

Fruit of The Spirit Bible Scripture Study:

Lesson 1: Being Fresh Fruit (B.F.F)

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.
Galatians 5:22-23 (NIV)

What is the Purpose of the Fruits of the Spirit?

There are two huge things that the Fruits of the Spirit accomplish here on Earth.

They give you the power to fulfill your destiny in Christ. Without the Holy Spirit bearing spiritual fruit inside of you, you would be powerless. You wouldn't have the endurance and faithfulness to complete the calling that God has given you. You wouldn't even have the self-discipline to study your Bible or pray.

Without the Fruits of the Spirit, the gifts that God has hidden inside of you, would stay locked away forever.

They are what God uses to draw people to Himself through you. Do you know anyone who, no matter the situation, always radiates a godly peace - They are unshakable. People in this world are drawn to that kind of peace. With all of the chaos surrounding them every day, they search their entire lives for whatever peace and joy they can get their hands on. They end up trying to fill the void with fleeting counterfeits like alcohol and illicit sex. Things that merely numb their pain for a short while, but leave them longing once again, after the party is over. When they look at you in a time of crisis, and see God's unshakable peace and joy staring back at them through your eyes, they want to know what you know. Then, you can introduce them to Who you know.

Reflection Questions:

What Fruits of the Spirit do you already see manifesting in your life?

Which of the 9 Fruits of the Holy Spirit do you still need God to manifest inside of you?

Lesson 2: Have You Been Marked?

Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal. The promised Holy Spirit ~Ephesians 1:13 (NIV)

Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. **Matthew 7:17-20 (NIV)**

Jesus told His disciples that you can tell if someone truly belongs to Him by the kind of spiritual fruit that they produce. What does that mean?

When you surrender your life to Jesus, your salvation is not free. It's bought with a very high price. The crucifixion and death of Christ. You may sometimes ask yourself why God thinks you're worth of that sacrifice? Despite all of your attempts at perfection, you constantly miss the mark. Surely trading Jesus' excellence for your mediocrity could not have been the best choice. But Your Heavenly Father has a very special kind of love towards you. He longs for you to be able to bask in His presence.

And, once He finally gets you - You're Marked.

Now, the changes don't happen over night. They're gradual. You may not notice them over days and weeks. Or even after several months. But, you are God's work in progress. And, eventually, the signs that you are His become more and more evident. Everything that you do. Every thing that you say. You begin to look more like Jesus.

Reflection Questions:

Do you believe in your heart that you have been Marked by the Spirit of God? Why or why not?

Do you agree with the idea that people in the world can be drawn to God by His fruit in your life? Why or why not?

Lesson 3: Love Happens

By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another. ~ John 13:35

You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself. The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments. -Matthew 22: 36-40 (NLT)

The Greek word used in Galatians 5, and again here in John 13, is Agape. This is the kind of love that God loves us with - It is self-sacrificing. It is unconditional.

And, let's face it, it is impossible for any human to achieve on their own. It can only be developed as a Fruit of the Holy Spirit.

But, Jesus says that developing this kind of love in your heart is the only way the world will be able to identify you as His. In Matthew, Jesus explains that Agapao (the verb form of Agape) is the actual basis of Christianity.

Reflection Questions:

Why do you think that it is significant that Jesus uses the action verb Agapao to describe the kind of love that the

Holy Spirit wants to develop inside of you?

How would you react if someone gossiped about you or said something bad about you? Reacting in a negative way is not in the best interest of the other person. Satan wants you to react negatively. God wants you to react with love.

Lesson 4: I Still Have Joy

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, **James 1:2 (NIV)**

Weeping may last through the night but joy comes with the morning. **Psalms 30:5 (NLT)**

There are two kinds of joy. The fleeting joy that the world gives. And the lasting joy that God's Spirit provides.

The joy that we find in this world is allusive. It is like chasing a mirage. People spend years thinking that when they finally get that promotion, or when they eventually get out of debt - They will be happy. And, yet, when they finally reach the place where they thought they would find happiness, they only experience more longing. Why? They foolishly thought that they were the source of their own joy. But, your Heavenly Father doesn't want His child sitting around "grieved and depressed." That's why God's Word says that He's given you the very joy of the Lord to be your strength and stronghold (Nehemiah 8:10 -AMP). So, while the world is searching for happiness, the Holy Spirit is sprouting seeds of joy and gladness inside of you. And this Fruit of the Holy Spirit is God's gift, to be your strength in times of turmoil.

