

BRANCHING OUT

THRIVING IN THE FRUIT
OF THE SPIRIT

Growth Group Study Guide



Branching Out: Thriving in the Fruit of the Spirit

It's so easy to relegate our Christian faith to church and the friends we have at the church. Jesus calls us to be out in the world with our faith and the most wholistic way to do that is to live a life that bears the fruit of the Spirit. In our actions and attitudes is where people see Christ-like qualities, or the lack thereof. When we are truly connected to The Vine, as branches, we will effortlessly bear the fruit of the Spirit. This series will help us identify those areas in our lives that we need to submit to God and recognize when He's helping us grow as Christians.

The Fruit of the Spirit

Galatians 5:22-25

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

3. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach you through this sermon? How will this affect your daily life?

Questions from the Bible:

1. In verse 16, Paul tells the Galatians to “*walk by the Spirit.*” What does he mean?
2. In verse 18, Paul tells us “*But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law*”. Does that mean that we don’t need to abide by the law when living by the Spirit?
3. After listing the fruit of the Spirit, Paul asserts that “*Against such things there is no law.*” Why do you think Paul included this statement?
4. Read John 15:5. What do you understand this verse to mean? How do you think the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) factors into what Jesus is saying?
5. Read the parable found in Luke 13:6-9. Jesus often leaves His reader to interpret the meaning of His parables. What do you suppose He is saying to us with this one?
6. What should those who live by the Spirit do? What does this mean?

Questions for Application:

1. How do you know when you are being led by the Spirit?

2. What is the main fruit(s) or change(s) the Spirit has produced in your life? How did this happen?

3. What are the things in your life that hold you back from developing the fruits of the Spirit?

4. In this series, we are learning that the Spirit is the vine that produces fruit in the believer, and that the fruit is a set of behaviors that are available to all who earnestly seek to grow more Christ like. Which fruit requires you to turn to the Spirit for more of His power?

5. In verse 15 Paul accuses the Galatians of “*biting and devouring each other*”. Where do you see this happening among Christians today? What remedy does Paul give for how to respond when we see or experience this?

6. Consider your day-to-day interactions with people. What fruits are others most likely to see you exhibit? Do your interactions reflect well on your Savior?

Resources Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic

The Fruit Of The Spirit – 6 day reading plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/17021-the-fruit-of-the-spirit>

Fruit of the Spirit – 11 day reading plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/25684-0fruit-of-the-spirit>

The Fruit of the Spirit – 4 day reading plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/24761-the-fruit-of-the-spirit>



The Fruit of the Spirit - 6 Day



Fruit of the Spirit - 11 Day



Fruit of the Spirit - 4 Day

Questions for Discussion

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?

2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship - prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

Make it a point this week, and throughout this sermon series, to focus on recognizing where the fruit of the Spirit is manifest in your life, and where it is missing.

NOTES

Blessed Assurance

Verse 1

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

Refrain

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Verse 2

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Refrain

Verse 3

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

Refrain

June 9, 2024
Session 2 | Rooted in Love



Before you begin this growth Group session, read the summary found inside the cover of your Growth Group materials.

Background:

This will help set the context of the session if someone from your group reads this aloud.

In 1873, Phoebe Knapp composed a melody and shared it with her friend Fanny Crosby. She asked Fanny what the melody said to her. After spending several minutes in prayer, she replied that the melody was “Blessed Assurance; Jesus is mine!” and proceeded to come up with the words for the verses and chorus of the well-known hymn. Verse three states:

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

This is my story, this is my
song, praising my Savior all
the day long.
Chorus to *Blessed Assurance*

“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

Reading these words, we find that she felt happy and blest with her life, knowing God’s goodness and love. Amazing considering that Fanny was blind from the age of six weeks. She felt so blessed and loved by God, that she composed over 5,000 hymns glorifying His name. Some of these you’ll find in our hymnal, such as To God Be the Glory, Blessed Assurance, and Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross. By sharing her admiration for God through song, she has blessed many faithful believers, never drawing the attention to herself but instead glorifying God for all that He has done. Knowing the love of God allowed her to become a blessing to others. Are you using God’s love to bless others?

Scripture: Galatians 5:22-23 and John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Before engaging in the questions, have someone in your group read the Scripture passage aloud.

Sermon Reflection:

1. What was something you want to make sure you remember that came from the sermon this week?
2. What challenged you about this sermon?

3. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach you through this sermon? How will this affect your daily life?

