The Gift of God's Spirit

A Contemplative Prayer Journal

based on Galatians 5:22

Written by residents of the Florida Senior Enrichment Center.

The Gift of God's Spirit

Scripture:

John 14:15 "If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

25 All this I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have told you.

I Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that you yourselves are God's temple, and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

Reflection:

1. What does it mean that you are God's temple? How does that impact you?

   _____

   _____

2. Have you ever been in a situation where you felt God's spirit speaking to you? or through you to someone else? (You know how you suddenly realize something...or you say something wise or insightful to someone and you don't even know where it came from?)

   _____

   _____

3. What does it mean to you...how does it change you...to know that the Divine...the very image of God lives in YOU?

   _____

   _____

4. What does it then mean to know that the same Divine Spirit lives in every person?

   _____

   _____

Prayer: God, we thank you for your Holy Spirit that dwells within us and others. Help us be mindful of this gift!

(contributed by Kimberly Weir)

The Fruit of the Spirit is … LOVE

In Galatians 5, St. Paul names *Love* as the first fruit of God's Spirit. In Corinthians, he details lots of dos and don'ts about living in *Love*.

Scripture:

1 Corinthians 13: 4-8

Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

Reflection:

Why do you think St. Paul considers *love* the first Fruit of God's Spirit?

_____

Why does he take time to describe the practice of *love* with such detail?

_____

Which quality/aspect of *Love* is most natural for you, or easiest for you to practice? _____

How did you show *love* in this way recently?

_____

How did this deepen your sense of fellowship?

_____

Which quality of *love* is most challenging for you? And why?

_____

What might help you *love* like this?

_____

What blessing might come from practicing *love* in this way?

_____

Which quality of *love* would help strengthen our Community Life?

_____

How can you bring this gift of Spirit to our gatherings?

_____

Prayer: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and kindle in us the fire of Your Love. Send forth Your Spirit and we will be created, and You will renew the face of the earth.

(contributed by Faye Perdoni)

The Fruit of the Spirit is…JOY!

The sunrise with its brilliance delivers
a new day's hope suspended on the river.
Sparkling, dancing, with His light;
a reminder of His presence ignites.

–Rita Schaaf

Scripture: (verses copied from NKJV)

Romans 14:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

John 15:11

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

John 16:22

Therefore, you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

Reflection:

1. What does it mean to have the spirit of *joy*?

_____

_____

2. How do you rest in *joy*?

_____

_____

3. How does it make you feel to know that it's actually possible to be filled with "all *joy* and peace"?

_____

_____

(contributed by Rita Schaaf)

The Fruit of the Spirit is…PEACE

Scripture:

John 14:27
27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Paul used the Greek word “Eirini” which can mean “peace between individuals; harmony, concord.” Peace in this verse can also mean more than just the absence of war or something felt in the mind. It can also be a way of living life in a proper relationship between human and God, as well as human and human.

Reflection:

What symbols of *peace* do we find in scripture? What was happening when those symbols showed up?

_____

_____

Think of a time you have felt *peaceful*. What was going on at that time?

_____

_____

How would you define *peace*?

_____

_____

What robs you of *peace*? How does that impact your life and well-being?

_____

_____

How has having *peace* helped you in your relationship with God?

_____

_____

“We can experience peace while picking up the pieces.”
author unknown

(contributed by Mike Cox)

The Fruit of the Spirit is…PATIENCE

Scripture:

Psalm 27:1, 8-13

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom should I fear?
The Lord is the defense of my life;
Whom should I dread?

8 *When You said*, “Seek My face,” my heart said to You,
“I shall seek Your face, Lord.”
9 Do not hide Your face from me,
Do not turn Your servant away in anger;
You have been my help;
Do not abandon me nor forsake me,
God of my salvation!
10 [f]For my father and my mother have forsaken me,
But the Lord will take me up.

11 Teach me Your way, Lord,
And lead me on a level path
Because of my enemies.
12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my enemies,
For false witnesses have risen against me,
And the violent witness.
13 I certainly believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord
In the land of the living.

14 Wait for the Lord;
Be strong and let your heart take courage;
Yes, wait for the Lord.

Reflection:

1. What are you most impatient about? And Why?
   _____
   _____

2. What are the consequences of being impatient?
   _____
   _____

3. What are some of the fruits of *patience*? What fruit does *patience* bear?
   _____
   _____

4. Why does the psalmist say we should wait on the Lord? What does that mean to you? Why is it so difficult?
   _____
   _____

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Love is patient…

Prayer: Holy Spirit, grant us the grace to be *patient* and to wait for you.

(contributed by Joseph Testy)

The Fruit of the Spirit is…KINDNESS.

Scripture:

Ephesians 4:31-32

31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with
every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one
another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Reflection:

How do you define *kindness*? _____

_____

Where else do you find *kindness* in the Bible? _____

_____

When is it easiest to be *kind*? _____

_____

When is it the hardest to be *kind*? _____

_____

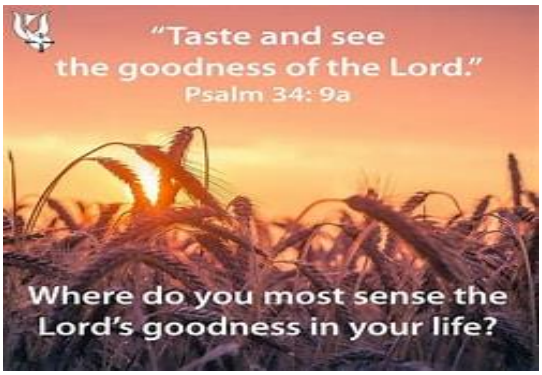
Why is *kindness* a fruit of the spirit? _____

_____

Prayer: O God of love and kindness, help us remember your kindness and goodness to us and then share that with others.