Reflection Questions:

Why do you think God tells you that His joy is what acts as your strength during trying times? Can you think of a time when His joy kept you strong?

When things are going well for you, do you act happy and content? What if things are not going the way you think that they should be, do you start to lose your faith and act negatively? Satan wants you to act negatively. God wants you to react joyful whether you are having good times or bad times.

Lesson 5: Let there be Peace

There are two kinds of peace that we have as Christians. We have peace with God, and we have the peace of God. Let me explain the difference.

THEREFORE, SINCE we are justified (acquitted, declared righteous, and given a right standing with God) through faith, let us [grasp the fact that we] have [the peace of reconciliation to hold and to [enjoy] peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One)
-Romans 5:1 (AMP)

In addition to Jesus' death buying you peace with God, it also serves as a cleansing sacrifice to allow you into the presence of the Lord.

With the Holy Spirit now living inside of you, you are able to experience the peace of God. This is the kind of peace that the Fruit of the Holy Spirit manifests.

We are told in Philippians how to receive this peace for ourselves.

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. -Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

We are promised a peace that exceeds our understanding. That means, it is a peace that does not make sense to us mentally. In times when we should be pulling out our hair and biting our nails, we feel an overwhelming peace in our spirits.

I think that, more and more, bearing this Fruit of the Holy Spirit is something that Christians struggle with.

Reflection Questions:

In what area of your life is there fear, anxiety and worry? Fear, anxiety and worry come from Satan. God wants to give you peace. Read your Bible and pray. Submit to God and resist the Devil.

Why do you think so many Christians today struggle with receiving and maintaining God's peace? Do you feel that you have a problem maintaining your peace?

Lesson 6: A Test of Endurance

Consider it wholly joyful, my brethren, whenever you are enveloped in or encounter trials of any sort or fall into various temptations. Be assured and understand that the trial and proving of your faith bring out endurance and steadfastness and patience. But let endurance and steadfastness and patience save full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [with no defects], lacking in nothing. -James 1:2-4 (AMP)

Dictionary.com says that forbearance is patient endurance! This simply means that the Holy Spirit will give you the ability to endure trials and tribulations, as you patiently watch for your victory.

Why can you patiently endure trials and tribulations? Because you know that God's Word will always prevail in His timing. Notice what God is telling you through this scripture. He says that trials are only an opportunity for you to prove your faith in His promises. Do you believe what you see in front of your eyes, or do you believe what the Word of God says about your situation?

Anyone can believe God's promises for healing when they aren't sick. But what happens when they get a bad report from the doctor, and 6 months have passed with no improvement. Where is their faith then?

A trial is your chance to prove to yourself, your God, and the world, that you really do believe! It is amazing that God says we should let patience and endurance complete their work in us. He tells us that they are what will really make us "fully developed" (James 1:4 AMP). Patiently waiting on God with expectancy in your heart brings about spiritual maturity. That is why allowing this Fruit of the Holy Spirit to begin growing inside of you is so necessary.

Reflection Questions:

Have you ever had to wait on a promise from God's Word to manifest itself in your life? What did you learn from the experience?

Does it shock you to know that God believes developing patient endurance will make you "fully developed" spiritually? Why or why not?

Lesson 7: Is it going to hurt you to be nice?

God tells us that, since He has chosen us to be His children that He loves, we have a responsibility to clothe ourselves in tenderhearted mercy and kindness (Colossians 3:12 NLT).

We've been told to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" since we were 3 years old. So, sometimes we can take the idea of kindness for granted. But, when we do a Bible scripture study on kindness, we find out the emphasis that our Heavenly Father really puts on just being nice.

Proverbs, known as the book of wisdom, holds some wisdom for us regarding kindness. We are told that there is actually a reward for being kind.

If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying. Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart. Then you will find favor with both God and people, and you will earn a good reputation. -Proverbs 3:2-4 (NLT)

I've heard many Christians confessing the end of this scripture - "I have favor with God and man." But, as I have said before, God works in covenant promises. If you are not doing your part of the promise, you can not expect to walk in the provision. Yes, we all want to live many years and have our lives be satisfying. We want to have favor with God and with people. But, have we hung kindness and loyalty around our necks as reminders to always walk in them?