Questions from the Bible:

1. The Greek word for love used in Galatians 5:22-23 is agape. Agape is the love that God displayed for us when He sent His Son to die on the cross. It is unconditional love, given whether it's returned or not. It is unselfish. Where have you seen this type of unconditional love in your life?
2. John 13:1-17 is the account of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. How do the words and humble actions of Jesus in this passage display the fruit of love? Why was it important for Jesus to wash the disciples' feet?
3. Who is the most humble person you have known and what makes them humble?
4. Recall the stories of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4), of Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19), and of Jesus and the daughter of Jarius (Mark 5). Which of these accounts show Jesus demonstrating the fruit of love? Are other fruits of the Spirit demonstrated in these accounts?
5. 1 Peter 4:8 reads "*Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.*" How does the crucifixion of Christ factor into this? In light of this, how should our behavior toward others be impacted?

6. In 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a Paul gives us an amazing definition of love. If we consider this our standard, what grade would you give yourself for the love shown to family and friends? What about a grade for your love of strangers, or enemies? What is Christ's expectation?

Questions for Application:

1. Do you feel the "Blessed Assurance" of being a follower of Jesus Christ? Why or why not?
2. Verse 3 of Blessed Assurance ends with the words "Filled with His goodness, lost in His love." Can you describe a time when you were "filled with His goodness" or "lost in His love"?
3. Jesus fulfilled the ancient prophesy of the coming of a king, yet He insisted on washing the feet of the disciples. How does this simple act of agape challenge your understanding of leadership?
4. In what way are we to wash the feet of others?
5. When you consider the fruit of love, who comes to mind? How have they displayed the fruit of the Spirit? What have you learned from their example?
6. When others observe you, where do they see the fruit of love?

7. When and why do you find it difficult to allow others to serve you? Is it difficult for you to serve others? Explain how?
8. Fanny Crosby expressed her love for God through 5,000+ hymns glorifying His name. How do you outwardly express your love for God?

Resources: Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic

Indescribable Love – 7 day devotional: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/24378-indescribable-love/>



Indescribable Love

Loving Well – 7 day reading plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/25359-loving-well>



Loving Well

Questions for Discussion

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?
2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship – prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

Find a way this week to use God's love to be a blessing to others.

NOTES

I SPEAK JESUS

I just wanna speak the name of Jesus
 Over every heart and every mind
 'Cause I know there is peace within Your presence
 I speak Jesus

I just wanna speak the name of Jesus
 'Til every dark addiction starts to break
 Declaring there is hope and there is freedom
 I speak Jesus

'Cause Your name is power
 Your name is healing
 Your name is life
 Break every stronghold
 Shine through the shadows
 Burn like a fire

I just wanna speak the name of Jesus
 Over fear and all anxiety
 To every soul held captive by depression
 I speak Jesus

'Cause Your name is power
 Your name is healing
 Your name is life
 Break every stronghold
 Shine through the shadows
 Burn like the fire

Shout Jesus from the mountains
 Jesus in the streets
 Jesus in the darkness over every enemy

Jesus for my family
 I speak the holy name
 Jesus, oh

Shout Jesus from the mountains
 Jesus in the streets
 Jesus in the darkness over every enemy
 Jesus for my family
 I speak the holy name
 Jesus (Jesus)

'Cause Your name is power
 Your name is healing
 Your name is life
 Break every stronghold
 Shine through the shadows
 Burn like a fire

Your name is power (Your name is power)
 Your name is healing (Your name is healing)
 Your name is life (You are my life)
 Break every stronghold (break every stronghold)
 Shine through the shadows
 Burn like a fire

I just wanna speak the name of Jesus
 Over every heart and every mind
 'Cause I know there is peace within Your presence
 I speak Jesus

June 16, 2024

Session 3 | Peace in the Midst of Chaos

Before you begin this Growth Group session, read the summary found inside the cover of your Growth Group materials.



Background:

This will help set the context of the session if someone from your group reads this aloud.

The song I Speak Jesus starts and ends with the words:

I just wanna speak the name of Jesus,
Over every heart and every mind,
'Cause I know there is peace within Your presence,
I speak Jesus

“I know there is peace within Your presence.” Peace. Have you really considered what this word is meant to convey when used in a Biblical context? In today’s world, the word “peace” is generally used to describe the absence of conflict or a time of quiet tranquility. There are numerous references to peace in the Bible and many of them speak of a different kind of peace. Isaiah 32: 17 tells us, “*The fruit of that righteousness will be peace; its effect will be quietness and confidence forever.*” Psalm 46:10 tells us to “*Be still, and know that I am God.*” In John 14:27 Jesus tells us, “*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.*” In John 16:33, Jesus says “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

*Be still, and know that I am
God.*

Psalm 46:10a.

