

# Fruit OF THE Spirit

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

## 2015 Bible Study



RAINBOWTRAIL.ORG



We Are Very Grateful To The Following Individuals  
For Their Work In Writing The 2015 Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp Bible Study

## **Fruit Of The Spirit**

### **Day 1 -- Fruit Of The Spirit**

Pastor Mark Twietmeyer - Trinity Lutheran Church, Boulder, CO

Introduction To The Theme	p.5
Morning Watch	p.7
The Study	p.8
Additional Resources	p.13
Parent Devotional	p.14

### **Day 2 -- Shalom - Love, Joy, And Peace**

Pastor Nicole' Ferry - Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Los Alamos, NM

Introduction To The Theme	p.15
Morning Watch	p.17
The Study	p.18
Additional Resources	p.23
Parent Devotional	p.26

### **Day 3 -- Patience – Kindness On The Clock**

Pastor Russ Britton – Bethany Lutheran Church, Cherry Hills Village, CO

Introduction To The Theme	p.27
Morning Watch	p.29
The Study	p.30
Additional Resources	p.34
Parent Devotional	p.38

### **Day 4 -- Being At My Best For All...**

Pastor Jane Jebesen- Faith Lutheran Church, Golden, CO

Introduction To The Theme	p.39
Morning Watch	p.41
The Study	p.42
Additional Resources	p.49
Parent Devotional	p.53

### **Day 5 -- Living Fruit-fully Wherever I Go**

Pastor Vera Guebert-Steward - Evergreen Lutheran Church, Evergreen, CO

Introduction To The Theme	p.55
Morning Watch	p.58
The Study	p.59
Additional Resources	p.65
Parent Devotional	p.70

### **Day Camp and Preschool Bible Study**

Nellie Jarvis – Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, Canon City, CO



# Fruit Of The Spirit

I have always thought there were nine fruits of the spirit. That is what I had been taught when I was child. Even the fun song we sing at camp points to the many “Fruits of the Spirit.” However, as we began to write this study, I finally understood that it is really a singular FRUIT of the Spirit that has multiple characteristics. So we all possess the Fruit of the Spirit and ALL of the characteristics; we each just have a different mix of those characteristics. This opens the door for us to grow in the areas that we are not as strong as in others. Nonetheless, we can use all nine characteristics to impact people who touch our lives. As we grow into these characteristics, we will become more Christ-like. And when we become more Christ-like, we can change the world!

The days of this study take us from a more clear understanding of the Fruit of the Spirit and its characteristics to a new understanding of how we can be living fruit every day in all circumstances:

1. **The Fruit Of The Spirit:** Through our baptism, the Holy Spirit has blessed us with the fruit of the Spirit. These nine characteristics give us the character of Christ. In bearing the Fruit of the Spirit, we are being transformed into the image of Christ.
2. **Shalom – Love, Joy, And Peace:** Shalom refers to the wholeness, perfection and peace of God’s creation. It is through the expressions of Love, Joy, and Peace that we can be part of re-establishing shalom in the world. We are given these characteristics as gifts, not for our sake, but for the sake of others.
3. **Patience – Kindness On The Clock:** God has modeled and extended patience to us. It is by God’s grace that we are able to live out Patience, Kindness, and Gentleness. By that same grace, we don’t *have* to live out these characteristics to prove anything; rather we *get* to live out patience, kindness, and gentleness.
4. **Being At My best For All:** How we choose to live in Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control can greatly impact how others interact with us. It will transform us too. These characteristics allow us to be at our very best living our life for others.
5. **Living Fruit-fully Wherever I Go:** We are gifted with the Fruit of the Spirit and these characteristics of the fruit exist in all of us. We are sent home to use the Fruit of the Spirit in our daily lives to impact the lives of others. And God calls us to continue to stay connected to God, “the vine,” as we grow into the Fruit of the Spirit with prayer, worship, and a community of faith.

Morning Watch is an important part of each day at camp. We will begin each Morning Watch with a welcome, some scriptural reading, a current song, and then move to a half hour of God Time and reflection. We hope that this discipline of quiet time during the day is one that many will take home with them as they seek to grow in their relationship with God.

I am very excited about this study. This is a very practical study. I hope this study can move campers, staff, and congregational leaders to wake each morning and wonder what part of the fruit of the Spirit God will use in them today to touch the lives of others. If this happens, they will transform the lives of others, and in doing so, they will be transformed as well. I also hope this study will help you to continue to grow in your own faith journey. Thank you for the opportunity to be partners with you as we serve the youth, adults, and families of the Rocky Mountain Synod and beyond.

  
Dave Jarvis,  
Executive Director



“Fruit Of The Spirit”  
2015 RTLCL Bible Study- Day 1  
**Fruit Of The Spirit**

## Introduction To The Theme

Without looking, how many fruit are there of the Spirit? Take a guess and then look in Galatians 5:22-23 and count to see if you got it right. Did you get it right? Did you get nine? If you did, you're wrong because there is only ONE fruit of the Spirit. That's right, just one. In Greek the word for "fruit" is "karpos," and Paul uses the singular form, signifying that there is one fruit with nine attributes, not 9 individual "fruits" from which we pick and choose. So, to translate this verse a little loosely, it could read like this. "But the *single fruit* of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control . . ." This means that all of these attributes listed are one group that go together as a unit.

We are not sure why Paul used the image of fruit to describe these attributes. But two things come to mind. First, throughout scripture, the righteous are likened to trees, (ie. Proverbs 11:30, Isaiah 11:1, Matthew 7:16) and how they live in relation to God and others is described as good or bad fruit. And second, in Genesis 1 God said, "*Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.*" And it was so. <sup>12</sup> *The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good.* The purpose of fruit is for propagation, for the sake of continuing the species. The fruit of a plant is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. In the same way, the Fruit of the Spirit is not an end in itself, it is not just about us, but it is given for the sake of producing more fruit. And in producing more fruit, we are blessed as well as a blessing.

As we look at the Fruit of the Spirit, there are initially two things that jump out at us. First of all, the Fruit of the Spirit is just that - of the Spirit. It is not our fruit but the fruit of the Spirit of God at work in us, beginning most often, in the waters of our baptism. [Certainly, the Spirit of God works in those who have not been baptized, but the promise and covenant of Baptism includes the gift of the Holy Spirit along with the faith, gifts, and fruit the Spirit brings.] We see this connection between Baptism and the Holy Spirit in the Baptism of Jesus. In all four Gospels, following his Baptism, the Holy Spirit descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove. And in the Gospel of John we see that the Holy Spirit remains with Jesus. Then in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus successfully undergoes the temptations of Satan, and then begins his ministry to others in healing, teaching, accepting, forgiving, empowering, challenging, and encouraging. Through all of which, the 9 attributes [love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control] are descriptive of his character. In fact, we could accurately read the Galatians 5 passage substituting "Jesus" for "fruit of the Spirit," because the Spirit ultimately is the Spirit of Jesus.

