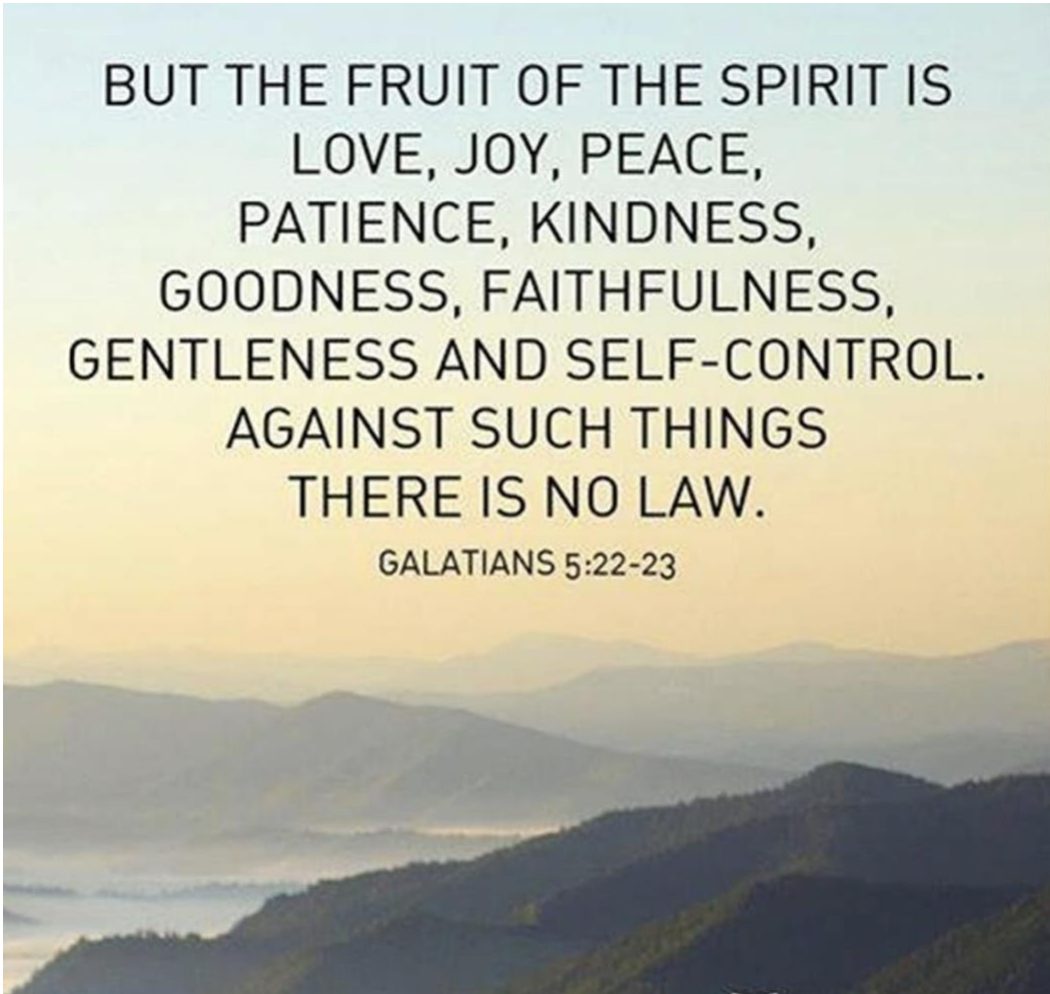


ELEV8 Basketball

2023-24 Devotional

BUT THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS
LOVE, JOY, PEACE,
PATIENCE, KINDNESS,
GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS,
GENTLENESS AND SELF-CONTROL.
AGAINST SUCH THINGS
THERE IS NO LAW.

GALATIANS 5:22-23



Fruit of the Spirit

Week 1 – Welcome / Intro to “Fruit of the Spirit”

Week 2 – Love

Week 3 – Joy

Week 4 – Peace

Week 5 – Patience

Week 6 – Kindness

Week 7 – Goodness

Week 8 – Faithfulness

Week 9 – Gentleness

Week 10 – Self-Control

Week 11 – Review

ELEV8 Basketball has been serving families in Central MD for many years. The program offers a fun, instructional, and competitive basketball program to kids in kindergarten (age 4) through seniors in high school. ELEV8 Sports is ministry of Columbia Presbyterian Church (CPC), operated in partnership with Crossroads Church of the Nazarene and Bethel Korean Presbyterian Church.