Jesus tells us clearly that we will have troubles in this life and assures us that we will not have to face them alone. In the scriptures for this week, Paul and James tell us that we can be at peace, even joyful, in the face of trials. The peace that God promises and the peace that Jesus gives is an inner tranquility, even in the midst of trials and storms of life.

Yes, we can be at peace when our job is in chaos, when our family is in turmoil, and when our health has been compromised, because we trust the Lord to be with us in the storm.

*'Cause I know there is peace within
Your presence,
I speak Jesus*

Scripture: Philippians 4:6-7 and James 1:2-4

Before engaging in the questions, have someone in your group read the Scripture passage aloud.

Sermon Reflection:

1. What was something you want to make sure you remember that came from the sermon this week?

2. What challenged you about this sermon?

3. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach you through this sermon? How will this affect your daily life?

Questions from the Bible:

1. In Matthew 6:5 Jesus tells us, “*Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear.*” Why are we not supposed to worry?

2. In John 14:27, Jesus says “*my peace I leave with you.*” What is unique about His peace?

3. In Philippians 4:7 Paul tells us that the peace of God “transcends all understanding”. What does this mean to you?

4. We learn from James that we should “consider it pure joy” when we face trials in our life. James goes on to tell us that testing produces perseverance, and that perseverance must finish its work so that we can become mature believers. How are we to respond to the testing and trials of life?

5. Read Philippians 4:6-7 again. What do you find most challenging about these verses? Where do we find the strength to live out this instruction?

Questions for Application:

1. How do you personally respond to the challenge, “*Do not be anxious about anything...*”. If asked, how do you explain your response to others?

2. If God already knows everything you are thinking and experiencing, why is it important to take everything to Him in prayer?

3. What is the natural reaction when facing trials? How does this differ from the way a believer faces the same trials?

4. Describe a time when you experienced the peace of God during chaotic or traumatic times. Were you surprised to have experienced peace under those circumstances? At the time did you recognize it as the peace of God?

5. No matter where one sources their news, the headlines are filled with trauma and disaster. In John 16:33 Jesus tells us where we will find peace. Are you able to experience this peace? If not, what are we meant to do?

Resources: Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic

Courageous Peace – 6 day reading plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/19156-courageous-peace>



Courageous Peace

Peace – 5 day reading plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/21478-peace>



Peace - 5 Day

Peace – 7 day reading plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/44506-peace>



Peace - 7 Day

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?

2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship - prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

If you are struggling to find peace in your life, read John 14:26-27 daily and pray for the Holy Spirit to fill you with the peace of God.

NOTES

Lord, I Need You

Verse 1

Lord I come, I confess
Bowing here, I find my rest
Without You, I fall apart
You're the one that guides my heart

Refrain

Lord, I need You, oh, I need You
Every hour, I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You

Verse 2

Where sin runs deep, Your grace is more
Where grace is found is where You are
And where You are, Lord, I am free
Holiness is Christ in me

Refrain

Verse 3

So teach my song to rise to You
When temptation comes my way
And when I cannot stand, I'll fall on You
Jesus, You're my hope and stay

Refrain

My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You

June 23, 2024

Session 4 | Not-So-Random Acts of Kindness

Before you begin this Growth Group session, read the summary found inside the cover of your Growth Group materials.



Background:

This will help set the context of the session if someone from your group reads this aloud.

Have you ever been the recipient of an act of kindness, a free coffee paid by the driver in front of you, coming home to a shoveled driveway, or a compliment from someone you don't know? How did that make you feel? Hopefully, it brightened your day. Has this act of kindness made you want to spread kindness to others? Just like a pebble into a pond the ripple effect can influence others to repeat kindness to more people.

Those who are kind benefit themselves, but the cruel bring ruin on themselves.

Proverbs 11:17

In the hymn Lord, I Need You (previous page) God's kindness and mercy is poured out for us. He knew that sin would separate us from Him. He was kind in sending Jesus. Jesus knew His mission here on Earth. In this song, the lyrics read that "I need you, oh I need you, every hour, I need you" which is all about understanding our circumstances of needing God's kindness to us and then abiding in that love and kindness in order to be fueled to give that to others. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the world was filled with kindness? Our

realization of our need in every hour puts us in a place to fully abide in Christ to fill our world with the kindness that was given to us.