(contributed by Kimberly Weir)

The Fruit of the Spirit Is… GOODNESS.



Kindness is the disposition that moves us to treat others in a gentle and considerate way. Goodness also involves kindness toward others, but it includes an aspect of moral integrity and generosity that seeks to inspire, encourage and support others in living a better life. The word Paul uses for goodness is defined as "virtue equipped at every point."

Scripture:

Luke 4: 16-21

Then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day, he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because He anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to captives,

and recovery of sight to the blind;

to set free those who are oppressed;

To announce the year when the Lord will save his people.

Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him. He began

speaking to them, ‘This passage of scripture has come true today as you heard it being read.’

Reflection:

Jesus embodied and made manifest the Spirit of God’s Eternal Goodness. The same Spirit anoints us to inspire, encourage and support others to taste and see God’s Goodness in our lives today. What examples do we find in scripture of Jesus living into this proclamation?

In what ways can a person be “poor” besides financially?

_____

What can hold a person “captive” in our society today?

_____

What kinds of things can we be “blind” to in life?

_____

Feelings of oppression take many forms. What kind of burdens can be oppressive?

_____

In what ways can you announce the Good News of God’s Saving Grace by your words or example to others every day?

_____

Prayer: Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Galatians 6: 9-10

(contributed by Fay Perdoni)

The Fruit of the Spirit is…FAITHFULNESS.

Scripture:

Exodus 2:23-24

23 During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in
their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery
went up to God. **24** God heard their groaning and he remembered his
covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.

2 Corinthians 11:24-28

24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. **25** Three
times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I
was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, **26** I have been
constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from
bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger
in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from
false believers. **27** I have labored and toiled and have often gone without
sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I
have been cold and naked. **28** Besides everything else, I face daily the
pressure of my concern for all the churches.

Romans 8:28

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Reflection:

Where do we learn *faithfulnes*s? _____

_____

Can *faithfulness* lead us to memories? _____

_____

Can *faithfulness* steer us to recognize our most worthwhile thoughts?

_____

How do we remain *faithful* over a long period of time? _____

_____

How do we show *faithfulness* to God? _____

_____

What examples do we have of *faithful* women in the Bible? _____

_____

Prayer: God, we thank you for your ultimate gift of faithfulness to us in the surrendering of Your Son, Jesus. May we be ever mindful of that gift. Amen.

(contributed by Edward Valentine)

The Fruit of the Spirit is…GENTLENESS.

"Be kind to each other. It is better to commit faults with gentleness than to work miracles with unkindness." —Mother Teresa

Scripture:

Philippians 4:5: Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

Colossians 3:12: Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

1 Peter 3:15
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.

Matthew 11:28-29 2
28 Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Reflection:

George Washington Bethune, Dutch Reformed pastor in the United States, observed in 1839: *"Perhaps no grace is less prayed for, or less cultivated, than gentleness."* His words still ring true today. As Christians, we often lack the gentleness we desperately need. We may hardly even notice its absence.

If we undervalue gentleness, or meekness, it's likely because we misunderstand it. Perhaps we think of it as a sort of spinelessness or weakness, as if to be gentle or meek is to lie down and let others wipe their feet on us. But a better, more biblical way to think of gentleness is as *strength under control*. This is the gentleness the Scriptures describe in our triune God and in His servants, like the apostle Paul. It involves a Godward dimension of submission to the Lord in all of His Word and works, and it involves a human dimension in the consideration of others. Such humble strength is what God expects of and supplies to all His people.

1. What are some of the ways we can demonstrate *gentleness*?

   _____

   _____

2. In what ways is *gentleness* a sign of strength?

   _____

   _____

Prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, produce in me the fruit of a gentle spirit.

(submitted by Rita Schaaf)

The Fruit of the Spirit is…SELF CONTROL.

Scripture:

Proverbs 25:28
Like a city whose walls are broken through
is a person who lacks self-control.

1 Peter 4:7-8
7 The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. **8** Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

James 1:19-20
19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, **20** because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

Psalm 141:3-5
Set a guard over my mouth, Lord;
keep watch over the door of my lips.
4 Do not let my heart be drawn to what is evil
so that I take part in wicked deeds
along with those who are evildoers;
do not let me eat their delicacies.
5Let a righteous man strike me—that is a kindness;
let him rebuke me—that is oil on my head.
My head will not refuse it,
for my prayer will still be against the deeds of evildoers.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

24 Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. **25** Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. **26** Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. **27** No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Reflection:

1. Why is *self-control* a “fruit of the spirit”?

   _____

   _____

2. How does it feel when we have *self-control*? And when we don’t?

   _____

   _____

3. When is it hardest to have *self-control*?

   _____

   _____

4. What does patience have to do with *self-control*?

   _____

   _____

Prayer: Serenity Prayer –

“God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.”

(contributed by Judi Mackie)