ELEV8 SPORTS

We believe that every human being is made *Imago Dei* (in the “image of God”) and has inherent worth. We also believe from God’s Word (the Bible) and our everyday observations, that we have each failed to meet His standard for living which has broken our relationship with Him. Left to our own choices and actions, we can never restore that relationship with Him. However, we also believe that over 2000 years ago, Jesus lived a perfect life and died a horrific death on a cross to take the punishment that our disobedience deserves and offers new life to all who trust and have faith in Him as both Savior and Lord. As a ministry of CPC, ELEV8’s purpose is to positively develop strong character in our participants while seeking to honor and offer life-changing hope found in Jesus.

Our devotions this season will focus on what the Bible calls “Fruit of the Spirit” which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). These fruits were displayed by Jesus while living on this earth and revealed His true heart for those “image bearers” who understood their true spiritual brokenness. The Spirit is now active in those who call upon Jesus’ name with the Spirit’s fruit providing evidence of His active work in their lives.

For all ELEV8 participants who don’t know Jesus as Savior and Lord, it is our prayer that you will consider His offer in Matthew 11 *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light”*. If you heed Jesus’ invitation and come to Him by faith, the Spirit will live in you and enable your growth to become more like Jesus and display a character evidenced by what Galatians calls the “Fruit of the Spirit”.

Each week our devotions will look at how Jesus’ interactions with people displayed his character, which often seemed counter intuitive to His disciples and those he interacted with. If these characteristics or fruit are one’s that you’d like to see in your life and those of your family but you don’t yet know Jesus as Lord and Savior, please talk to your ELEV8 Head Coach or someone from the ELEV8 Leadership Team. We’d love to share with you our own personal journey of faith to knowing and trusting Jesus. If you already have a personal relationship with

Jesus, we pray that the devotional time this year will encourage, challenge, and increase your dependency on the Spirit's active work in your lives to becoming more like Jesus each day.

We're excited that you're part of our ELEV8 community this year and look forward to a great season!

ELEV8 Leadership Team

Bunny Amason
Dane Choe
Thomas Fahs
Jim "Duck" Murduck

Mark Armstrong
Michael Dransfield
Curt Hustead
Andrew Parlette

Chuck Brogan
Vincent Dudek
Paul Johnson
Julie Schellin

Suggestion for coaches leading the devotion:

1. Read the devotional material before the practice, and
2. Pray for God's Spirit to speak to your heart and to use your words to reach the hearts of your players.

Week #1: Welcome to ELEV8

Get to know your team!

Introduce yourself to parents and players.

Have players introduce themselves.

***Idea:** Have each player say their name, where they live, and something they like to do in their free time.*

This year our devotions will focus on the character of Jesus, which the Bible summarizes as fruits of the “Spirit”. Those are summarized in the Bible here:

Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control: against such there is no law.

Each week during devotions we will discuss one of these and seek to understand how God desires for us to produce this fruit, through His Spirit, for His glory.

Conclude by sharing your personal testimony with the team and the impacted it’s had on your life (include an example of a fruit the Spirit has produced from you).

PRAY WITH YOUR TEAM FOR THE SEASON

Week #2: Love

Read - Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Verse for today – John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Intro – Today’s devotion will focus on love

Q: Name something you love (e.g. basketball, pizza, movies, etc.)

Q: What do you think demonstrates love to another person? (e.g. serve them, buy them something)

Jesus’ Entire Ministry was Characterized by Love

Q: *How did Jesus demonstrate love in his earthly ministry?*

Common answers include:

(1) Becoming a human being, born in a manger (Luke 2)

(2) Subjecting Himself to humiliation, suffering and death on a cross (Matt 27).

Jesus also demonstrated his love through (3) compassion for others.

