Paul talk to Felix and Drusilla about?

Felix's feelings about learning about self-control were "that's enough for now." There is never a convenient or comfortable time to learn about self-control – we will probably all feel like our toes have been stepped on this week.

- What does **1 Corinthians 6:12** say is the key to self-control?

The Greek word for mastered is *exousiazō* which means "to be ruled by or be under the power of, to be in bondage to." The key to self control is the refusal to allow our enemies (the flesh, the world, or Satan) to rule or hold us captive in any way. What does "self" have to do with the issue of "control"? Christ has given us the victory over the flesh, the world, and Satan. Only self can re-extend authority to one of these 3 enemies. Self-control is an issue of mastery, of authority, and of boundaries.

- Proverbs 25:28 explains why we need self-control. Write this verse in your own words:

A city is only as secure as the walls that surround it. In Deuteronomy 1:22-28 the spies describe the walls of the city. When Solomon was crowned king, he built the wall around Jerusalem (1 Kings 3:1). Even the tabernacle in the wilderness had a portable wall to provide security.

- Where does the Holy Spirit dwell today (1 Cor 6:19-20)?
- According to the following verses, what happens when the walls of fortification are broken down?
 - Ezekiel 26:7-14
 - Ezekiel 38:11



Can you think of a way that the enemy has stolen victory from you through a broken-down wall in your life?

Any out of control area in our lives invites the enemy in. He is on the lookout for that crumbling section – those wounds of guilt, shame, frustration, failure. His goal is to hold you captive. Are you a prisoner of war? Do you deeply desire to end this defeat? We need the protection and daily victory of self-control. Read **Nehemiah 2:1-20**. God’s Word gives us a plan:

1. “I set out...with a few men” (v12) ⇒enlist accountability partners
2. “I went out ... examining the walls” (v13) ⇒Honest self-examination. In what areas do you lack self-control?
3. “Come, let us rebuild...that we may no longer be in disgrace” (17) ⇒Admit that you have experienced disgrace in your areas of self-indulgence.
4. “Let us start rebuilding...they began this good work” (v18) ⇒ Don't put it off any longer. Begin to cooperate with God's diligent work with you in your areas of captivity. God may work through a structured process such as a support group or counselor.
5. “The God of heaven will give us success” (v20) ⇒Give it to God, then keep giving it to God over and over until you have overcome.

You can succeed! Addictions? Yes! Living out of control? Yes! **2 Corinthians 2:14** tells us you will march to success. Write out **Isaiah 58:12** on a note card and begin to memorize it. God covers all the bases!



Two Examples

Today we are going to look at two examples of self-control. The Greek word for self-control is *egkrateia* which means “temperate, restrained, self-controlled.” The antonym of *egkrateia* is *akrasia* which means excessive and indulgent.

Samson: A life of Akrasia

Read **Judges 13:1-25**. Before his conception, God ordained Samson’s dedication to Him as a lifelong Nazarite. (Num 6:1-20 tells us the special actions required of the Nazarite vow).

- Why did Paul have a haircut after leaving Corinth (**Acts 18:18**)?

The Nazarite vow was a vow of self-control, restraint, and extreme personal discipline. Unfortunately we can observe two serious signs of self-indulgence in Samson’s life:



So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking... Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. (Eph 4:17,19)

- 1) Samson possessed a total disrespect for the sacred. Read **Judges 14:1-20**. Samson disregarded his consecration by touching a dead animal and he disrespected his parents by causing them to be disobedient as well. It's dangerous to treat the character and commands of God with disrespect. What do these verses tell us about the importance of respect?
 - a. Exodus 20:12
 - b. Galatians 6:7-8
- 2) Samson's second sign of self-indulgence was his inappropriate sense of humor. He had an affinity for jokes and riddles that were motivated by a lack of respect and were at the expense of others. Today we can fall into the same ideology when we observe the unspoken rule of thumb that "inappropriate subjects are admissible as long as they are humorous." Ask yourself these questions:
 - a. Do I have an appropriate sense of humor?
 - b. Am I more likely to laugh at an off-color joke rather than a "clean" one?
 - c. Do I talk to others about inappropriate subjects? Often for a laugh?

God loves laughter and tells us that it is good for us (**Prov 17:22**) but when it is at the expense of God's character it becomes toxic.

Read **Judges 16:1-31**. Samson's weakness for women resulted in a fatal attraction. A man whose life was to be the epitome and devotion and restraint was instead lived almost entirely out of control. Sadly he was more effective in death than in life. By his example we see that self-indulgence robs our sensitivity to the Holy Spirit and saps us of much-needed strength.

Daniel: A Life of Egkrateia

Read **Daniel 1:1-21**.

- What was the difference between Daniel's attitude toward the king's food and Samson's attitude toward the honey?
- What was the result of Daniel's restraint?
- What do you learn about Daniel from the last words of verse 10?
- What testimony does verse 28 provide for Daniel?

Notice, Daniel didn't panic or ignore the edict; he got down on his knees and made his petition. We can draw several conclusions from Daniel's self-control:

- 1) Physical discipline and spiritual discipline often go hand in hand
- 2) Prior discipline prepares us for present dilemma
- 3) Self-control enhances effectiveness; self-indulgence limits it
- 4) Self-control for God's sake invites God's blessing.