Second, the Fruit of the Spirit gets planted inside us in the waters of our Baptism because we are baptized into Christ. [Gal 3:27 *As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*] And, baptized into Christ, we are re-created in the image of Christ and we take on the character of Christ. But, why and for what purpose? Thanks for asking. In the beginning, when God created humanity, we were created in the image of God to reflect the image and the glory of God to all of creation. But we were not quite satisfied with only reflecting God, we wanted to be God, be in charge, and reflect our own created image. So, we started doing it our own way, life became about us, and not about community with God and others. This attitude continues today, and we continue to

suffer the consequences of these decisions as we experience a life and a world that is out of balance and broken, as evidenced in the horrors of the evening news, and in the disappointments of daily life. But, in God's grace and mercy, God did not throw in the towel, but took up the towel and started restoring and redeeming creation. As part of that process, God redeemed humanity first, and invited and equipped us to be a part of the clean-up process. From 2 Corinthians 5,

*If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!<sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;<sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.<sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.<sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

In the waters of our baptism the Spirit of God has given us the seeds of the Fruit of the Spirit. We have been given the character of Christ [love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control] so that we can help reconcile the world back to God. But as we receive this gift in seed form [Parable of the Sower and the Seed] one of the aspects of the Christian life and faith formation is to grow those seeds. Fruit does not appear overnight. It takes time. The tree or plant must be nurtured and pruned. It takes time for growth and development. In the same way, the Fruit of the Spirit given to us in baptism, or the character of the Christian, develops in stages into the character of Christ. Which is why, when we baptize infants, we ask the parents if they will promise to raise their child in the Christian faith [bring them to the services of God's house; teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the 10 Commandments; place into their hands the Holy Scripture; and provide for their instruction in the Christian faith.] When we baptize adults, we similarly ask them to promise to intentionally grow their faith. This character of Christ is shaped most often by seeking and meeting God in the context of everyday life, and is transformed and enriched by spiritual practices, such as prayer, worship, service, and study. Through the pruning of life's challenges and the nurturing of spiritual practices, the fruit of the Spirit will increasingly appear in our life. Such a life is not something we naturally produce, but one that depends on God's work in us, which is the "of the Spirit" part. On our own, we often bear something far less attractive. Paul contrasts the fruit of the Spirit to the ordinary behaviors we often display when we are not living our day-to-day lives in relationship with God, which are behaviors he calls "the works of the flesh." He wrote: "The works of the flesh are: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery [wickedness]; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like."

Bearing the Fruit of the Spirit, then, is essentially being transformed into the image of Christ for the sake of others. It is becoming more and more like Jesus as our lives reflect more closely the character of Jesus. This transformation takes place as we are encountered by the living God; renounce the ways that draw us from God and bring our attitude, behavior and desires into increasing harmony with a Christ-like life; give God complete control of our relationship; and find union with God. This is a lifelong journey and process. Spiritual fruit will show itself in our lives as a change in our character and outlook. As our lives are being transformed by the Spirit, Jesus' thoughts will become our thoughts. His purpose will become our purpose. We will become like Jesus. Admittedly, we will have an easier time with some characteristics over others. Some will be more developed than others. We might be kind and good but need to work on our patience. We might have great joy and peace but need work on self-control and gentleness. None of us is perfect, and we all have areas of improvement. But, all Christians have the Spirit of God and, therefore, we have the fruit of the Spirit of God in us. It is there, even if only in developing form, but it is there. The result then of spiritual fruitfulness is that God is glorified, we reflect better the image of God, and the world is that much closer to being reconciled to God.

# Objectives For Today

The purpose of this day is to help the campers:

1. get a better understanding of the Fruit of the Spirit.
2. understand that they have received the Fruit of the Spirit and embrace their gift.
3. make choices that foster the growth of the Fruit of the Spirit in them for the sake of others.

## Morning Watch

**Welcome** (Someone reads)

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven!* (Ecclesiastes 3:1)  
*Welcome to this day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it!* (Psalm 118:24)

**Scripture** Galatians 5:22-25

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,  
<sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. <sup>24</sup>And those who  
belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>If we live  
by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.*

**Song** *Holy Spirit, Living Breath Of God* Keith & Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend

Holy Spirit, living Breath of God,  
Breathe new life into my willing soul.  
Bring the presence of the risen Lord  
To renew my heart and make me whole.  
Cause Your Word to come alive in me;  
Give me faith for what I cannot see;  
Give me passion for Your purity.  
Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me.

Holy Spirit, from creation's birth,  
Giving life to all that God has made,  
Show your power once again on earth;  
Cause Your church to hunger for Your ways.  
Let the fragrance of our prayers arise.  
Lead us on the road of sacrifice  
That in unity the face of Christ  
Will be clear for all the world to see.

Holy Spirit, come abide within;  
May Your joy be seen in all I do—  
Love enough to cover ev'ry sin  
In each thought and deed and attitude,  
Kindness to the greatest and the least,  
Gentleness that sows the path of peace.  
Turn my striving into works of grace.  
Breath of God, show Christ in all I do.

### Questions

1. Do I have the Fruit of the Spirit?
2. Do I have to do anything to receive it?
3. Why was the Fruit of the Spirit given to me?

### Prayer

Pray the words of the song.

# Scripture Study

## Context

This is the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Bible Study. What effect does this day have on the study? Some possibilities:

1. Homesick. Some campers will be struggling to be away from home and therefore distracted and distracting to others.
2. 1<sup>st</sup> full day of camp means that a routine has not yet been established. Seasoned campers [whether their experiences have been good or bad] will come to this study with expectations and preconceptions of what this will/should be like.
3. Energy will be high.
4. Campers are deciding:
  - a. if the study is a safe place to be involved.
  - b. if the study is going to be interesting, relevant, and worth their time.
  - c. if you as leader know and believe what you are teaching.
  - d. if you as leader have control of the study and the group.
  - e. if you as leader care for and about them.

SOOOOO...be ready, be prepared, be energized, be engaged. Make sure that you spend your own time in prayer [as short as that time may be] asking for the presence and guidance [blessing] of the Holy Spirit. You may also need to be more transparent, sharing more of yourself so that the campers get a sense of where this is going and how they should/can be involved and invested. If you need help, don't hesitate to talk with Pastors and other adults on site, that's why they are here!

## Setting

THIS IS IMPORTANT. Gather campers into a **close** circle so that you can have good eye contact with each one of them and so that you can touch them on a foot or arm to bring them back into the study. However, fidgeting is not always a sign of disengagement. Some campers, especially boys, think better when they are fidgeting. You will need to determine if their playing in the dirt, throwing rocks, playing with bugs, etc., is distracting them or others to the point you need to ask them to stop.

## Prayer of Blessing

Through prayer bless the space and time of your Bible Study. Ask God to set this space aside as holy space, and to come and fill this space with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Also, ask God to set aside this time of Bible Study as holy time to be encountered by God, and in the encounter to be shaped and changed by God's Spirit. This first day you might lead that prayer of blessing, but on other days it would be good to include the campers so that they can learn and practice how to bless.

## Scripture

1. Galatians 5:22-25 [The attributes and characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit]  
*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. <sup>24</sup>And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup>If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.*
2. John 1:32-33 [Baptism of Jesus]  
*<sup>32</sup>And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup>I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'*
3. Luke 4:1-2 [What happens after his baptism]  
*Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led\*\* by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup>where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.*
4. Luke 4:14-15 [What happens after his temptation]

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. <sup>15</sup> He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

5. Galatians 3:27 [Our baptism is into Christ]

*As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

6. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 [Our baptism links us with the ministry of Christ]

*If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! <sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. <sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

\*\* This word in the Greek is "ekballo" is the word that is used here and it does not mean led out...it means THROWN INTO the desert. This may be more important for High School campers but it is interesting to think about.

### **Study**

Start with prayer. [See above]

*Let's start our study with a piece of fruit. I brought an apple [orange, Clementine, etc] with me, just enough for all of us to share a taste. But, before we eat, let's talk about the apple. [As you talk, start cutting or peeling the fruit] We call an apple a fruit. So, what do we know about fruit? Let's go around the circle and each one of us say something we know about fruit. [Answers should include the following:]*

1. good to eat
2. tastes good
3. healthy for you
4. fruit has seeds
5. if we planted this it would grow
6. seeds are usually in the middle of the fruit, but can be on the outside of the fruit, like with strawberries
7. fruit is the product of the plant or tree
8. the main purpose of the fruit is to produce seeds in order to produce more plants
9. the fruit:
  - a. protects the seed while it is growing
  - b. helps with disseminating the seed
  - c. provides the initial environment for the seed to sprout
10. the skin of the fruit can be hard or soft, edible or inedible
11. some fruit do not have seeds, because we have removed the seed for convenience [grapes, bananas]

*OK, that's good. So, let's eat. [Pass out a piece to everyone.]*

*The reason we are talking about fruit, is because St. Paul talks about fruit in Galatians 5:22 and 23. Let's turn to that passage and read it. [Ask one of the campers to read the passage aloud]*

<sup>22</sup> The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control.