That is where the Holy Spirit comes in. It is there to help you to be kind to people who do not deserve your kindness anymore than you deserve the kindness of a Holy God. As you grow in the area of kindness through God's Spirit, you will be surprised how many people you begin to draw to God. Becoming a representative of His mercy and kindness here on the earth allows you to be a reflection of God's unconditional love.

Let the world see the love of God through your kindness.

Reflection Questions:

Do you feel that many Christians take kindness and mercy for granted? Have you ever done this yourself?

What is the kindness thing that you have done for someone?

Lesson 8: It's all Goodness

For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of Light...For the fruit...of the light or the Spirit [consists] in every form of kindly goodness, uprightness of heart, and trueness of life.
-Ephesians 5:8-9 (AMP)

This Fruit of "the Spirit," as God puts it in this scripture, is being kind, having a heart for righteousness, and living a life that is true and dedicated to the source of truth - The Lord.

What makes a person good? Sometimes religion can get us to focus on lots of little rules and regulations. We get distracted by denominations, or even things that amount to no more than rituals. But, God is looking at your heart. And He is looking at your life. Is it full of goodness?

The Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. -Romans 14:15 (NLT)

Those should be the things that we focus our energies on. Because those are the things that matter to God.

Reflection Questions:

What do you think qualifies a person as being "good" in God's eyes?

Can a person live a sinful life but still be good? Why or why not?

Lesson 9: Watch Yourself

And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. ~ Proverbs 29:23

Faith

What is faith?

NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses]. -Hebrews 11:1 (AMP)

Faith is the "title deed," or, essentially, the proof of ownership for the things that you are still hoping for. The things that, with your senses, you can't even see yet. In fact, you may be seeing the opposite! But, it is your faith that is the confirmation that you already possess it in the spiritual realm. Faith is probably one of the biggest challenges, because it is believing in something that you can not see, long after you thought it would have appeared. That is why faith is not something you have to come up with on your own - It is a One of the 9 Fruits of the Spirit.

I have heard a lot of Christians say that they are not sure that they have enough faith for something. Hey, I've even said it myself. But, faith is not something that you just have to scrounge up from inside of yourself. It is something that grows inside of you from spending time with God's Holy Spirit.

Never think that you do not have enough faith. The Holy Spirit is your source for as much as you need!

Gentleness

Our society is very Me centered. People feel that they have to Take Care of Number One, or they will somehow miss out or be taken advantage of. Wouldn't you rather have God exalt you than you try to exalt yourself? He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think!" (Ephesians 3:20).

But, when you realize that God is taking care of you, and that He can do a much better job of it than you ever could, you lose the conviction that you must force your own way. You let Him make your way, and you begin making the way for others.

Self Control

And because of His glory and excellence, He has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share His divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. -2 Peter 1:4 (NLT)

1. As Christians, we all have two natures. No matter how holy we think we are, we are still human. So, we have our sin nature, and, because of Jesus' sacrifice, we have God's divine nature that we are allowed to share in. But, there is an issue. The two natures don't get along! "For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other." And, if you were working on your own, you would not be able to do the things of the Spirit, even if you really wanted to (Galatians 5:17 NLT).

But the Holy Spirit has been sent to help you. God tells you to "live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." If you live by the Spirit, you will be able to maintain self-control. What would you look like if you were able to gain self-control through walking in the Holy Spirit?

Would there be less of those moments when you weren't walking in love. Fewer instances when you said something that wasn't kind, and then regretted it. Or less times where you tried to exalt yourself instead of being humble and counting on God to exalt you.

Allowing God's Spirit to develop this spiritual fruit within you gives you the help you need to walk in all 9 Fruits of the Spirit. No wonder God put it last.

Reflection Questions:

Have you ever thought that you did not have enough faith for something? How does it feel to know that developing faith is something the Holy Spirit has been sent to help you with?

Have you ever fallen into the world's trap of feeling like you have to take care of number one? How can you safeguard yourself from feeling this way, even when you are wronged by those around you?

Are there any of the 9 Fruits of the Spirit that you thought would be difficult to develop? What role do you think developing self-control can play in helping you to develop the others you had been lacking?

What do you think are the best ways to develop the 9 Fruits of the Spirit in your own life?