

Read Mark 10:13-16 and answer the following questions.

1. What did the disciples do to the women who brought their children to Jesus?

2. What did Jesus do with the children?

3. How would you compare the attitude of Jesus with that of the Disciples?

Jesus _____

Disciples _____

Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12. Paul here describes his ministry among them. What are some words he uses to describe his actions and attitudes?



Living the Christian Life Bible Study

Lesson 12a (NIV)

Growing the Fruit of the Spirit (Part 1 of 2)

Student's Name _____ Unit _____

Instructor _____

Comments _____

1.0 Introduction

Many television programs today offer a makeover, even an extreme makeover. You can get a makeover of your face, your body, even your house. The idea is that by making over the outside, you will feel better about your self, thus “making you over.” The problem with a physical makeover, of course, is that it is only temporary: wrinkles will re-appear in the face, bodies will again sag, and houses will eventually need redecorating. God also offers us an extreme makeover, but His is from the inside out, changing our character, not our appearance. This makeover is permanent and growing. He calls this change “The fruit of the Holy Spirit.”

After listing a long series of sinful personalities, in 1 Corinthians 6:11 Paul says, “*And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*” In this verse, Paul is talking about our forgiveness from sin and our right relationship with God. This is a change in our standing with God; it is immediate, complete, and permanent.

In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul gives a list of acts of the sinful nature, including such sins as *sexual immorality, hatred, jealousy, and envy*. These are followed by the fruit of the Spirit, which is “*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*” This is God’s extreme makeover, a real and lasting change in personality, from the inside out. The ultimate role model for this makeover is Jesus Christ Himself, as He perfectly embodied all these character traits, and God’s goal for us is to make us like His Son.

By saying these new character traits are the *fruit of the Spirit*, Paul tells us two things: first that the source of them is God Himself, in the Holy Spirit. Secondly, they grow; they do not appear fully developed overnight in a new Christian. The full development of these character qualities is a life-long process. To paraphrase another writer, “God loves you just the way you are, but He loves you so much he refuses to leave you the way you are; He wants you to be just like Jesus.”

As we study each of these characteristics, we will define it, discuss a biblical example, and then suggest what it might look like in our lives today.

6.0 Kindness and Goodness

These two aspects of the fruit of the spirit are almost indistinguishable from each other. Kindness is to have a gentle and considerate nature toward others; goodness is to act toward others in a way that is morally honorable and helpful in effect. A person who is kind and gentle will seek to do that which is helpful for other people, and will do it with a pleasant manner. Sometimes one person can do a good thing for a person, but do it in an unpleasant way, out of necessity, or because it is his job; this is goodness without kindness. It is also possible to act in a kindly way toward a person without meeting their real needs; this is kindness without goodness. The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to cause us to seek the best for others, and do it in a way the reflects the character of God.

Both of these characteristics are the result of a Godly kind of love, as we saw in our study of Love as a fruit of the Spirit. We learned from 1 Corinthians 13 that love is kind, meaning “pleasant, helpful, seeking the other’s best.” We also learned that love is not self-seeking; rather, it “seeks the good of the other.”

Kindness and goodness are both characteristics of God, they flow from His infinite love for us. So we, too, should display our love for others in kindness and goodness. In these, as in all aspects of the fruit of the Spirit, the Lord Jesus Christ is our primary example.

Read John 8:1-11 and answer the following questions.

1. What did the Pharisees want for the woman (v. 5)?

2. What did Jesus want for her (v. 11)?

3. How would you compare the attitude of Jesus with that of the Pharisees toward the woman?

Jesus _____

Pharisees _____

5.0 Patience

Patience is the ability to remain consistent in difficult times. Patience is not losing one's temper in a difficult circumstance. It is not a passive, wimpy, do-nothing attitude. It is a strength that endures trial and remains true to its own character. It is perseverance with pleasantness.