*How many fruit do you think is Paul talking about here? [Wait for an answer, which should be "9"] At first glance it does seem like Paul is talking about 9 fruit, doesn't it? In English the word "fruit" can be singular or plural. But in Greek, the language Paul wrote in, the word he uses is "karpos" which is singular. So, Paul is talking about only 1 fruit. But, if Paul is talking about 1 fruit, then what are the 9*

things that he lists? What are the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? [Solicit answers] They are the attributes or characteristics of the fruit we receive.

It's like a salad. If we were to make a salad for us to eat, what would be the ingredients? What would we put into the salad? Let's each put one ingredient into our salad. [Ask each camper to put in one ingredient. Answers would include: lettuce, spinach, carrots, mushrooms, cheese, olives, bacon bits, croutons, salad dressing, etc.] OK, how many salads do we have in our bowl? [One] But, how many ingredients? [numerous] So, we have only one salad, but many different ingredients making up our salad. And the more ingredients we would put into the salad, the better it would be. The same is true with the Fruit of the Spirit. There is only one Fruit, but, there are 9 characteristics or ingredients: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

So, what do you think?

1. How many of you have the Fruit of the Spirit? Raise your hand. [To those who raise their hand.] When and how did you receive the Fruit? [Solicit answers]
2. OK, then, how many of you don't you think you have the Fruit of the Spirit? Raise your hand. [To those who raise their hand] Why don't you think you have the fruit? [Solicit answers]
3. And, how many of you just don't know? Thoughts on that? [Solicit thoughts]

Truth is each one of you who has been baptized received the Fruit of the Spirit in your baptism. Certainly, the Spirit of God works in those who have not been baptized, but the promise and covenant of Baptism includes the gift of the Holy Spirit along with the faith, gifts, and fruit the Spirit brings. Let's take a look at that. Turn to John 1:32-33 [Ask one of the campers to read]

<sup>32</sup> And John testified, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup> I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'"

If the Holy Spirit comes to Jesus in his baptism and stays with him, then what does Jesus receive from the Holy Spirit? [Solicit answers] In his baptism Jesus receives the Fruit of the Spirit from the Holy Spirit. He receives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

And then what happens after his baptism? Anybody know? [Solicit answers] Turn to Luke 4:1-2 and let's see. [Ask one of the campers to read]

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, <sup>2</sup> where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.

What happens? [Solicit answers] After his baptism Jesus is tempted by the devil.

Then what happens? Jump to verse 14 and 15 [Ask one of the campers to read]

<sup>14</sup> Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. <sup>15</sup> He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

What happens? [Solicit answers] So, after he is baptized Jesus is tempted by the devil, and then he starts his ministry.

So what role does the Fruit of the Spirit play in Jesus' temptation and ministry? [Solicit answers] The Fruit of the Spirit [self-control] helps Jesus overcome the temptations, and the Fruit of the Spirit [love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, and gentleness] helps Jesus do his ministry.

So, what about you? What does Jesus' baptism and the Fruit of the Spirit have to do with us? Turn to Galatians 3:27 [Ask one of the campers to read]

*As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

*If in your baptism you were baptized into Christ, then what did you receive in your baptism? [Solicit answers] In your baptism the Spirit also descended upon you, remained with you, and you received the Fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control just like Jesus.*

*And if the Fruit of the Spirit helped Jesus in his temptations and ministry, then what does the Fruit of the Spirit do for you? [Solicit answers] Let's turn to 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 [Ask one of the campers to read]*

*If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!<sup>18</sup> All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation;<sup>19</sup> that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.<sup>20</sup> So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.<sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

*What does this say about what the Fruit of the Spirit does for us? [Solicit answers] It says that the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are to help us be a part of Jesus' ministry to help others and the world.*

*It's like the fruit we ate. What's the purpose of the fruit? [Solicit answers] The purpose of the fruit is to produce more fruit. So the reason that the Holy Spirit gave us all those characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit is so that we can use that love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control to help others.*

*Are all those characteristics working for you? Do you feel like you are loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, generous, faithful, gentle, and have self-control all the time? [Solicit answers] Me either. I'm still working on every one of those and will be working on them my whole life. Sometimes I'm doing OK. But many times I'm not doing so well. Sometimes we have an easier time with some of the characteristics over some of the others. Some are more developed in us than others. We might be kind and good but need to work on our patience. We might have great joy and peace but need work on self-control and gentleness. None of us is perfect, and we all have areas of improvement. Sometimes we may even wonder if we have them. But, God promises that we all have the Spirit of God and, therefore, we have the Fruit of the Spirit of God in us.*

*What has to happen for a seed that you plant to grow and produce fruit? [Solicit answers]*

*Fruit does not appear overnight, does it? The tree or plant must be watered, get sun, be nurtured and pruned. It takes time, even years, for growth and development. In the same way, as the Fruit of the Spirit is given to us as a seed, it must be nurtured and pruned. It takes time, even years, for growth and development. If a seed needs water, sun, and nutrients to grow into a mature plant to grow fruit, what does the Fruit of the Spirit need to grow? [Solicit answers]*

*The Fruit of the Spirit grows as we nurture it through things like prayer, worship, service, study, as well as Christian friends and community. That's why you are here. That's why we pray, worship, serve, and study. That's why you go to church. That's why your parents promised to raise you in the Christian faith. That's why we encourage you to have Christian friends.*

*Who remembers receiving the Fruit of the Spirit? [Solicit answers] Who remembers even asking for the Fruit of the Spirit? [Solicit answers] You don't remember getting it and you didn't even ask for it if you were baptized as an infant. But you did receive it. It was a gift from God. Just like that bracelet*

*you are wearing. You didn't ask for it, but it was given to you as a gift from us. And you wear it. You could take it off, couldn't you? But we hope that you choose to keep wearing it, just like we hope and pray that you choose to develop and grow your Fruit of the Spirit - your love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

*So, to help you remember your Fruit of the Spirit, your bracelet is many colors just like fruit is many colors. And to help you remember the 9 characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit your bracelet has the first letter of each of the attributes: L, J, P, P, K, G, F, G, and S. And over the next 3 days we are going to look at each of those attributes so that we can learn what they are and nurture them.*

*I know this has been a lot of information in a short amount of time. What kind of questions do you have? [Solicit questions and offer answers]*

Close with prayer soliciting from the campers what you should pray about.

## **Additional Study Ideas**

1. This nine-fold Fruit of the Spirit is not what we *do*, but who we *are*.
2. The Fruit of the Spirit can sometimes be more visible when circumstances are unfavorable.

## **Ideas To Incorporate Theme Throughout The Day**

### **Activities**

1. When a camper sees another camper displaying one of the characteristics, the camper can touch the bracelet of the camper and say "I saw you showing self-control when you..."
2. Incorporate fruit into meals

### **Morning and Evening Worship**

1. Pass out fruit to a portion of the campers and tell them to share the fruit with 9 others
2. Give each camper a seed
3. Divide the campers into 9 groups and assign each group a different characteristic that they have to create and perform a skit

## **Other Songs, Stories, Thoughts, Questions, And Suggestions**

### **Songs**

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Fruits of the Spirit                  | 7. They'll Know We Are Christians |
| 2. Shut de Do                            | 8. Create in Me                   |
| 3. We Are the Family of God              | 9. One Name                       |
| 4. Romans 16:19 [change "hope" to "joy"] | 10. Every Move I Make             |
| 5. There's a Place                       | 11. Aye-Aye-Aye                   |
| 6. Someday                               | 12. Live Christ                   |

## **Ideas To Adjust Study Down For Juniors**

When we were born we were given intelligence, personality, motor skills, etc. but they had to be developed. What would have happened if our parents didn't read to us, teach us colors, give us toys to play with, hug us, tell us they love us, etc? Those "gifts" of intelligence, motor skills, emotions, personality, etc. would not have developed in a healthy way. Same is true of the Fruit of the Spirit. We received them, but they had to be developed and nurtured. Parents can nurture the Fruit of the Spirit by pray with us, talking to us about God, reading Bible stories, going to church, etc.

