

The Fruit of the Spirit

STUDY GUIDE



THIS STUDY GUIDE

contains nine sessions that aim to help you invigorate your spiritual life as you intently watch, read, or listen to the sermons from the series *The Fruit of the Spirit* by Alistair Begg. The content for each session focuses on a corresponding message on Galatians 5:22–23. This study aims to provide a reminder that faithful Christian living demonstrates the unparalleled attractiveness and transforming power of the Gospel to the world around us.

FIND ALL 9 MESSAGES AT TFL.ORG/FRUIT.



All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The fruit of the Spirit is the character of God reflected in the lives of those who are united with Christ. It cannot be produced by an outward change of habit or a system of self-improvement but is cultivated as God works to conform us to the image of His Son. As we consider the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, Scripture guides us to examine our hearts, challenges our progress, and encourages us to trust God's promise that He began this work and will complete it.



Each session includes four parts:

- 1) Getting Started:** a brief summary statement or commentary on the sermon, followed by an introductory prompt to answer before you listen
- 2) Key Scriptures:** important Bible verses that were referenced in the sermon and are flagged for further meditation and memorization
- 3) Going Deeper:** questions to help you process the main ideas of the sermon while and after you listen
- 4) Giving Praise:** a poem or hymn that can be committed to memory, incorporated in worship, or used as the basis for prayer about what you have learned and considered

SESSION ONE

“LOVE”

Getting Started

All of our expressions of love tend to be based on how attractive we find someone or whether we believe they are worthy of our time and affections based on certain qualities. God’s love is not like that.

What distinguishes God’s love from ours?

Going Deeper

1. Love is mentioned first in the list of the fruit of the Spirit. What does Alistair say is the significance of this?

2. Alistair points out that it’s impossible to love God yet not love your neighbor. Why is this so? How have you experienced this reality?

3. Alistair says, "The love of God is an initiative-taking love. In fact, genuine love always takes the initiative." How does this description of love reflect God's love for us in Christ?

4. True love takes action. What are some ways we see love in action within the church? In what area do you most struggle to love in this way?

5. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul commands the church, "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith." What are some questions you can ask yourself to see if the love of Christ is reflected in your life?

KEY SCRIPTURES

"It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations." (Deuteronomy 7:7-9)

"If anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (1 John 3:17)

Loved with everlasting love,
Led by grace that love to know;
Gracious Spirit from above,
Thou hast taught me it is so!
O, this full and perfect peace!
O, this transport all divine!
In a love which cannot cease,
I am His, and He is mine.
In a love which cannot cease,
I am His, and He is mine.

“I AM HIS, AND HE IS MINE”

BY GEORGE W. ROBINSON



SESSION TWO

“JOY”

Getting Started

When we think of joy, we often confuse it with happiness. Happiness is often determined by our circumstances in life (health, wealth, relationships, etc.). Christian joy, however, is not. Instead, it is a supernatural response to the Gospel that shapes our attitude and response to every part of life.

How does our understanding of the Gospel help us face the challenges of life and remain joyful?

Going Deeper

1. French philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal once said, “Being unable to cure death, wretchedness and ignorance, men have decided, in order to be happy, not to think about such things.”¹ How can the Christian think about such things without being joyless?

2. How does thinking about our misery and guilt apart from Christ help us to appreciate His grace toward us in the Gospel?

3. What are frequent hindrances to your joy?

4. Christian joy is anchored in objective reality and facts. Our feelings often fluctuate. How does dwelling on the unchanging promises of God help us when dark days come?

5. Charles Spurgeon mentioned how Martin Luther, when hearing bad news, would say, “Come, let us sing a psalm, and spite the devil.”² What can you put into practice to help you cling to the joy of the Lord in any circumstance?

¹ Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, trans. A. J. Krailsheimer (New York: Penguin, 1966), 66.

² C. H. Spurgeon, “The Fruit of the Spirit: Joy,” *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 27, no. 1582, 77.

KEY SCRIPTURES

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.” (Psalm 16:11)

“Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” (1 Peter 1:8–9)

Savior, since of Zion's city
I thro' grace a member am,
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Your name.
Fading are the world's vain pleasures,
All their boasted pomp and show;
Solid joys and lasting treasures
None but Zion's children know.

"GLORIOUS THINGS OF THEE ARE SPOKEN"

BY JOHN NEWTON



SESSION THREE

“PEACE – PART ONE”

Getting Started

It doesn't take long to realize that the world is devoid of peace. Wars and rumors of wars have been constant throughout world history. Fights, arguments, lawsuits, and more are part of everyday life. We are often stressed by relational strains at work and with family and friends. Jesus, however, told His disciples not only that they would have tribulation but also that He would give them peace.

How can Christ promise peace while also guaranteeing tribulation?