Love through Compassion

From Matthew 14: One day Jesus was at the Sea of Galilee and great crowds of people came to him. Among them were sick, lame, mute, and blind. There were no hospitals and minimal help for sick in the region. Jesus had compassionate love for them and healed many. He also knew the people had been following and learning from him for three days and were very hungry. He took a few loaves of bread and two fish and multiplied them to feed over four thousand people. Jesus demonstrated his love to meet both our physical and spiritual needs.

God’s Love

We read in Romans 5:8 - “God demonstrates his love for us in this: while we were sinners, Jesus died for us”

Jesus demonstrated unconditional love for us through his life and death. Through faith in Jesus, we can have a restored relationship with God. The Bible says that the Spirit will then come and live in us and begin to grow and produce fruit in our lives to share with all those we interact with.

Our memory verse for today:

“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life” (*John 3:16*)

Q: Do you believe and have faith in Jesus? Please talk to your coach if you have any questions.

End in Prayer

Pray for your players that they may have faith in Jesus' sacrifice for them and begin to produce the fruit of unconditional love to others in their lives through the Spirit.

Week #3: Joy

Read - Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Verse for today – Romans 15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Intro – Today’s devotion will focus on joy

Q: What makes you happy? What makes you sad?

Some things make us happy (e.g. winning a game) and the opposite often makes us sad (e.g. losing a game). Each of these are very temporal in nature, usually dependent on how much value we place on the things that make us happy/sad.

Biblical Joy

This joy goes beyond happiness and is not dependent on our circumstances because its basis is in God himself and His promises. That’s why it is a fruit of the Spirit.

Jesus was Joyful

Jesus is described in the book of Hebrews as ‘*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.*’

Q: How can this be? (He was joyful because he knew that his death would bring many sons and daughters to glory in God’s family.)

Heaven Rejoices

In Luke 15, Jesus told a parable to the Pharisees about a shepherd who owned 100 sheep and loses one of them. He left the 99 in a safe place and searched for the lost one. When he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and carries it home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’

Jesus summarized the parable's meaning by saying '*I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who (believe they) do not need to repent.*'

Q: Have you ever felt like you were the one sheep that was lost? (The Good Shepherd is ready and able to meet you where you are and carry you home. All you need to do is ask)

Our Joy is not Dependent on our Efforts or Circumstances

When a sinner truly repents and places their faith and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord, they can have confidence in the Good Shepherd to carry them home. Jesus' joy will be in them, and their joy will be complete.

End in Prayer for your Players (from the Apostle Paul)

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 (Romans 15:13)

Week #4: Peace

Read - Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Verse for today – Philippians 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Intro – Today’s devotion will focus on peace

The word “peace” has various meanings in our culture.

Q: Can you name some? (e.g. absent of war, goodbye)

Biblical Peace - involves our hearts, souls and minds.

Q: Where does Biblical peace come from?

A: a Sovereign God who works out all things for our good and His glory.

In John 14, Jesus is talking to His disciples shortly before He is crucified. He knows they will be scared, and so He promises them “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you . . . Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

In Luke 24, we read that Jesus appeared to the disciples after the resurrection and his first statement to them was “Peace be with you”. Jesus knows our weakness and tendency to worry and fret.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippian church and offered the following:

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4: 6-7)

As disciples of Jesus, we aren’t promised an easy life to always relax and never experience conflict or fear. We are promised the Spirit to live in us (John 14) so we will not be alone and Jesus prays for us daily (Romans 8).

Q: What creates stress in your life? What do you worry about?

From Jesus' words in Matthew 11 "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light*".

If you respond to Jesus' invitation and come to Him by faith, the Spirit will live in you and enable your growth to become more like Jesus.

Invitation to your team: Please see me after practice if you want to learn more about becoming a follower of Jesus.

End in Prayer

Pray for your players, that they may know Biblical peace in their lives.

Week #5: Patience

Read - Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Verse for today – Romans 12:12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Intro – Today’s devotion will focus on patience

Q: What does it mean to be patient? What causes you to be impatient?

Jesus exhibited the fruit of patience throughout His earthly ministry. While many wanted Jesus to often take immediate action, he displayed patience because he had an eternal mission in mind.