## **Ideas To Adjust Study Up For Senior Highs**

Fruitful Christians are not controlled by their environment. Everyone experiences trials and pain, but those who are led by the Spirit do not lose the Fruit of the Spirit because of their situations. They keep their joy even when difficulties overwhelm. If someone speaks harshly, they respond with kindness. Because the Holy Spirit is in control, the Spirit is free to produce its fruit no matter what the circumstances are. Even though such believers may feel pain, anger, or a desire for revenge, they choose to trust the Lord to protect them and direct the outcome.

1. No one produces these characteristics in herself or himself. They are pure gift. But while we do not produce them we do have the choice to grow and develop them
2. If we choose not to develop and grow the seed/Fruit of the Spirit, it will not grow and develop in a healthy way

# Parent Devotional

**Scripture**    2 Corinthians 5:17-21

## Reflection

In our study today we have been helping your youth understand that they received the Fruit of the Spirit, the characteristics of which are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We have all received this gift of Fruit as seed from God. In the church we witness this in baptism. As with any seed, growth depends upon nurture and pruning. The process of nurturing and growing faith includes worship, prayer, study, service, and being part of Christian community. Your role in bringing them to baptism is to help nurture and grow that fruit. Their role is to learn to also take responsibility for growing and nurturing that fruit. The Fruit of the Spirit is not an end in itself but a means to an end, which is to help Christ reconcile the world back to God.

As you think about our study today, how have you helped nurture and grow your youth's Fruit of the Spirit? What could you as a family do in the areas of worship, prayer, study, service, and Christian community to help nurture and grow your youth's as well as your Fruit of the Spirit?

## Family Activity

Discuss how you have helped nurture your child's Fruit of the Spirit. What can you, as a family, do together in the areas of worship, prayer, study, service, and Christian community to help nurture your Fruit of the Spirit?

**Prayer** Google and pray: *Holy Spirit, Living Breath Of God* Keith & Kristyn Getty, Stuart Townend

Holy Spirit, living Breath of God,  
Breathe new life into my willing soul.  
Bring the presence of the risen Lord  
To renew my heart and make me whole.  
Cause Your Word to come alive in me;  
Give me faith for what I cannot see;  
Give me passion for Your purity.  
Holy Spirit, breathe new life in me.

Holy Spirit, come abide within;  
May Your joy be seen in all I do—  
Love enough to cover ev'ry sin  
In each thought and deed and attitude,

Kindness to the greatest and the least,  
Gentleness that sows the path of peace.  
Turn my striving into works of grace.  
Breath of God, show Christ in all I do.

Holy Spirit, from creation's birth,  
Giving life to all that God has made,  
Show your power once again on earth;  
Cause Your church to hunger for Your ways.  
Let the fragrance of our prayers arise.  
Lead us on the road of sacrifice  
That in unity the face of Christ  
Will be clear for all the world to see.

**“Fruit Of The Spirit”**  
**2015 RTL Bible Study- Day 2**  
**Shalom - Love, Joy, And Peace**

## **Introduction To The Theme**

Today we begin with our fruits. Yesterday we heard an understanding that there is a collective fruit of the Spirit- almost an umbrella of fruit, if you will, that has many expressions. This week at camp we will focus on nine characteristics of that fruit. This second day we will focus on the first three as they are listed in Galatians 5:22-23.

*“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.”*

Today we learn and celebrate: Love, Joy, and Peace. Each one of these characteristics is not given to us to make us special or “more important” than anyone else. For these gifts of the Spirit are not given just “to us” -“for us.” These gifts are given to be used in the context of community. Utilizing these gifts in community can create the Shalom that God desires for our lives, our community, and for our service to the world. Did you just hear the word Shalom? Why yes...yes you did. Although this word is not used as often in our secular world or even in some of our churches, this word is used as a greeting in Jewish circles, just as many Americans might say “hi” or “hello.” Often we translate shalom as meaning peace, but in that one Hebrew word rests God’s original design for all of creation.

Shalom is a Hebrew noun that refers to the wholeness, perfection, prosperity and peace of God’s creation. This noun expresses God’s vision for how God wants creation to function. When God created the world, God webbed all things together in perfect harmony, delight and peace. God walked along the same paths as humans. This is really an amazing picture! We know, however, that this picture, this desire for creation, was to change. There was a change and sin entered our world which shattered this understanding of Shalom. In a sense “Shalom” was vandalized and perverted. Adam and Eve broke the natural order of placing God first when they ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that one decision, that one moment in time sin, pain and selfishness have taken over God’s creation: natural disasters fall upon the world and creation no longer has direct communication with God. When this decision was made, when Adam and Eve heard God walking in the garden, they no longer walked with God in love, joy and peace instead they hid from God in their shame.

God so desires for this creation to be as it was from the beginning. God desires to bring back shalom order, shalom relationships, and a shalom rhythm into our world. Interestingly enough, the Hebrew word Shalom is related to the Hebrew verb “shalem” which means to repay in full, to make restitution, to restore and to make peace. God has enacted shalem through Christ’s death on the cross, but shalom will not fully be restored until Christ comes to earth again. In the meantime we “get to” use these gifts for the good of our community, for the Shalom of our life together.

In the three expressions of Love, Joy, and Peace we can be a part of re-establishing some part of shalom in this world. These three gifts are the foundation for all relationships that we have for one another. We know that our relationships have brokenness in them simply because we are sinful human beings. Our sinful nature can so easily slip into the opposite of these three gifts in our hatred, our self-absorbed sadness, and our anger. These opposite ways of being from love, joy, and peace are almost as weeds among the beautiful garden God has given us. How we relate to each other matters. How we speak to each other matters. How we look for good in each other, and how we serve one another matters. Hatred, self-absorbed sadness, and anger imprison us and yet God longs for a new way of

relating, new way to love the world even in the midst of its brokenness. We can imagine this new life, as we read Isaiah 58: 6-9:

*“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.”*

This watered garden, this clear spring of water, is the life giving design God longs for in the creation. We have come to Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp to learn about this Shalom for which we were created and we thank God for Love, Joy, and Peace, which allow us to give a glimpse of that Shalom to the world.

## **Objectives For Today**

The purpose of this day is to help the campers:

1. learn the bigger picture understanding of Shalom. Perhaps for us to embraces “Shalom” as we do “hi” and “hello.”
2. gain an understanding of the first three gifts: Love, Joy, and Peace.
3. see the use of these gifts for the good of the community for the re-establishment of some sense of Shalom in the world.
4. see these gifts as an opportunity of how to see and look for God’s goodness in the world. We often see that for which we are looking. How can we use these gifts as a lens for our being in the world?
5. allow for one of the three gifts to rise up in the Bible Study community for a focal point of the day. This is our hike day and it will be important to tie in being in God’s creation with our understanding of Shalom and love, joy, and peace.

# Morning Watch

## Welcome (Someone reads)

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven! (Ecclesiastes 3:1)  
Welcome to this time of reflection about the differing characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit.*

## Scripture Galatians 5:22-23

*“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.”*

## Song *You Are My Joy* David Crowder Band

And He set me on fire, and I am burning alive.	You are my joy.
With His breath in my lungs I am coming undone.	You are my joy.
And he set me on fire and I am burning alive.	You are my joy.
With his breath in my lungs I am coming undone.	You are my joy.
And I cannot hold it in and remain composed.	
Love's taken over me and so I propose the letting myself go.	I need to catch my breath, I need to.
I am letting myself go.	I need to catch my breath, give me a moment now.

You are my joy.	You are my joy.
You are my joy.	You are my joy.
You are my joy.	You are my joy.
You are my joy.	You are my joy.

And He set me on fire, and I am burning alive.	I'm laughing so hard.
With His breath in my lungs I am coming undone.	And I'm laughing so hard.
And He set me on fire, and I am burning alive.	And I'm laughing so hard.
With His breath in my lungs I am coming undone.	
And I cannot hold it in and remain composed.	
Love's taken over me and so I propose the letting myself go.	
I am letting myself go.	

## Questions

1. When you think of the word joy what comes to mind?
2. When you think about the word happiness what comes to mind?
3. Have you ever thought about the differences between Happiness and Joy?
4. Have you ever experienced Joy to the level that it took your breath away?
5. When have you experienced love to the point that you cannot explain it and want to share it with the world?
6. When have you felt peace? What does God's peace feel like?