Going Deeper

1. What does it mean to have peace with God?

2. What is the main reason that we lack peace with God and with others?

3. Alistair explains that true peace is “knowing that my account with God has been settled, that my debt has been canceled, and that my account ... is in a favorable balance on account of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done.” Everyone desires to have peace. How might you share this aspect of the Gospel with others?

4. If someone at your workplace (or any comparable setting) were to ask you, “Why do you always seem so peaceful in the midst of the chaos around here?” what would you tell them?

5. As the apostle Paul teaches us in Colossians 1:20, Jesus is the one who has reconciled us to the Father through His blood at the cross. How does knowing that God is the one who took the initiative in our reconciliation stir us to strive for peace in our conflicts with others?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:5)

“In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.” (Colossians 1:19-20)

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.

“IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL”
BY HORATIO SPAFFORD



SESSION FOUR

“PEACE – PART TWO”

Getting Started

“Who cares? Who really listens? Who’s paying attention?” Such stoical questions may seem to come from a strong mindset, but do they really portray the peace that Scripture teaches? Godly peace doesn’t yield indifference toward life’s problems; it leads to acknowledgement of the Ruler over every problem, the Provider of every solution.

How can knowing that the trials of life are under God’s sovereign rule and reign give us peace?

Going Deeper

1. When we are reconciled to God through faith in Jesus, we enter into a battle with three enemies: the devil, the flesh, and the world. But the same grace that reconciled you to God is the grace that is supplied daily to you. Since this is the case, what should our response be when hindrances to peace come upon us?

2. Alistair mentions that unconfessed sin is a hindrance to peace. Pause and consider whether there is anything you have not yet brought before God in confession. Write a brief prayer for forgiveness, peace, and holiness.

3. Dwelling on our past sins can also be a hindrance to peace. Why do we often dwell on these sins when we know Christ has paid the price for our sins on the cross?

4. We often add anxieties to ourselves when we want to determine how things are done and the time frame in which we want them accomplished. According to 1 Peter 5:6-7, what can we do to rid us from this controlling mentality?

5. In 1 Samuel 7, Samuel sets a stone in the place where the people gathered and calls its name Ebenezer, which means “stone of help.” This was to remind the Israelites of God’s actions for them throughout their history. How does reflecting on God’s faithfulness—even through our own unfaithfulness—help calm our anxieties about the future?

6. Trust and security go hand in hand. When there is no trust, there is no security. How does knowing God as a caring Father encourage us to trust Him and find security?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:4-7)

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:6-7)

In heavenly love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding,
For nothing changes here:
The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid;
But God is round about me,
And can I be dismayed?

“IN HEAVENLY LOVE ABIDING”

BY ANNA LETITIA WARING



SESSION FIVE

“PATIENCE”

Getting Started

God is described throughout Scripture as patient and slow to anger. In His dealings with the stubborn Israelites in the Old Testament, He continuously shows them mercy. We see God's patience on perfect display in the forgiveness of our sins through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

What were some specific ways God was patient with His people in the Bible? How has He displayed patience in your life?

Going Deeper

1. Patience, like all the other characteristics of Christ, often is formed most noticeably in the face of trials and challenges. What is currently testing and, by God's grace, *growing* your patience?

2. Alistair states that God's patience is revealed in His forgiveness of sin. We know that we don't deserve forgiveness, but God offers it anyway. How does this shape the way you think about and treat others who have wronged you?

3. How does knowing that God has good purposes for our trials encourage you in their midst?

4. Alistair mentions that one of the evidences of one who is truly penitent is a forgiving spirit toward those who have offended us. Is there someone in your life against whom you still hold a grudge? What's holding you back from letting go of it and seeking peace?

5. One of the ways our patience is tested is through unanswered prayer. What have you been praying for that has yet to be answered? Why is it so difficult to wait on the Lord?

6. What was a painful trial in your life that has been a great lesson in patience for you?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Then Peter came up and said to him, ‘Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.’” (Matthew 18:21-22)

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” (James 1:2-4)

Be still, my soul; the Lord is on your side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to your God to order and provide;
In ev'ry change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul; your best, your heav'nly friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

“BE STILL, MY SOUL”
BY KATHRINA VON SCHLEGEL,
TRANS. JANE BORTHWICK



SESSION SIX

“KINDNESS AND GOODNESS”

Getting Started

Nearly everyone agrees that goodness and kindness are admirable traits. Many people believe and teach that you should be good and kind to those who are good and kind to you. The goodness and kindness of the God, however, transcend this incomplete practice. His goodness and kindness are even displayed to those who don't return the favor.

How is God good and kind to those who are not good and kind?

Going Deeper

1. Alistair states that when God's grace begins refining the heart, we begin to take more than a passing interest in the well-being of others. How has your perspective of others changed since you came to faith in Christ?

2. When Peter is before Cornelius's household in the book of Acts, he says of Jesus, "He went about doing good" (10:38). How did Jesus "do good"?

