



Love

Scripture

1 John 4:7-12

7 Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

1 Cor. 13:1-13

1 If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10 but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. 11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. 12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.



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

Notes			



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



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

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- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the quality of love in your life. Consider recent examples in your life. Where did you feel like the Spirit was helping you live this out, rather than times when you allowed your natural, sinful nature to take over?
- Matthew 3:8 says, "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." Is God showing you any areas where pruning is necessary so that you can bear more fruit?

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

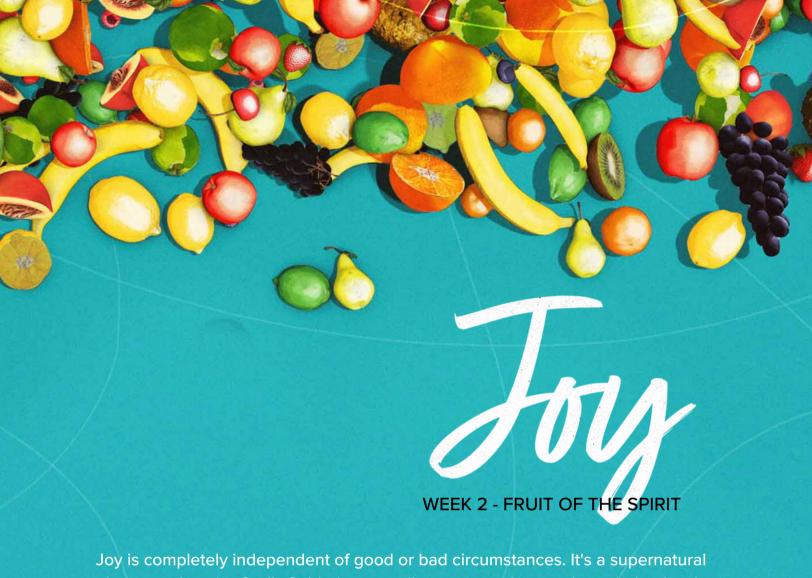
MY PERSONAL ACTION STEP:



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



Personal	Answered Prayers
Group	
Im thankful for	
Sermon Notes—	



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

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







Philippians 4:4

"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!"

Nehemiah 8:1-12

All the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the teacher of the Law to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded for Israel.

2 So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. 3 He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

4 Ezra the teacher of the Law stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah; and on his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam.

5 Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. 6 Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

7 The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah—instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. 8 They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read.

9 Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

10 Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

11 The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve."

12 Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

James 1:2-4

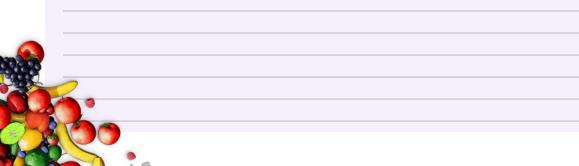
Trials and Temptations

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.



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

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



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

MEDITATE & MEMORIZE:

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grow

- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the quality of joy in your life. Consider recent examples in your life. Where did you feel like the Spirit was helping you live this out, rather than times when you allowed your natural, sinful nature to take over?
- Matthew 3:8 says, "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." Is God showing you any areas where pruning is necessary so that you can bear more fruit?



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

MY PERSONAL ACTION STEP:



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

Personal	Answered Prayers
Group	
Im thankful for	
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Peace is a sense of wholeness and completeness that is experienced as we spend time in the presence of God. We are able to rest in knowing that our Good Father is in control of all things.

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





Philippians 4:6-9

"6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you."

- What do you learn about God and peace in this passage?
- Where do you see Jesus demonstrating this fruit of the Spirit?
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- Matthew 3:8 says, "Produce fruit in keeping" with repentance." Is God showing you any areas where pruning is necessary so that you can bear more fruit?

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- Develop a lifestyle of prayer. This week, be intentional in talking to God about everything, including specific areas in your life where you are lacking peace. Be intentional to bring your concerns to the Lord all day long. Confess your worries and anxious thoughts, Ask Him for wisdom and peace. Praise Him for Hls help. Record your story below, noting any changes that you noticed in your peace levels throughout the week.
- Meditate on Philippians 4:8. Ask God to install a 4:8 alarm in your heart that will alert you every time you entertain a thought that doesn't match this verse. When you find yourself stuck on a situation you can't change, ask God to help you focus on what is true, and to find good in the situation (or a person), even if it doesn't appear to be good.