Jesus – Patient Healer of Body and Soul

In Mark 5, Jesus interacted with two people who were sick: a woman and a young girl. The woman had experienced pain and bleeding for many years while the young girl had recently become ill and her father Jairus was afraid she was going to die.

Jesus agreed to go with the girl’s father, a synagogue leader, to see his daughter. On the way, crowds gathered around Jesus as he walked. A woman in the crowd reached out and touched Jesus’ cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized what had happened and asked, “Who touched my cloak?”. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

While Jesus was still speaking, a message from Jairus’ house came “Your daughter is dead”.

Note: This would have overwhelmed Jairus and he must have been thinking, if only Jesus had hurried and not stopped to interact with this woman, my daughter might still be alive.

Overhearing what they said, Jesus told Jairus, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” When Jesus arrived at Jairus’ house, there were many grieving people. Jesus said “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” Jesus went with the child’s parents into where the girl’s body was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). Immediately she opened her eyes and got up. She was alive and healed!

Again, Jairus would have been overcome with emotions.

Jesus displayed patience and power to heal both body and soul.

End in Prayer

Pray with Paul’s words in Romans 12 that in all circumstances, we would be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Week #6: Kindness

Read - Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Verse for today – Ephesians 4:32. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Intro – Today’s devotion will focus on kindness

Q: What does it mean to be kind? Is this easy to do in all situations?

It’s relatively easy to be kind to people that are kind to us. However, when we interact with people that are unkind, rude, or mean to us, our tendency is to be unkind, rude or mean in response.

Biblical kindness is truly a fruit of the Spirit that can only occur when the Spirit is guiding us in difficult interactions with others.

Jesus and Acts of Kindness

One day, as Jesus makes his way down a mountainside, a leprous man emerges from the shadows and kneels before Jesus. He asks to be made clean and Jesus touches him. And just like that; he is clean!

In one touch, Jesus breaks all laws and boundaries set by society and touches the untouchable. In one touch, Jesus not only heals him but gives him the gift of being clean. Back in those days, lepers were outcasts and could not be touched. There was a stigma attached to being unclean in Jewish society. After all, lepers were on the “unclean” list with pigs! Jesus restored his skin and gave him a new status in life. Through the kindness of Jesus, he could live “clean.” He could give and feel the touch of family and friends.

God’s Kindness

“Do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4)

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

Biblical kindness is being nice when others aren't nice, and even when they may be rude to us. The Bible tells us “If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink, for you will heap burning coals on his head” (Proverbs 25.21-22a).

Q: What does this mean? (God uses kindness, through his disciples being led by the Spirit, to lead many of His enemies to repentance)

End in Prayer

Holy Spirit, please work in each of our hearts to display kindness to all those around us. Whether on the basketball court, in our school, our neighborhood, or in our families.

Week #7: Goodness

Read - Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Verse for today – Romans 12:21. Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

Intro – Today’s devotion will focus on goodness

Q: Are you a good person? Do you do good things?

The word “good” or words with the root word “good” in them, including goodness, are mentioned almost 700 times in the Bible. The Greek word kalos, translated “good,” describes that which is noble, wholesome, and beautiful, in contrast to that which is wicked, mean, and unlovely. It signifies not only that which is good inwardly—character—but also that which is attractive outwardly.

Jesus said “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11). In using the phrase “the good shepherd,” Jesus is referencing His nobility, inherent goodness, righteousness, and beauty. As shepherd of the sheep, He is the one who protects, guides, and nurtures His flock. As the good shepherd, Jesus speaks of “laying down” His life for His sheep.

When Peter summarized the ministry of Jesus, the ministry of which he was an actual witness, he stated: "Jesus of Nazareth . . . went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). These acts of goodness included his life of mercy, his humble submission to an unjust death on the cross to pay the punishment for our sins.

Micah the prophet says “He (God) has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)

Called to Seek Goodness

In response to God’s goodness offered to each of us through Jesus, we’re called to acts of goodness (i.e. love God and love our neighbors). A humble posture before God is the starting place for loving Him with our heart, soul, mind, and

strength. Loving our neighbor as ourselves involves acting justly in our unjust world and seeking ways to lovingly show mercy to all those around us.