3. How does the kindness of God lead us to repentance?

4. Goodness is not usually extraordinary. It is displayed in the ordinary and menial tasks. What are some ways you can daily display the goodness of God to those around you?

5. Have you ever displayed kindness to someone who did not return it? How did you react? What should be our reaction as Christ's followers?

6. Our good deeds do not earn us entrance into heaven, but they do display something. What do they show?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“The LORD is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.” (Psalm 145:9)

“God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:4-7)

I've found a Friend, O such a Friend!
So kind and true and tender,
So wise a counsellor and guide,
So mighty a defender!
From Him who loves me now so well,
What power my soul shall sever?
Shall life or death, shall earth or hell?
No! I am His forever.

“I'VE FOUND A FRIEND”

BY JAMES SMALL



SESSION SEVEN

“FAITHFULNESS”

Getting Started

Broken promises seem to be an everyday occurrence in life. From politicians, from employers, and even from spouses, promises are frequently broken. God, on the other hand, has never broken a promise.

How might the fact that we are so accustomed to broken promises make it difficult for us to trust in God's faithfulness?

Going Deeper

1. Alistair defines faithfulness simply as “trustworthiness.” From Scripture, how has God demonstrated His faithfulness, or trustworthiness? Provide a few examples.

2. How has God proven His faithfulness throughout your own life?

3. How can you exhibit this same faithfulness in your own relationships?

4. Does being faithful in whatever God has called you to do always mean success? Can you be faithful and successful? Can you be faithful and “unsuccessful”?

5. Think of a time in which you questioned the faithfulness of God. How were you reminded of His faithfulness at that time?

6. Can you think of a time in which your faithlessness was exposed? How did it teach you to turn back in faithfulness to God and to what He has called you to do?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!”
(Psalm 89:5)

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.”
(Hebrews 10:23)

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been, Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Great is Thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided.
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

“GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS”

BY THOMAS O. CHISHOLM



SESSION EIGHT

“GENTLENESS”

Getting Started

For some reason, gentleness is not a highly admired or prayed-for quality. We more often esteem ostentation and boldness, while gentleness is perceived as weakness or spinelessness. But surely these perceptions can't be true if the Lord Jesus describes Himself as meek and gentle.

What do you think of when you hear or see the word *gentle*? Is gentleness something that you often pray to be displayed in your life?

Going Deeper

1. Alistair defines gentleness as “strength under control.” Can you give an example of this quality from a believer you know personally?

2. What are some ways God displays His gentleness with His people throughout Scripture?

3. Jesus describes Himself as “gentle” (Matt. 11:29) and as “the good shepherd” (John 10:11). How did He put this description into practice throughout His earthly ministry?

4. Alistair explains that there are three ways we exhibit gentleness in relation to God: a teachable spirit, a repenting heart, and a trusting faith. When you come before God and His Word, which of these is the greatest challenge for you, and why? Which comes easiest?

5. As with other characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit, gentleness is developed in and through life’s trials. How do these trials make us gentler and more like Christ?

6. Our natural tendency is to be tender with ourselves and tough on others. To be gentle, however, often means to be tough on ourselves and tender with others. When our patience is tested as we deal with others, what should we remind ourselves?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.” (Isaiah 40:11)

“Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.” (Titus 3:1-2)

Was there ever kindest shepherd
Half so gentle, half so sweet,
As the Savior who would have us
Come and gather round His feet?
It is God; His love looks mighty
But is mightier than it seems:
'Tis our Father, and His kindness
Goes out far beyond our dreams.

“COME TO JESUS”

BY FREDERICK FABER



SESSION NINE

“SELF-CONTROL”

Getting Started

All of us have a tendency to eat too much, drink too much, sleep too much, work too much, spend too much, etc. Our natural inclination is to push and cross boundaries. God, however, has set boundaries for our good. Licentiousness and boundless activity do us great harm and in the end are nothing more than shackles and chains.

What are some ways in which you struggle or have struggled with self-control?

Going Deeper

1. Alistair explains that God places boundaries for His children’s good. How are they for our good?

2. How does remembering that Christ died for and received the punishment for your sin motivate you to live a self-controlled life?

3. True self-control is not a “pull yourself by your own bootstraps” practice but an enabling grace wrought by the Holy Spirit. How, then, do our own effort and work factor into growing in self-control?

4. Alistair states that “the beginning of self-mastery is to be mastered by Christ.” What does this look like in your day-to-day life?

5. How is biblical self-control different from either legalism or asceticism?

6. The battle in self-control or self-mastery cannot be a solo mission. We need the church community. How does having a close community of brothers and sisters in Christ help us in our pursuit of self-control?

KEY SCRIPTURES

“A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.” (Proverbs 25:28)

“For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free.
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life's alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within Thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.

“MAKE ME A CAPTIVE, LORD”
BY GEORGE MATHESON