When Jesus was on earth, He was the perfect reflection of the Father. How did He treat people? Kindness and compassion were evident in His life. In turn, how we treat people matters to God, all people, even people that we do not yet know, or people we may not like. We need to reflect more of God and his characteristics in today's world. Spread kindness. Be intentional. Make someone's day. Spread the love of God in your corner of the world.



Scripture: Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:12

Before engaging in the questions, have someone in your group read the Scripture passage aloud.

Sermon Reflection:

1. What was something you want to make sure you remember that came from the sermon this week?
2. What challenged you about this sermon?

3. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach you through this sermon? How will this affect your daily life?

Questions from the Bible:

1. Why do you think God wants us to be kind to one another?
2. What is your motivation for forgiving one another? (Ephesians 4:32)
3. What kind of relationship should we have with God according to Colossians 3: 12?
4. According to Colossians 3:12, as "*God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved*" are you displaying these attributes in your daily living?
5. In Lamentations 3:22-23 we learn the Lord's compassions never fail and they are new every morning. What are some recent kindnesses you have received from the Lord?
6. In both scripture selections for this week, Paul admonishes his readers to live a life that displays the characteristics and behaviors we know as the fruit of the Spirit. Why do you think that Paul brings this up so often in his letters?

Questions for Application:

1. What are some old habits in your life that need to go? What is God calling you to do and replace those old habits with instead?
2. What do you think it means to clothe yourself “*with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience*”? How should wearing “Christ’s clothing” affect the way you live your daily life?
3. Kindness, love, and goodness are individually listed in the fruit of the Spirit, yet in the world today they can often be used interchangeably. If you are describing the fruit of the Spirit, how do you differentiate them?
4. Why do you think that it is important for Christians to be intentionally kind people?
5. Ephesians 4:32 calls on us to be kind and compassionate and forgiving, just as God has been toward us. Which of these poses the biggest struggle for you right now? How will you get victory?
6. In Ephesians 4:32 notice that Paul doesn’t merely tell us to be kind and compassionate, but that we must forgive each other as Christ forgave us. Does this change how you interact with others? How so?

Resources: Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic.

Intentional Kindness -3-day devotional: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/12981-intentional-kindness>



The Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness -5-day devotional: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/38114-fruit-of-the-spirit-kindness>



The Fruit of the Spirit: Kindness

Courageous Kindness -5-day devotional plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/29401-courageous-kindness>



Courageous Kindness

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?

2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship - prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

Throughout this coming week become intentional about spreading kindness. Plan for it. Search out ways to help others, cheer someone up by lifting them up. Be genuine.

NOTES

It Is Well with My Soul

The United Methodist Hymnal Number 377

Text: Horatio G. Spafford

Verse 1

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain

It is well with my soul,
it is well, it is well with my soul.

Verse 2

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
let this blest assurance control,
that Christ has regarded my helpless estate,
and hath shed his own blood for my soul.

Refrain

Verse 3

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!
My sin, not in part but the whole,
is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

Refrain

Verse 4

And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
the trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
even so, it is well with my soul.

Refrain

June 30, 2024

Session 5 | Faith Over Frustration

Before you begin this Growth Group session, read the summary found inside the cover of your Growth Group materials.



Background:

This will help set the context of the session if someone from your group reads this aloud.

It is well with my soul,
it is well, it is well with my soul.

This chorus was written in 1873 by a grieving father as he sailed to England to comfort his wife, after the ship she and their young daughters were on sank, and the four girls perished. It is said It Is Well with My Soul was penned after its author, Horatio Spafford, passed over the very spot in the Atlantic where his daughters and 222 others lost their lives. *And still*, he wrote, “It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul...” How was that even possible?

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

Hebrews 11:1

Faith, and God’s peace, and God’s grace, and the strength of the Holy Spirit

To be sure, a well-seasoned faith was required to pen the following:

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

“Thou has taught me to say”—Horatio had a relationship with God before this tragedy. One in which God taught him the faithfulness that would be required to live well with his soul under the most horrific circumstances. Horatio Spafford had a full measure of the fruit of faithfulness.

“Faithfulness is steadfastness, constancy, or allegiance; it is carefulness in keeping what we are entrusted with; it is the conviction that the Scriptures accurately reflect reality. Biblical faithfulness requires belief in what the Bible says about God—His existence, His works, and His character... The only way we can have such faith is by the Holy Spirit’s influence. He testifies to the truth and impels us to seek God. The Spirit makes us faithful.”¹

*“Whatever my lot, thou has taught me to say
It is well, it is well, with my soul”*

In Hebrews 11:6 we learn that “*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.*” The Holy Spirit will develop abiding, “it-is-well-with-my-soul,” faith in us too, when we believe that He exists, and we earnestly seek Him. God doesn’t require a perfect faith journey from us, He requires a steadfast one, through which we are making an effort to live as disciples of Jesus Christ before the watching world.