## Prayer

God of love, joy and peace. Thank you for the beginning of this day. Thank you for filling our heart with love so we know we are not alone. Thank you for giving us joy that takes our breath away. Thank you for giving us peace that passing all understanding. Walk with us this day.  
Amen.

# Scripture Study

## Context

Ah! Day two of Bible Study! You made it through the awkwardness of the first day among campers who do not know each other, or at least you will have less awkwardness today than you did yesterday! Today is also hike day which means you will be with other campers throughout the day whom you do not know. ☺ They may indeed be a little more focused as the exhaustion of the hike kicks in. So today's focus will be about finding love, joy, and peace in God's creation. Here are just a couple of things to think about as you continue on the hikes, in your Bible Study community and during the All Camp. Perhaps you can also imagine how you would be if you were in the shoes of your campers:

For some this is the day after their second night away from home. Remember that although you may have counted the number of days until you returned to college during the winter or spring break, some of these campers may be painfully counting the days until they are back in their beds. You may have seen biting of lips, little flushed faces with a few tears and perhaps a challenge with eating the meals because they are not the food mom or dad provides. For some campers the fact that we are at day two will be unbelievable because they love it here at RTLK and could stay forever. Or so they think! ☺ Just allow the space for all experiences to be as they are and trust that God will use this week in the way God wishes.

Many of us live in the language of this faith journey. As we wrote this study we sought out the differences between seeing fruits as gifts and one fruit verses many fruits. If you find yourself completely comfortable with this language, you are an insider to the church. One of the important things to remember is that some of our campers do not attend church. Many of them, especially the younger ones, may have a difficult time transferring an understanding of spiritual gifts to the fruit we may reference to during the week. Use this Bible study time as a check in to see if those connections are being made.

Continue to use the pattern you established yesterday and know that we will have a little less time for study due to our hike day. As a counselor you will not have enough time to spend with all three gifts of love, joy and peace. You will be on a grand adventure to see what gift comes up organically with your campers. As you review each gift, see which one seems to resonate with each camper. Translated: if there is one gift where the campers are smiling at you, nodding their heads, and wanting to share stories, they are getting it. If they look at you like they need a translator or have a "deer in the headlight look" see about expanding the definitions or move to a different gift.

Keep in mind that as the leader and facilitator of the Bible Study, the campers may test you to see if you are like their teachers, their parents, or their Sunday School teachers. They need to know that this time is worthwhile and that the environment is safe. Review that shared ideas will stay in the group and that all ideas are welcomed without judgment. As a reminder, if you are excited and focused on this Bible Study, such energy will be contagious for the campers.

Please keep in mind that this is not "old-school" learning. Many of our campers will be active and playing with sticks, flowers, rocks or anything in the immediate area and such fidgeting does not mean they are not listening or processing the material. Please ask each camper to have their Bible or a Bible that we can loan them. Many have never learned where the books of the Bible are and may not have read anything from the Bible on their own.

## **Study**

Welcome your campers to Bible study. Depending on how you started yesterday, consider asking one camper to open with prayer, use popcorn prayers with everyone saying one thing they are thankful for or that they saw in creation, or use any other prayer form with which you are comfortable.

Review names in the group and ask about their hike. You may or may not have gone on the same hike as your campers and it will be interesting to see what they experienced. Some campers may have had a great hike, some may be frustrated that it was too long, and some may be frustrated that they did not peak Eagle due to high winds or lateness in the day!

Here is how you can start, say the following:

*Yesterday we talked about the Fruit of the Spirit and the many ways it can express itself or show up as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We learned that these gifts are given from God and that they are lived out from our baptisms. Today we are going to learn that these gifts are not simply for us to be “special people” in the world but are gifts to be “shalom” for the world and our communities.*

*Did you hear that “Shalom” word I just used? Who knows what Shalom means? Do you know where this word comes from? This word is a Hebrew word that is used as a greeting in Jewish circles, just as many Americans might say “hi” or “hello.” Often we translate shalom as meaning peace, but in that one Hebrew word rests God’s original design for all of creation. Shalom is so much bigger than peace!*

*Shalom is a Hebrew noun that refers to the wholeness, perfection, prosperity and peace of God’s creation. This noun expresses God’s vision for how God wants creation to function. When God created the world, God designed all things together in perfect harmony, delight and peace. God walked along the same paths as humans. This is really an amazing picture! Right now, close your eyes and imagine walking with God in the most beautiful garden you can imagine! What do you see?*

*Your imaginations are great! We know, however, that this picture, this desire for creation, was to change. There was a change and sin entered our world which shattered this understanding of Shalom. In a sense “Shalom” was completely messed up when Adam and Eve ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that one decision, that one bite of the fruit they were not supposed to eat, that one moment in time sin, pain and selfishness took over God’s creation. From that point on natural disasters fell upon the world and creation no longer has direct communication with God. When this decision was made, when Adam and Eve heard God walking in the garden, they no longer walked with God in love, joy and peace instead they hid from God in their shame.*

*God really wants creation to be like it was in the beginning. God gives us love, joy, and peace to bring at least a little of Shalom back into our lives. So let’s look at each one of these gifts:*

*Love: When you hear the word love what do you think about? Allow your camper to give ideas and you could see if anyone remembers that there are different kinds of love. They may remember from last year.*

*Let’s look at the kind of love God gives us: Before people die they want to share the greatest concern of their hearts. They may want to tell their family members how much they mean to each other, they may want to confess something that has been heavy on their hearts, or they may want to share where the family treasure is hidden! ☺ When Jesus was getting ready to die on the cross, here is what he asked for: Ask a camper to read John 17:1-5; 20-26:*

*After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed."*

*"I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. "Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."*

Let's talk about what we just read:

1. What did Jesus ask for from God for his disciples?
2. Did he think that gift of love would just stay with the disciples?
3. What do you think about this kind of love?
4. Does our world say anything about this kind of love?
5. How long was this love from God around?

*Jesus did not ask for the disciples to have lots of money or to be famous. Jesus asked that God allow them to have the love that God had for Jesus. Jesus felt that this love would sustain them in times of difficulty and Jesus knew that God would also love those disciples unconditionally. One thing that is helpful for us to remember is that this love is not simply a feeling. Love often is defined as a love that makes us feel all tingly or warm inside. The love that is a fruit of the Spirit is a gift that allows us to love regardless of the feelings we may or may not have. This is the love God has for us.*

*After Jesus resurrection, before he went to heaven, he spent time with Peter who had denied him three times before Jesus' death. Peter was one of Jesus closest disciple, one of his most passionate, trusted followers, and yet when things got ugly during Jesus' trial and crucifixion, Peter denied that he knew him. Have a camper read John 21:15-19:*

*"When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."*

*This kind of love reinstated Peter to be a follower of Jesus. Although the Bible does not say: We can imagine that Jesus probably did not bring up the issue of Peter's denial again and again in any sort of sarcastic way to remind Peter that he really messed up. Jesus simply reminded Peter that love is the foundation of all of our relationships and reminded him (and reminds all of us) that love is an unconditional and extravagant gift we are given from God. Now let's talk about joy!*

*Joy: When you hear the word Joy what do you think about? Does anyone remember the old-school song: I've got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy, down in my heart? Where? (Or Donde? For those who have*

*been on mission trips! ☺) So what comes to mind when you hear the word Joy? Allow campers to brainstorm freely.*

*Let's look at how God defines Joy: Ask a camper to read John 17:13:*

*"But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves."*

*Read also: James 1:2-3:*

*"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance."*

*Read also: 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."*

*Read also: Philemon 1:7:*

*"Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints."*

*Let's talk about what we read:*

- 1. What did you hear in these readings about Joy?*
- 2. How is joy different than happiness?*
- 3. Is there anything listed about what causes joy?*
- 4. Does joy happen even when things are tough?*

*This kind of joy that we read in the Bible is not simply a happy feeling. Joy is more an attitude that warms up our hearts for others and with others regardless of the circumstances. Joy is not tied into things we have, or places we go, grades we earn, music chairs we are given, or friends we have.*

