

HOW DO I PURSUE HEALTH?

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

Read **Galatians 5:22–25**.

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

It can be tempting to treat the fruit of the Spirit like a checklist that we need to constantly return to in order to reprimand and remind ourselves of how we're performing as Christians. While looking over this list to gauge and check our spiritual health is a good practice, it's only the first step. Circle the individual demonstrations of the Spirit that seem to come least naturally to you. Which ones prove over and over again to cause you seasons of unhealth?

Once you've done that, Read **John 15: 4–5**.

⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

Jesus made it clear that the key to living a fruitful life spiritually is connection to him. Paul's letter to the Galatians gave them a great list of traits to look for as markers of spiritual health. These demonstrations of the Spirit show us that we are remaining and abiding in Jesus, being guided by the Holy Spirit, our helper and advocate. When you find yourself in a season of unhealth, returning to the ultimate source of life is the most important step. Finding out what that looks like for you through community, counseling, study, and accountability is the next step in moving forward towards health, "keeping in step with the Spirit" as Paul says.

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THINK ABOUT IT

1. What has your most recent season of spiritual unhealth looked like? Why do you think you found yourself in that place? What has helped you to move forward in a healthier way?
2. If you were to pray for God to help you experience more fruit in one area of your life, what would it be? Why? What would it look like for you to “keep in step with the Spirit” to allow more growth in that area?
3. Is there anything in your past or present that is preventing you from trusting the Holy Spirit to guide you? What would surrender look like in this area of your life? If you are unsure, it might be helpful to meet with a friend or counselor who you trust to help you unpack any areas of doubt, unhealth, or trauma.

APPLY IT

Part of keeping in step with the Spirit is consistently turning over our areas of unhealth in prayer, asking him to forgive us and change our attitudes and hearts. If you find it difficult to focus during prayer, or you aren't sure what to ask for, write a simple prayer or piece of Scripture to memorize and repeat. It can be as simple as, “Heavenly Father, I trust you with my patience. Help me to be patient as you are patient with me.” Or an example of a Scripture to memorize when you're struggling with self-control might be **Hebrews 12:11**, which says:

No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

After you've chosen something to pray for, share that prayer with someone you trust who will pray for you as well. Tell them your desire to keep in step with the Spirit in this area.

FOR GROUP DISCUSSION (IF DESIRED)

Is there anything about your life right now that would prevent you from being an effective leader for the most important people in your life (family, friends, team, colleagues, etc.)? Would you be willing to share that area and pray for it with others? What other step can you take this week to move towards health in that area?