Scripture: Hebrews 11:1, Galatians 5:23

Before engaging in the questions, have someone in your group read the scripture passage aloud.

¹ got questions.org

Sermon Reflection:

1. What was something you want to make sure you remember that came from the sermon this week?
2. What challenged you about this sermon?
3. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach you through this sermon? How will this affect your daily life?

Questions from the Bible:

1. Consider Hebrews 11:1. In your own words, what does it mean?
2. Hebrews 11:3-31 tells of the faith of the patriarchs and matriarchs of the people of Israel. What do you feel as you read of the faith of these individuals?
3. How would you explain faith to a non-believer? Where does our faith come from? Why is it hard to have faith in God?
4. Read Hebrews 11:6. What does this verse teach us about faith and faithfulness?

5. The book of Job is an enduring account of one man's faith in the face of tremendous adversity. If you are familiar with the account, to what do you attribute Job's continued faith after losing everything?

6. If a young Christian came to you and said, "I don't see much of the fruit of the Spirit in my life," what counsel would you give?

Questions for Application:

1. The Holy Spirit lives in us and will help us cultivate the fruit of the Spirit. What, then, should you do if you are in need of more of a particular fruit? What if you have already exhibited a lack of fruit in a given area?

2. What are the characteristics of a faithful person? Does it look the same for everyone?

3. For some it is easy to be angry with God, wanting to shout to Him, "Why me?" when things are going badly. Others seem able to stand in the storm and face life's difficulties with confidence. What do you think accounts for the difference in responses?

4. Look back at different stages in your life. How has your faith changed? What has influenced your faith?

5. How has faith enabled you to turn away from the approval of the world to seek the approval of God? In what areas might you need God's help to seek more of His approval?

6. What has God been teaching you about faithfulness?

Resources: *Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic.*

Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness – 5 Day Plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/38017-fruit-of-the-spirit-faithfulnessResources>



Fruit of the Spirit : Faithfulness

Fruitful Faith – 5 Day Plan: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/31335-fruitful-faith>



Fruitful Faith

Questions for Discussion:

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?

2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship – prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.

NOTES

Spoken For

Verse 1

And take this world from me, I don't need it anymore
I am finally free, my heart is spoken for
Oh, and I praise You
Oh, and I worship You

Refrain

Covered by Your love divine (love divine)
Child of the Risen Lord
To hear you say, 'this one's mine' (this one's mine)
My heart is spoken for

Verse 2

Now I have a peace I've never known before
I find myself complete, my heart is spoken for
Oh, and I praise You
Oh, and I worship You

Refrain

Verse 3

By the power of the cross, You've taken what is lost
And made it fully Yours
And I have been redeemed by You who spoke to me
Now I am spoken for

Refrain

July 7, 2024

Session 6 | Taming the Tiger Within

Before you begin this Growth Group session, read the summary found inside the cover of your Growth Group materials.



Background:

This will help set the context of the session if someone from your group reads this aloud.

Any athlete will tell you that to compete you have to be in great physical shape. They lift weights, run, swim, whatever exercise it takes to develop their bodies. They must have self-control and determination.

Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.

Proverbs 16:32

So it is with being a Christian. We need to flex our self-control muscles. Not only to help us when we are tempted, but to help us make good choices. When the Holy Spirit becomes the sole ruler in our lives, our Christian life must be in harmony with the values of the Kingdom of God. It takes a strong effort to continue defeating the old human character, that

is contrary to God's Word, to live out the values of the Kingdom. Self-control is key to helping us unlock other fruit of the Spirit. Can you imagine faithfulness without it? Use self-control to help you think through your choices in life.

In the song Spoken For, verse 1 talks about being free because his heart is spoken for. Verse 2 speaks of a peace that he has never known before, being complete. Once your self-control muscle is strong enough you can be completely free to be who you are meant to be.

Likewise, urge the younger men to be self-controlled. Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame, having nothing evil to say about us.

Titus 2:6-8

Scripture: Proverbs 16:32, Romans 12:1-2

Before engaging in the questions, have someone in your group read the Scripture passage aloud.