*Saddleback Church co-founder Kay Warren sees it this way:*

*"My problem was my definition of joy. I thought joy meant feeling good all the time. That's impossible! Even for those who are naturally upbeat and optimistic, that's impossible. 'Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in every situation.' You'll find nothing in that definition about happy feelings, because, as we all know, happiness is fleeting and temporary.*

*We tend to think that life comes in hills and valleys. In reality, it's much more like train tracks. Every day of your life, wonderful, good things happen that bring pleasure and contentment and beauty to you. At the exact same time, painful things happen to you or those you love that disappoint you, hurt you, and fill you with sorrow. These two tracks — both joy and sorrow — run parallel to each other every single moment of your life. That's why, when you're in the midst of an amazing experience, you have a nagging realization that it's not perfect. And while you're experiencing something painful, there's the glorious realization that there is still beauty and loveliness to be found. They're inseparable.*

*If you look down train tracks into the brightness of the horizon, the tracks become one. You can't distinguish them as two separate tracks. That's how it will be for us, too. One day, our parallel tracks of joy and sorrow will merge into one. The day we meet Jesus Christ in person and see the brightness of who he is, it will all come together for us. Then it will all make complete sense."*

*This will be the day our joy will be complete. This will be the day when the gift of the Spirit of Joy will fill our hearts to their full measure. Fun fact for you to remember about Joy:*

*The Greek word for 'joy' is Kevo, derived from the word charis, which is the Greek word for 'grace.' This is significant to note, for chara is produced by the charis of God. This means 'joy' is not a human-based happiness that comes and goes but, rather, true 'joy' is divine in its origin. It is a Spirit-given expression that flourishes best in hard times. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 1:6,[10] the Thessalonians were under great stress due to persecution; yet in the midst of it all, they continued to experience great joy. The Greek strongly implies that their supernatural joy was due to the Holy Spirit working in them. Paul even called it the "joy of the Holy Ghost".*

*Now let's talk about Peace. Ask a camper to read: (Remember share the wealth in who is reading! ☺)*  
John 14: 25-27:

*"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."*

*Read also: Philippians 4:6-7:*

*"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."*

*Let's talk about what we read:*

- 1. Is peace simply the absence of conflict or war?*
- 2. Is peace a feeling?*
- 3. How do we imagine having peace in our lives?*

*The gift of peace that we are given from the Spirit is so much more than holding up two fingers and saying: "Peace Man!" This gift is so much more than a peace bumper sticker on the back of our cars. This gift of peace is peace of mind because we understood that even death will not separate us from God. When the Roman church which was undergoing severe persecution St. Paul wrote "I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:38-39). Even death couldn't separate a Christ-follower from God. We therefore can have access to this peace of mind and embrace the gift of peace that we are given. What a gift this is!*

*Now that we have an understanding of our first three gifts of love, joy and peace. Let's talk about how these gifts are to be used.*

*We talked about Shalom. This is how God desires the creation, including humans, to be, perfectly connected, whole, rich in possibility, and in complete peace. We are given the gifts of love, joy and peace not for ourselves but for others.*

*Sadly we are in a world that does not always trust connecting with people who are not the same or with people we do not know. This way of suspicious is not new.*

*Fifty-one years ago, on March 13, 1964, the picturesque tranquility of Kew Gardens in New York was shattered by the murder of 28-year-old Catherine Genovese, known as Kitty. The murder was grisly, but it wasn't the particulars of the killing that became the focus of the case. It was the response of her neighbors. As Ms. Genovese screamed -- "Please help me! Please help me!" -- 38 witnesses did nothing*

*to intervene, according to reports; nobody even bothered to call the police. One witness later explained himself with a phrase that has passed into infamy: "I didn't want to get involved."*

*This "not wanting to get involved" is a big focus for many in our world. As I (Pastor Nicolé who wrote this study) was taking a self-defense course in Frederick, Maryland with a group of women, we were given these instructions: "Do not yell 'Help me!' if you get in trouble. People will hear that and will not want to get involved. You need to yell "Fire!" because people are more likely to work to stop a fire from consuming a building than to help a person in trouble."*

*How many of us have been told "do not get involved" in things that may not directly impact our lives? How many of us do not see or hear things because we are connected with visual screens for much of our day? What would our lives look like if God had decided to not get involved in our lives? What would our lives look like without God's Spirit to guide and instruct our lives?*

*The gifts of love, joy, and peace give us all that we need to be fully present to God in all circumstances of life. May these gifts be used in our relationships with others so that we experience and share Shalom as our God intended.*

### **Closing Prayer**

Good and Gracious God. Thank you for this day. Thank you for the spiritual gifts of love, joy and peace. Give us all that we need to use these gifts to catch a glimpse of your Shalom to come. And all God's people say: Amen!

## **ADDITIONAL STUDY IDEAS**

### **For Love**

1. Romans 8:28: *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."*
2. Matthew 5:43-45: *"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous."*
3. First Corinthians 12:4-8 *"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."*
4. Mark 12:30-31: *"And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."*

### **For Joy**

1. Psalms 96:11-13: *"Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his faithfulness."*
2. Luke 15:7 *"Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."* (Jesus speaking in the parable of the lost sheep)
3. Philippians 1:3-5: *"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."*

### **For Peace:**

1. Isaiah 9:6: *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Your campers may be familiar with this from our Christmas hymns and text.*
2. 1 Corinthians 14:33a: *"For God is not a God of disorder but of peace."*
3. 2 Thessalonians 3:16: *"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you."*

## Ideas to Incorporate Theme Throughout The Day

1. This is our Hike Day so looking for love, joy and peace will come from encountering these opportunities during the hike in creation. Encourage the campers to use their wrist bands to spin for a letter of a fruit of the Spirit and look for that gift all day. Our invitation to not worry about time because it is “God’s time” or “11:11” and not focusing on the distance: “11 more miles!” may allow them to seek **peace** in the midst of the hike, to seek **joy** on the journey, and to have **love** for nature and their fellow hikers!
2. One of the themes for the day that you could consider would be the hippy theme. Although I do not support the reason those of that era were filled with “love, joy and peace”, ☺ it may allow the campers to connect being fully in the moment and with embracing a different way of being than the world allows or encourages. God’s love, joy and peace do allow us to think outside of the norm of being self-absorbed and uninvolved.
3. Perhaps “All Camp” can be a more lower key activity with rotations of activities such as low energy games, storytelling, etc. Many of our campers will be tired from their hike day which can mean they will be more willing to talk during Bible Study and reflect on their day.

### Games

1. **PEACE BALANCE** -- Have participants stand in a circle and count off by twos. There must be an even number. After everyone has a number, have the group hold hands and then take a few steps backward so that their arms are extended (but not too tightly). On the count of three, tell everyone to keep their feet planted and then have all of the ones slowly lean forward while the twos slowly lean backward until everyone is at a 20 to 30 degree angle, completely balanced in both directions. Hold this for 10 seconds and then tell people to ease back to a standing position. Take a moment to appreciate the teamwork and balance that was required for the activity, and then debrief it with the group. If the exercise was not successful, talk about why and invite people to try it again.
2. **The WEB of Love, Joy, and Peace** -- With a ball of yarn begin by having the group sit in a circle. Explain that the object of the game is to create a web that connects the entire group by passing the ball of yarn to each member of the circle. Make sure the group understands that each person may only receive the yarn one time. Explain that, before passing the yarn to the next person, the facilitator should introduce his or herself and briefly explain how he or she is feeling. (i.e. “Hi, my name is Jen and I’m feeling happy!”) That person is then invited to share where they saw love, joy, or peace on the hike today. The facilitator should then hold a piece of the yarn and pass the ball to another member of the circle. (i.e. “Here you go, Emily...”) This process continues until everyone in the group has received the ball of yarn. The last person to be passed the ball of yarn should pass the ball back to the facilitator. The facilitator can then direct the group’s attention to the web they have created, explaining how everyone is connected. Our gifts have been given to us to enhance our love, joy and peace in community.
3. **HUMAN KNOT** -- Have the group stand in a tight circle. Tell everyone put their right hand into in the middle of the circle and grab the hand of someone else, making sure that it is not the person standing on their immediate left or right. Next, tell everyone put their left hand into the middle of the circle and grab someone else’s left hand, again making sure that it is not the person on their immediate left or right (and also making sure that they are holding the hands of two different people). To make sure that everyone is connected, have the groups quickly “pass a pulse” around the circle. When the group is well-tangled, explain that their job is to untangle themselves without letting go. Walk around the group and observe the strategies that players are using and the way different people are displaying leadership. Also, make sure that people are physically safe and mindful of each other. Variation: Challenge the group to untangle the knot without talking.
4. Any game that will allow an understanding of community will be very helpful to allow the campers to gain an understanding that the fruits we learn about this week are indeed for the building up and benefit for the community, the body of Christ.