God-honoring goodness doesn't come naturally to any of us. We need the Spirit working in our lives to produce this fruit.

We are tempted to be discouraged at time by what is happening around us in society, but the Spirit enables those who ask to follow the Apostle Paul instruction "Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good".

Q: What are ways to show goodness to those around you, both on and off the basketball court?

End in Prayer (Use the two verses below)

Lord, there are people in our life that we don't like nor desire to show goodness to. Jesus recognizes this about us and said in Matthew 19, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Give us a heart to show goodness to everyone we come in contact with, and may we have the heart of the Apostle Paul who said, "I can do all things through him (Jesus) who gives me strength."

Week #8: Faithfulness

Read - Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Verse for today – Psalm 36:5 Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds.

Intro – Today’s devotion will focus on faithfulness

Q: How would you define or identify a faithful person? (To be a faithful person is to be reliable, steadfast and unwavering.)

Faithfulness is an attribute of God, a positive characteristic of some people, a characteristic that many people lack, and one of the Fruit of the Spirit.

The Bible speaks often of God’s faithfulness. Over and over we learn that when God says He will do something, He does it (even when it seems impossible). When He says something will happen, it happens.

Many of us strive to be faithful in our personal commitments and relationships with others.

Q: Would your friends say that you are a faithful person?

We all know that none of us have been perfect and have failed to be faithful in the past. The Bible says it is a gift from God. When we receive Christ as Lord, the Holy Spirit dwells in us and brings the blessings of love, joy, peace and faithfulness. For follows of Jesus, our personal character should grow in faithfulness to God and in our relationships to our neighbors.

Q: Give an example of how to be faithful in your relationships with others?

Q: Why is it hard sometimes to remain faithful to commitments you make?

Jesus was faithful to the task he had here on this earth. Even when He was in anguish due to His impending crucifixion, He resolved to stay with the plan of redemption (the painful and shameful death on the cross) to the very end. He summarized His mission in John 12:27: "For this purpose I came to this hour." He

continues to serve His Church today as "a merciful and faithful High Priest" (Hebrews 2:17).

End in Prayer for your players that "faithfulness" would be a characteristic they desire to have and exhibit in their relationships with others and for the Spirit to enable them to grow in their faithfulness to all those they meet and have a relationship.

Week #9: Gentleness

Read - Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Verse for today - Philippians 4:5 Let your gentleness be evident to all.

Intro – Today’s devotion will focus on Gentleness

Of all the fruit of the Spirit, gentleness may be the most misunderstood and least admired. Gentleness is often seen as a weakness, but that is not the case.

Q: How would you define gentleness? What does gentleness look like?

A: It involves humility, thankfulness, and polite, restrained behavior toward others. The opposite of gentleness is unrighteous anger, a desire for revenge, and a big self-ego/pride.

Gentleness doesn’t come natural to any of us. Our identities are often defined in our physical or academic achievements, our possessions or our appearances. However, the Greek word for “gentle” as used in the New Testament means “not being overly impressed by a sense of one’s self-importance.”

Paul says, "If anyone is caught in a trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness" (Galatians 6:1). This means to confront the repentant brother or sister in a manner that is in line with Scripture—to be mild, loving, encouraging, and clear about the holiness that God calls us to.

Gentleness – Polite and Restrained Behavior

We see Jesus demonstrating gentleness with

- the woman at the well (John 4),
- a woman caught in adultery by the Pharisees, brought before Him to stone her, and Jesus began scribbling in the sand and asking anyone who was without sin to cast the first stone (John 8), and

- a parable about the “sinful” tax collector confessing his sins vs the “proud” Pharisee proclaiming his righteous (Luke 18)

Note: Jesus said the tax collector went home justified before God, but not the Pharisee. He then concluded with the verse - For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Gentleness – Righteous Anger

Jesus showed another side of gentleness when he displayed “righteous anger” toward self-righteous people who falsely believed in their own righteousness and bragged about it. They pretended to be good, but they were just as broken as everyone else and refused to admit and acknowledge their own sin. Jesus famously calls out this hypocrisy by saying they wash the outside of the cup but ignore the inside (Matthew 23)

Jesus also flipped tables in the temple twice (John 2 & Matthew 21) because the religious leaders were selling the sacrifices required by God’s law for a profit. In other words, poor families who traveled far and at great expense to follow God’s law were extorted, when they should have been helped.

