



DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Fruitful Life – Part 4
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Sunday March 24, 2019

Main Idea – The last three attributes of the Fruit of the Spirit – displayed through us by the Holy Spirit – represent our appreciation for God’s blessings to us. Faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are all possible because of the earlier attributes of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, and goodness.

God speaks many things to His children through a single statement. He has a special message for you.

- This lesson, as with all things taught in God’s house, will contain unique messages for many of us.
- The Bible describes this occurrence as being like the voice of many waters.
- **Ezekiel 43:2 – And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. His voice was like the sound of many waters; and the earth shone with His glory.**

There is a constant conflict going on in our souls between what is good and what our fallen natures want to do.

- Likewise, in the unseen spirit world, there is continuous battle between good and evil.
- **Galatians 5: 16-18 – I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.**
- Regardless of our best intentions, it is easy to fall back into being controlled by our fleshly impulses.
- However, when we allow the Holy Spirit to direct our thoughts and actions, God is able to do His spiritual work through us.
- **Galatians 5: 22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.**

The last three attributes of the Fruit of the Spirit

- We express our appreciation to God for all He has given us by the attributes of faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Faithfulness

- In the original Greek, Faithfulness means “belief, trust, with an implication that actions based on that trust will follow.”
- God is faithful to what He has promised. We know this about God. Therefore, we know He will do what is right in every situation.
- Our initial response to God’s faithful nature is to confess our shortcomings.
- God cannot cover what you will not uncover.
- **1 John 1:9 – If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
- Faithful relationships – both with God and other Christians – are valuable because trust that God will respond is present in those associations.

Gentleness and Self Control

- In Greek, Gentleness is described as: “humility, courtesy, considerateness.”
- Gentleness involves restraining our self-centered, fleshly impulses so that God’s spiritual attributes can be displayed through us.
- Once we are able to negate our fleshly desires, we are better able to have God reveal Himself.
- This is only possible if the earlier Fruit of the Spirit attributes of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, and goodness are already being revealed in us.
- **James 1:4 – But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.**
- Similar to gentleness is the idea of meekness.
- Meekness is at the intersection of gentleness and self-control. Meekness means “strength under control.”
- All things should be done with meekness, with the result being God is recognized by those around you.
- Hardships come to all of us. How well you are able to continually demonstrate God’s attributes of gentleness and self-control can serve as a type of compass pointing toward your spiritual maturity.

Jesus demonstrated gentleness and self-control

- Jesus always submitted his will to that of the Father.
- **Matthew 26: 39, 42, and 44** all portray Jesus as submitting himself to the Father’s will, even when his flesh desired otherwise.
- He demonstrated strength under control because of His continued kindness even during the worst events of his earthly life.
- **Matthew 26:51-54 – And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How**

then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”

- Those who were attacking Jesus did not know what they were doing. They were acting totally by the impulses of their flesh.
- Jesus demonstrated the Fruit of the Spirit even when those around him were not.

Jesus is faithful to your needs

- Jesus knows your situation and will be faithful to work everything to your good.
- Jesus has the ultimate strength to handle any circumstance. He will always respond when you are in a difficult place.
- Demonstrate faithfulness to God by believing He will always be true to you. He will respond to your situation.
- Demonstrate gentleness to God by putting others' needs above your own.
- Demonstrate self-control to God by realizing His ultimate power is working for good through the events of your life.

Reflective Questions for The Fruitful Life, Part 4

1. Some people may misinterpret the Greek word for faithfulness. Some may confuse faithfulness with loyalty. Look at the definition of faithfulness (above) and describe how it is something different than loyalty.
2. Why is the correct understanding of faithfulness necessary for being able to reflect God's gentleness? Why is a correct understanding of faithfulness necessary to demonstrate self-control?
3. What are likely bad things that will happen if we do not demonstrate gentleness and self-control during difficult times?
4. Using Jesus' example from Matthew 26 (above) what are likely good things that will happen if we demonstrate gentleness and self-control during difficult times?
5. What did God show you in this lesson that you believe is a unique message just for you?