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because we trust that He is sovereign in all circumstances, working to bring about His plans and purposes.

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





James 5:7-11

Patience in Suffering

7 "Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. 8 You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. 9 Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

10 Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. 11 As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy."

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

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





Scripture

Luke 6:27-36

27 "But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. 30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. 35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.



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

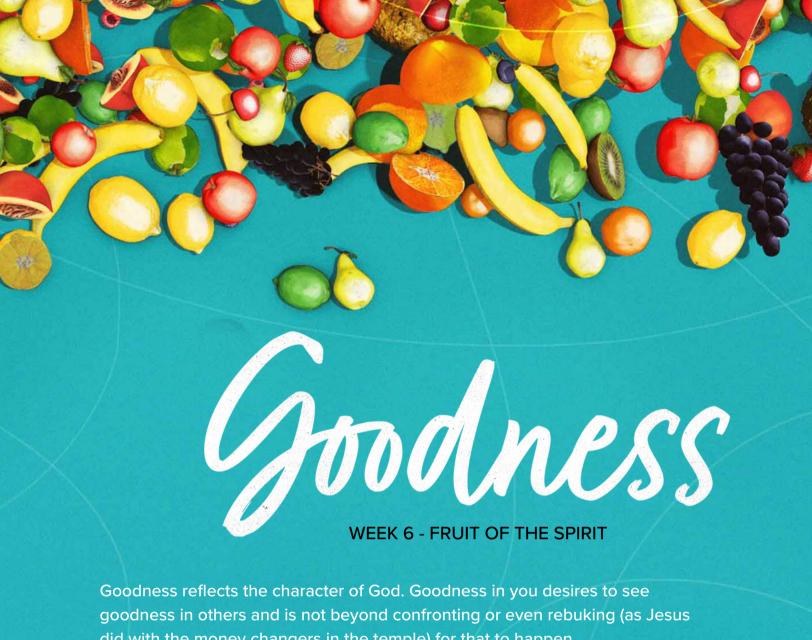
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Im thankful for	
Sermon Notes—	



did with the money changers in the temple) for that to happen.

Personal reflection: Does your life reflect the goodness of God, and do you desire to see others experience God at a deep level in their lives?





1 Peter 3:8-18

Suffering for Doing Good

8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. 9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For,

"Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech.

- 11 They must turn from evil and do good; they must seek peace and pursue it.
- 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? 14 But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." 15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 17 For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.



- What do you learn about God and love in this passage?
- Where do you see Jesus demonstrating this fruit of the Spirit?
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- Take time to "pause and pray" before speaking or acting. Think about what Jesus would do. Remember Jesus was often misunderstood, but never felt the need to defended himself. Be slow to speak and slow to become angry. If you are tempted to start quarreling, ask God to help you control your tongue.
- Do you have a clear conscience when it comes to seeking peace and righteousness? Confess and ask forgiveness for any evil that has come from your lips, knowing the Lord is attentive to your prayer. If necessary, repair a relationship that has been damaged by your lack of goodness.

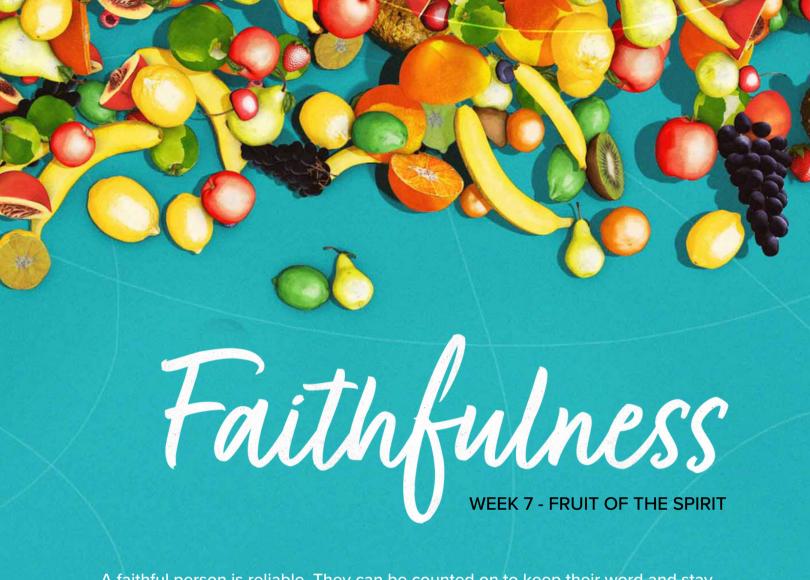
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Im thankful for	
Sermon Notes—	