# Other Songs, Stories, Thoughts, Questions, And Suggestions

## Songs – From RTLC Song Book

1. Every Move I Make
2. Fruits of the Spirit (of course)
3. They'll Know We Are Christians
4. Love Round
5. Go In Peace
6. Here I Am To Worship

## Additional Scripture

1. Matthew 12:33: *"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit."*
2. Luke 8:14-15: *"The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance."*
3. John 15:1-8: *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples."*
4. James 3:18: *"And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace."*

## Additional Prayer

Prayer for Peace attribute to St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

## Ideas To Adjust Study Down For Juniors

1. One of the possible challenges for this age group is to allow our juniors to understand this metaphorical "fruit" and "gifts" to the working of the Spirit. Consider checking in with them regularly and reinforce that it may be difficult to understand and encourage them to hang in there. Perhaps we can use more visuals with paper fruit and affirming and acknowledging the gifts we see in them and they see in others.
2. I do pray we implement the idea about the "Vine" in the cabins and in the Aspen for connectedness and community.

## Ideas To Adjust Study Up For Senior Highs

One focal point for this age group is the community connection. For this age, self-absorption and/or self-centeredness can be an obstacle and teaching them to share these "fruits", these "gifts" with others is key. Naming the need to remove the thought of "what's in this for me?" may be helpful noting that being a servant of Christ is other focused.

# Parent Devotional

**Scripture** Ephesians 5: 22-23; James 3:1-12; James 1:2-12; and Psalm 46

## **Reflection**

In our study for this day we focused on the understanding of Shalom and the first three gifts of the Spirit: Love, Joy, and Peace. We discussed how these gifts are essential to trying to return to the Shalom (bigger picture of wholeness that God has for our world) to our communities. We also reviewed the understanding of love, joy, and peace not as the world knows it but as God shows us and gives us in our lives.

## **Family Activity**

Discuss what these Love, Joy, and peace mean to you and how much you focus on these words in your family.

## **Listen to the song: *You are my Joy* David Crowder Band**

And He set me on fire, and I am burning alive.  
With His breath in my lungs I am coming undone.  
And he set me on fire and I am burning alive.  
With his breath in my lungs I am coming undone.  
And I cannot hold it in and remain composed.  
Love's taken over me and so I propose the letting myself go.  
I am letting myself go.

You are my joy.  
You are my joy.  
You are my joy.  
You are my joy.

And He set me on fire, and I am burning alive.  
With His breath in my lungs I am coming undone.  
And He set me on fire, and I am burning alive.  
With His breath in my lungs I am coming undone.  
And I cannot hold it in and remain composed.  
Love's taken over me and so I propose the letting myself go.

I am letting myself go.

You are my joy.  
You are my joy.  
You are my joy.  
You are my joy.

I need to catch my breath, I need to.  
I need to catch my breath, give me a moment now.

You are my joy.  
You are my joy.  
You are my joy.  
You are my joy.

I'm laughing so hard  
And I'm laughing so hard  
And I'm laughing so hard

Although this music may not be your favorite genre, the words do allow us to think about this kind of “God joy” that fills our hearts so full that we cannot breathe and we feel that we will lose all composure. Share with your camper and with the kiddos at home how it felt when you first laid eyes on them. For a parent this is probably as close as we get to understanding how much God loves us!

## **Prayer**

Good and Gracious God, mold us and form us into the kind of people you want us to be. Be patient with us when we fall short of what love demands of us and give us patience with ourselves. Send your peace as breath for our lives and allow us to see your blessings as a downpour of your joy. Amen.

“Fruit Of The Spirit”  
2015 RTLC Bible Study- Day 3  
**Patience – Kindness On The Clock**

## Introduction To The Theme

We hear Jesus name *loving our neighbor* as a part of the Greatest Commandment (Mark 12 and Matthew 22) In Christ, what characterizes the interactions we are to have with our neighbor? Today we visit the middle three characteristics of the fruit of the spirit that examine how we interact with one another. We encounter the story of a man who demands others extend patience to him but then does not extend the similar courtesy to others. With one of the Psalms testifying to God’s kindness and goodness, we also look at how kindness, as our disposition, and goodness, as kindness in action, can inform our care and treatment of one another.<sup>1</sup> Let’s take a deep breath and consider how patience can usher in kindness and goodness toward one another, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

“Are we there yet?” God’s people often wish things moved faster. Churches today often have those that name the desire that things were moved more quickly. I am not saying there are not opportunities for improvement, but I do wish to point out that the refrain, “how long?” echoes and resounds. In the Psalms alone that question is offered in 4, 6, 13, 35, 62, 74, 79, 80, 82, 90, 94, and 119. So what Fruit of the Spirit helps us endure when our sense of gratification is challenged? Patience.

Patience can be looked at three fold. First, how do we experience and see God’s patience modeled and extended to us. Second, how do we then live that patience in regard to our circumstances? And third, how do we appropriately dwell in patience when interacting with our neighbor, that is, our brothers and sisters in Christ, our fellow campers?

Our conduct and character when interacting with our neighbor certainly is informed by the three characteristics of the fruit we learned about yesterday of love, joy, and peace. But how does patience point to our claiming those values and virtues as given and cherished by God? We continue on to think about kindness and goodness. Surely where God deals with us in mercy and grace, through forgiveness, God is kind and good even if mysterious. How then, as the Holy Spirit equips us, are *we* called to be kind and good? In a world that is still fraught with sin and evil, is it kind and good to always turn the other cheek? Yes, these are challenging questions, they are not simple.

In this study day then, we consider how this Fruit functions as Spirit given (Day 1), how they relate to the other Fruit (Days 2 & 4), and preliminarily consider how we live them out (Day 5). And in the end, it’s not exactly easy figuring out how and when to be patient, kind, and good with one another. One of Luther’s prominent writings *The Freedom of a Christian* brings to light the paradox of our freedom in Christ when he writes: “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” By God’s grace, we’re *able* to live out the Fruit of the Spirit. By God’s grace, we don’t *have* to live out the Fruit of the Spirit to *prove* anything. By God’s grace, we *get* to live out the Fruit of the Spirit. It is in

---

<sup>1</sup> Winward, *Fruit of the Spirit*. 155.

recognizing the value and gift of grace, how could we want to live in any way other than the Fruit of the Spirit?

That you've chosen to be part of the ministry of Rainbow Trail Lutheran Camp suggests to me that you're off to a great start dwelling in this Fruit of the Spirit as you come to better know yourself and God who has fashioned you into one with a heart, soul, mind, and strength to serve. I am among those grateful for you living that calling. So let's see if this study can help you grant holy insights for your campers.

My prayer for **you** as you enter this day is from Ephesians 3:14-20.

*<sup>14</sup>For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. <sup>16</sup>I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, <sup>17</sup>and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. <sup>18</sup>I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. <sup>20</sup>Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.*

## **Objectives For Today**

The purpose of this day is to help the campers:

1. continue to reflect on the gifts that the Holy Spirit imparts looking particularly at patience, kindness, and goodness (hereafter referred to as PKG).
2. consider how these fruit are in relationship to the other fruit.
3. grow in understanding how God has displayed PKG to us.
4. discussion ways as disciples of Christ to better equip ourselves to be PKG in response to God's grace.
5. consider ways that they can be live out the fruit of PKG in their village for the rest of the week and their community when they return.