The Bible defines patience for us in Ephesians 4:2 *Be completely _____ and _____; be patient, _____ with one another in love.*

Paul uses the attitude of Jesus Christ toward himself to show the extent of God's patience with him.

1 Timothy 1:16 *But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his _____ as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life.*

Peter also tells us of God's patience with sinners. 2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

Unfortunately, there is only one way to acquire patience, and that is to have the patience we already have stretched beyond its normal limits. So the Holy Spirit uses the circumstances of life to supernaturally grow patience in us.

James 1:2-4 - *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops. _____*

⁴ *Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be _____ and _____, not lacking anything.*

You may also read Romans 5:3-5.

2.0 Love

The first of the fruits of the Spirit is *love*. The love that is produced by the Holy Spirit is not the kind of love that comes naturally to us; that warm, wonderful feeling we get from a relationship with another person, such as the love of a mother for her child, or the feelings between two young people totally infatuated with each other. While this love may be very enjoyable, it is also somewhat self-centered, because what we like about it is the good feeling we get from loving another person.

The love that God has for us, and the love that He places in us, is expressed in the Greek word *agape*. This love is a self-less love, a love that seeks the best for the other person regardless of how they respond to our love. Such a love is not natural, it can only come from God.

This kind of love is the love that Jesus Christ had for us when He died for us. 1 John 4:9 says *"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."*

What this love looks like in life is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Write the characteristics of love in the blanks on the left side of the page. On the right side of the page you may write any notes of explanation you may need, and indicate places you need to work on to show love in your life.

⁴ Love is _____,

love is _____

It does not _____

it does not _____,

it is not _____.

⁵It is not _____

it is not _____

it is not easily _____

it keeps no _____.

⁶Love does not delight in _____

but rejoices with the _____

⁷ It always _____,

always _____

always _____

always _____

This love, which can only be a fruit of the Holy Spirit, will be displayed in these ways in all of our relationships: marriage, family, and all others we have contact with

3.0 Joy

Joy is a deep inner delight in knowing that we are God's children, that He loves us with an everlasting love, that we are terribly important to Him. It is knowing that if God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it. Joy is different from happiness.

Happiness is the satisfaction that comes from pleasant circumstances; it is external, subject to change as the circumstances change. Happiness can be pumped up emotionally by upbeat music or by a charismatic speaker. Joy is internal, permanent, based on God, not circumstances. The joy of the Lord is a deep, settled assurance that all is well between us and God, it is knowing that we are the supreme object of His love.

Jesus is our example of joy, as He was able to endure the cross for the sake of joy.

Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. ² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

In Acts 16, Luke records the conversion of the Jailer at Phillipi, showing the joy that comes from salvation. *34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God--he and his whole family.*

The source of our joy is the Holy Spirit. In Romans 14:17, we read, *"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,"*

Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The joy of the Lord is also the foundation of our worship.

Psalm 5:11 But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

Psalm 98:4 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; (5) make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, (6) with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn- shout for joy before the LORD, the King.

Psalm 100:1 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. 2 Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

4.0 Peace

Our understanding of "peace" in this context is based on the Hebrew word "shalom." This word means much more than the absence of hostilities. Shalom is a feeling of "completeness, soundness, and well-being of the total person," a sense that everything is in its right place. In the Old Testament, this was considered as only coming from God as a result of being in a right relationship with Him by obedience to the law. In the New Testament, this kind of peace only comes from the presence of God the Holy Spirit within us. Consider the following aspects of the peace we have.

Peace with God

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace

_____ through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Peace of God

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer

and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. [7] And the peace

_____ which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts

and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Peace from God

Ephesians 2:13 - 14 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have

been brought near through the blood of Christ. [14] For he himself is our peace,

who has made the two one and has destroyed the _____, the dividing

wall of _____,

You may also read Galatians 3:28.

So by the Holy Spirit, we have peace with God, the peace of God, and peace with our brothers and sisters in Christ. This does not mean we won't have any enemies, but it does mean we will have peace within, even in the presence of hatred without.