A faithful person is reliable. They can be counted on to keep their word and stay true to their commitments. They have a strong sense of stewardship, realizing that all they have comes from God and they will one day answer to him for how they have used their gifts and talents.

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



Faithfulness Scripture



Matthew 25:14-30

The Parable of the Bags of Gold

14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. 15 To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. 17 So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. 18 But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. 20 The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'

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

22 "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'

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

24 "Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? 27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

28 "So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. 29 For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'



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

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Faithfulness



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

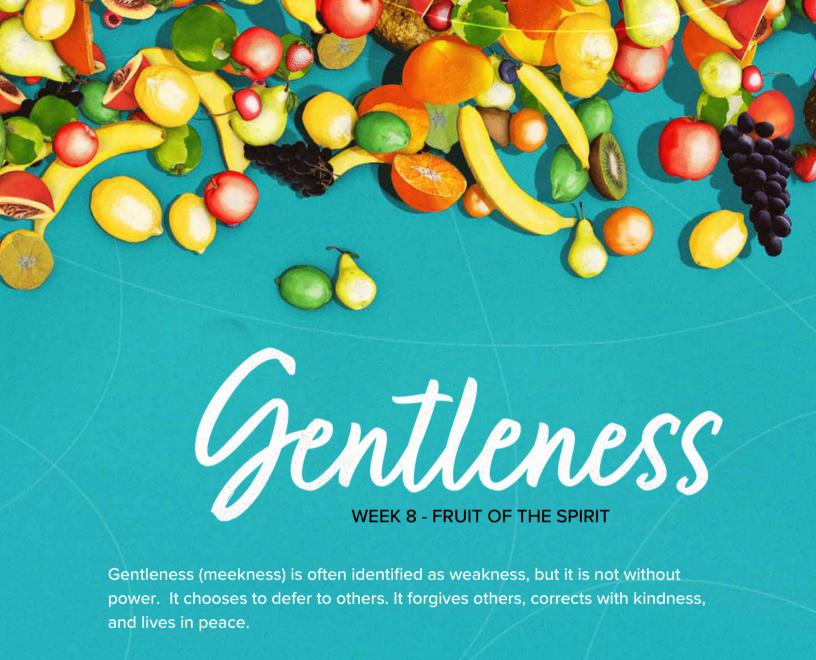
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Harvest

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



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Personal reflection: Do you come across as harsh and headstrong, or does the gentle grace of God flow through you to others?



Gentleness

Scripture

Matthew 11:28-30

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Ask

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

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Gentleness



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

ΜY	PERS	ONAL	ACTION	STEP:



Harvest

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



Personal	Answered Prayers
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Sermon Notes —	
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Personal reflection: Do you allow fleshly desires to control your life, or do you allow the Spirit to direct you to the things that please God and serve others?



Self-Control

Scripture

Titus 2:1-15

You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. 2 Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

3 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. 4 Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

6 Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. 7 In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness 8 and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

9 Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, 10 and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

11 For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. 12 It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, 13 while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

15 These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.



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

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Self-Control



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



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

MEDITATE & MEMORIZE:

Choose a key verse that the Holy Spirit reveals to you and record it below. Spend time this week meditating on it, and commit to memorizing it.

Grow

- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you the quality of self-control in your life. Consider recent examples in your life. Where did you feel like the Spirit was helping you live this out, rather than times when you allowed your natural, sinful nature to take over?
- Matthew 3:8 says, "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." Is God showing you any areas where pruning is necessary so that you can bear more fruit?

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

MY PERSONAL ACTION STEP:



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



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