Both Samson and Daniel were young men with everything going for them – with one big difference: one was protected by the wall of self-discipline; one was not.

Day 3

Chasing the Wind

Today we will let God's Word address our obsession with money, position, and possessions by observing the state of one man's soul as he finally obtained it all.



Read **Ecclesiastes 1:1-11** and then answer:

- Paraphrase Solomons answer in verse 2:
- What does he say about they eye?
- What is Solomon's point in verse 11?
- How does Solomon describe the pursuit of wisdom in Eccl. 1:12-18?



Read **Ecclesiastes 2:1-11**. What proved to be meaningless (v1-3)? _____ What was gained by his philosophy (v10-11)?



Read **Ecclesiastes 2:12-26**. What was Solomon's reaction to the "meaninglessness" of all he had pursued (v17)?



Write **Ecclesiastes 5:10**



Read **Ecclesiastes 12:9-14**. What is Solomon's conclusion?



Note what each of the following verse tell us about the shortcomings of money & wealth:

- **Matt 6:24**
- **Prov. 23:5**
- **Haggai 1:5-6**



According to **1 Timothy 6:3-10** what is great gain?



In **Prov. 30:7-9** what wisdom do you find for relating to wealth?



Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, "I find no pleasure in them". (Eccl 12:1)

Day 4

An Exercise in Control

Today we will look at the struggle to gain control of our mind and out mouth.



The one who has knowledge uses words with restraint, and whoever has understanding is even-tempered. Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues. (Prov. 17:27-28)

Control over the Mind

 Read each of the scripture below and consider how they relate to self-control in the area of television and social media:

- **Psalm 25:15.** How can viewing contribute to our being in a ‘snare’?
- **Psalm 101:3.** When we “set before our eyes” the “deeds of faithless men” how can those deeds “cling to us”?
- **Psalm 119:37** Rephrase this verse in your own words:

 Read **Romans 12:2.** In the past year, can you identify at least one specific way that you have struggled to avoid being conformed to the pattern of this world?

 What practical steps can you take to “take captive every thought” in your life (**2 Cor 10:5**)?

Control over the Mouth

 Two areas of our mouth need serious self-control: tasting & talking. Let’s first consider controlling what enters the mouth:

- Write **1 Corinthians 10:31**
- Consider the words of **1 Cor 6:12** and **10:23**. “Everything is permissible – but not everything is beneficial”. In the context of eating and drinking to the glory of God, what do you think this verse means?

 Controlling what exits the mouth gets us down to the nitty-gritty of self-control. Let’s see what God’s word says. Read **James 3:1-12**.

- What type of person is never at fault in what he says?
- What does James compare the tongue to?
- Think: What comparisons could you draw between a fire and the tongue?
- What does James say can be tamed by humans?
- What does he say humans cannot tame?
- Why is it ironic that we bless God and curse men?
- **Ephesians 4:29** gives us a standard for the words we say to others. Write it in your own words:

- Read **1 Thessalonians 4:11-12** and **2 Thessalonians 3:11**. What are these verses saying?

Gossip. It will take self-control to walk away from a great story, but you won't walk away alone – you'll walk away with your integrity.

- **Read 2 Peter 1:3-11.** How can Peter's words help us in our battle to make choices in favor of self-control?

Day 5

Victorious Living

A victorious life is the sum of many victorious days. The purpose of this study is the practicality of living the Spirit-filled life; so just how are we suppose to practice all that we've learned on a day-to-day basis? Let's take a look at a day in the life of a victor.

Read **Psalm 63** aloud with joy! This song of David is a wonderful guide for living a day in victory from morning until night. Psalm 63 opens in the earliest moment of the morning:

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:22-23

- What does **Mark 1:35** tell us about Jesus' morning practice?
- **Psalm 5:3** tells us David did 2 specific actions in the morning. What were they?

We need to hear from God first thing in the morning (**Isaiah 50:4-5**). Psalm 63 guides us to experience abundant victory in the glorious morning:

- 1) Acknowledge His authority. (Psalm 63:1)
- 2) Abound in His presence (Psalm 63:1)
 - a. Read **Matthew 12:34-35**. What happened to the empty house?
- 3) Ask to see His glory & power!
 - a. What does **Jeremiah 29:13** say?
- 4) Award Him with your mouth (Psalm 63:3). Read each of the following scripture and describe what they say about the mouth:
 - a. **Psalm 39:1**
 - b. **Psalm 81:10**
 - c. **Psalm 40:10**
- 5) Approach Him with praise! (Ps 34:4) "I will praise You as long as I live."
- 6) Attribute all satisfaction to Him!
 - a. Read **Psalm 65:4**. What does God do for the blessed person?
- 7) Audit the manifold blessing! (Ps 63:6)



Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Eph 5:1-2)

- 8) Allow yourself to rest in His arms (Ps 63:7-8)
 - a. Write **Psalm 4:8**

That is the life of a victor! Praise Him that we receive a new change to begin again every single morning! **Isaiah 26:3** says “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.”

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23

That’s living proof.