End in Prayer

Jesus, please give us hearts that are humble and a gentleness in spirit like yours

Week #10: Self-Control

Read - Galatians 5:22-23 – But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Verse for today – 2 Timothy 1:7 For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

Intro – Today’s devotion will focus on self-control

Q: Give an example of something hard to control? Why is this hard for you?

Self-control involves both “control over one’s behavior and the impulses and emotions beneath it”. It includes our minds and our emotions — not just our outward actions, but our internal state.

Jesus’ life demonstrated self-control

In Matthew 26, Peter and other disciples were with Jesus when soldiers came to arrest Jesus. During the arrest, a disciple resisted and cut off the ear of a soldier. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me. But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.”

Q: Why did Jesus show self-control in this situation?

(A: He knew what his mission was here on earth, to give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10). Thus, he exercised godly self-control and allowed Himself to be arrested and crucified (to save all who call upon his name).

The Apostle Paul talks about an athlete having “self control in all things” (*1 Corinthians 9*). He says an athlete must train in a focused, disciplined, and purposeful way to achieve a desired result.

It's the same way in life. We must be focused, disciplined, and purposeful in how we live our lives so as not to overreact to tense or stressful situations. Being prepared for situations we may face. Thinking through how to handle situations before they happen.

The good news is God stands ready to help all who recognize their need for Jesus in their lives. Whatever tempts us to lose control, the Spirit will help us exercise self-control. Ask Him daily for help. Only then can we have self-control, not because we're so strong, but because God is.

End in Prayer

Jesus, please show each of us how much we need you in our lives, as both Savior and Lord. Give each of us a desire to turn away from the things that don't honor you and to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit in our lives each day. For your glory!

Week #11: Summary & Review

Theme: Father God invites you to rest in the finished work of his son Jesus, and he will enable you to be a producer of fruit of the Spirit!

Galatians 5:22:23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Summary

Certain absolutes in life make sense. $2+2=4$. Always. No exceptions. But when it comes to behavior and doing things, we can get in trouble with claiming absolutes. An absolute usually comes with an “always” or a “never.” A few examples: We should always make our bed in the morning. Always? Mom (or Dad) you never let me do what I want to do. Never?

You see, when it comes to behavior and doing things, absolutes are rarely, well, absolutes. Which makes the conclusion of Paul laying out the fruit of the Spirit worth discussing. Paul has laid out 9 fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Then he states an absolute: “against such things there is no law.”

Rephrased in the negative, it would say “it is never against the law to do such things.” Rephrased in the positive, it would say “it’s always good or right to do such things.” Is that really true? Aren’t there exceptions? The world says yes; God says no.

For example, is it always right to love? When it comes to people, yes. We are called to love people, always. We can hate what they do, we can hate evil, but we’re called to love people. Always. Why? “We love because he [God] first loved us” (1 John 4.19). The other fruit of the Spirit are always right to exhibit for similar reasons. Because to act this way is in line with God’s character and how He treats us.

Notice Paul doesn’t phrase the absolute as “when we do this, we always benefit.” That wouldn’t be true. Sometimes being kind doesn’t benefit us. Mean people

may be mean in response to kindness. What Paul says, instead, is it's always right to do these things, regardless of how others respond to it.

Love others. Live with **joy**, **peace**, and **patience**. Extend **kindness**. Do **good**. Have enduring **faithfulness**. Be **gentle**. Exhibit **self-control**. How often? Always. Why? Because God said so, and because God treats you this way.

One of my favorite quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: "The time is always right to do what is right". Dr. King trusted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, relied upon God's word to define what was right, and sought to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit at all times in his life.

Discussion Questions

Do you know and trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior? (The time is always right to do what is right). He will help you produce fruit of the Spirit!

Jesus said "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)

Have players recall at least one thing they learned from this study. Challenge them to continue trying to live differently and stand out by bearing fruit.