Sermon Reflection:

1. What was something you want to make sure you remember that came from the sermon this week?
2. What challenged you about this sermon?
3. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach you through this sermon? How will this affect your daily life?

Questions for Application:

1. What in your life would be improved if you had more self-control?
2. Reflect on the practical implications of Proverbs 16:32, “*Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.*” How can this wisdom be applied in contemporary conflicts, both personally and in societally?
3. What has the Lord shown you or how has He convicted or encouraged you through Romans 12:1-2?
4. Zacchaeus was a tax collector, a profession that was without honor, if not outright criminal. Yet after his encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus gave half of his possessions to the poor and vowed to repay anyone he had cheated “*four times the amount.*” Do you know someone whose life changed radically after they encountered Jesus?
5. 2 Peter 2:19b (CSB) reads, “*people are enslaved to whatever defeats them.*” Is there a habit or practice that you sense God wants you to give up through exercise of your self-control muscle?
6. Romans 12:2 instructs us to “*not conform to the pattern of this world*” and to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*”. How are you being transformed?

Resources: Consider starting one of these Bible reading plans to go deeper on this topic.

Fruit of the Spirit: Self Control -5-day devotional: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/38000-fruit-of-the-spirit-self-control>



Fruit of the Spirit: Self Control

Practical Steps to Discipline and Self Control -4-day devotional: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/38532-practical-steps-to-discipline-and-self-control>



Practical Steps

Need Some Self-Control? Devotions from Time of Grace -3-day devotional plan: <https://www.Bible.com/reading-plans/14755-need-some-self-control-devo-from-time-of-grace>



Need Some Self Control

Walking With Jesus (Self-Control)-7 day devotional: <https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/27196-walking-with-jesus-self-control>



Walking with Jesus

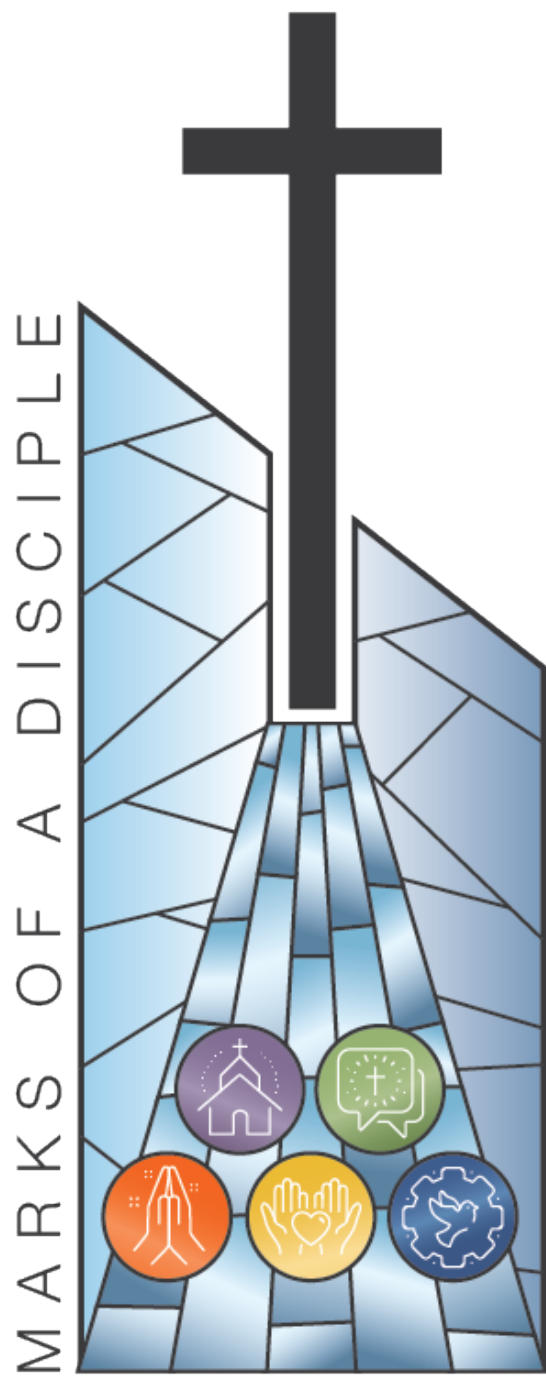
Questions for Discussion:

1. What are you reading in the Word this week?
2. How is your reading growing you in the Marks of Discipleship - prayers, presence, gifts, witness, service?

Growth Challenge:

As you flex your self-control muscle this week, use it to help you make better decisions.

NOTES



MARKS OF A DISCIPLE



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