# Morning Watch

## Welcome (Someone reads)

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven! (Ecclesiastes 3:1)  
Welcome to this time of reflection about the differing characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit.*

## Scripture Psalm 119:18 and Ephesians 1:17-19

*Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things [out of your law]. Psalm 119:18*

*<sup>17</sup>I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>so that, **with the eyes of your heart enlightened**, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.*

## Song Give Me Your Eyes Brandon Heath

Looked down from a broken sky  
Traced out by the city lights  
My world from a mile high  
Best seat in the house tonight  
Touched down on the cold black top  
Hold on for the sudden stop  
Breathe in the familiar shock  
Of confusion And chaos  
***All those people goin' somewhere  
Why have I never cared?***  
Give me Your eyes for just one second  
Give me Your eyes so I can see  
Everything that I keep missing  
Give me Your love for humanity  
Give me Your arms for the broken-hearted  
The ones that are far beyond my reach  
Give me Your heart for the ones forgotten  
Give me Your eyes so I can see (Yeah x4)  
Step out on a busy street  
See a girl and our eyes meet  
Does her best to smile at me  
To hide what's underneath  
There's a man just to her right  
Black suit and a bright red tie  
Too ashamed to tell his wife  
He's out of work, he's buyin' time  
All those people goin' somewhere  
Why have I never cared?  
Give me Your eyes for just one second  
Give me Your eyes so I can see  
Everything that I keep missing  
Give me Your love for humanity  
Give me Your arms for the broken-hearted

The ones that are far beyond my reach  
Give me Your heart for the ones forgotten  
Give me Your eyes so I can see (Yeah x4)  
I've been there a million times  
A couple of million eyes  
Just move and pass me by  
I swear I never thought that I was wrong  
Well I want a second glance  
So give me a second chance  
***To see the way You've seen the people all along***  
Give me Your eyes for just one second  
Give me Your eyes so I can see  
Everything that I keep missing  
Give me Your love for humanity  
Give me Your arms for the broken-hearted  
The ones that are far beyond my reach  
Give me Your heart for the ones forgotten  
Give me Your eyes so I can see  
Give me Your Eyes  
(Give me Your eyes for just one second)  
Lord, give me Your eyes  
(Give me Your eyes so I can see)  
Everything (Everything that I keep missing)  
(Give me Your love for humanity)  
Give me Your heart  
(Give me Your arms for the broken-hearted)  
For the broken hearted  
(The ones that are far beyond my reach)  
Give me Your heart  
(Give me Your heart for the ones forgotten)  
Lord, give me Your eyes  
(Give me Your eyes so I can see)

## Questions

Lyric: *All those people, going somewhere, why did I never care?*

1. What would it take for you to be more curious about your brothers and sisters in Christ?
2. Are there little things daily that could serve as reminder?

Lyric: *Give me a second chance, to see the way you've seen the people all along.*

1. What does God notice about people?
2. What are three to five ways you can you see people today as God sees them?

## Prayer

Make the sign of the cross on yourself and say these words:

*Holy Spirit, may fruit sprout in wondrous ways so that I may see the world differently.*

# Scripture Study

## Study Outline

1. Experience patience – make ‘em wait
2. Define patience: explain nuances of Greek terms, a large capacity to endure emotion<sup>2</sup>
3. Waiting Dinner Supper Advent Lent
4. Matthew 18 story of patience – *our patience*
  - a. Patience with challenging people
  - b. Patience with challenging circumstances
5. Chronos and Kairos – do you have *time* to be kind and good?
  - a. Becoming mature takes time; ripe fruit, ready fruit
6. Psalm 103 – *God’s kindness*; kindness as ‘love showing mercy’<sup>3</sup>
7. Hope/juxtaposed; 1 Thess 1:3 - Trusting God allows us to extend kindness and goodness
8. Difference between kindness and goodness
  - a. What role does *forgiveness* play in kindness and goodness?
9. Luke 18; Mark 10:18 – Why do you call me good? None good but God *God as good alone*
10. *Lutheran Insights* Small Catechism, Ten Commandments esp. 8<sup>th</sup> commandment
11. How do we do that?

## Study

### Check In

How is your group? Get situated in a comfortable circle or group that doesn’t leave someone on the outside and includes sufficient engagement.

### Opening Prayer

*Before we get too far, let’s offer an opening prayer to bless this time. Invite a youth to offer the prayer if they’re comfortable. It’s always great to enable them to participate. If no takers, try this out: Creator God, thank you today for the chance to spend time in your wonderful creation. Bless our time now as we look at ourselves as a wonderful part of your creation. Help us to see how you have made us with gifts to bless the world as salt blesses with flavor. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*

### Opener

*So today we’re talking about patience, kindness, and goodness. And we’ll start with an exercise in patience....* Then just stop and smile at the campers. Essentially you are going to create a space for them to *have* to wait.

*How did it feel to need to be patient?* Generally I imagine you will entertain some negative sentiments but hopefully too you can draw out some times for things worth patiently waiting to receive.

*What makes it easier to wait or be patient?* When you know what is coming? When you trust who/what you are waiting for?

Ask the campers, *How would you define patience?* Name times in their lives when patience is a lived reality. Road trips maybe? Holidays like Christmas? School vacations?

*What are times in church when we ‘wait?’* Advent we wait for Christmas; Lent we wait for Easter. Some youth may have experienced waiting for a new pastor... new youth director?

Some definitions from good theological grounds include: A calm endurance based on the certain knowledge that God is in control. i.e. Psalm 46:10.

Ruben Shelly shares insights from translation: “The word translated “patience” in the text of Galatians 5:22-23 is *makrothymia*. A compound word, it joins the Greek term for “large, big, grand” [*makros*]

---

<sup>2</sup> Shelly, *In Step With The Spirit*. 85.

<sup>3</sup> Keller, *Gardener Looks at Fruit of the Spirit*. 125.

with the word for “emotions, anger, rage” [*thymos*]. The resulting term refers to the ability to contain and hold in check large quantities of emotion, such as anger or frustration.”<sup>4</sup> It suggests the capacity to endure and tolerate. One scholar calls it conquering patience.

In an ad some time ago the great basketball player Michael Jordan is heard in a voice over sharing this quote which certainly draws out this type of patience:

*“Look me in the eyes. It’s okay if you’re scared. So am I. But we’re scared for different reasons. I’m scared of what I won’t become, and you’re scared of what I could become. Look at me. I won’t let myself end where I started. I won’t let finish where I began. I know what is in me, even if you can’t see it yet. Look me in the eyes. I have something more important than courage, I have patience. I will become, what I know I am.”* I particularly appreciate the certainty trust and inspiration that is named in that last line. While Michael might not have been claiming baptismal identity, when we know we are children of God wrapped in God’s loving steadfast care, we can be patient.

Some pop culture references to this might include the cliché “I’ve got this,” suggesting a capable handling. Additionally, Taylor Swift’s ‘Shake It Off’ could draw out this theme, particularly in light of the sense that this type of patience is in the face of antagonists – people trying to get under your skin. Careful here not to equate patience with not caring. That is not being patient - often that can merely be pouting. Real flattering right?

\*\*\*When not to be patient: This is a challenging conversation to have but necessary. Where abuse is taking place, there is no call for being patient. The life God has given us will contain challenges but especially where those challenges are rooted in another’s addictions, abusive behaviors, or neglect – intervention is as Godly, if not more sacred, to restore health and wholeness. These Fruit of the Spirit dwell in the people of God sufficient that if this needs to be spoken about find an appropriate person at an appropriate time.\*\*\*

*God is patient with us, how do we do being patient with one another?* This is a story that would work well to act out. It contains themes of slavery and harsh punishment so think that through before. The object is not to get derailed but to draw out who extends patience to whom, and how does that work out for them.

### Scripture

*Being patient with people who we expect things of can be challenging. Let’s hear this story in the Gospels. Matthew 18:22-35:*

<sup>23</sup>For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. <sup>24</sup>When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; <sup>25</sup>and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. <sup>26</sup>So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have **patience** with me, and I will pay you everything.’ <sup>27</sup>And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. <sup>28</sup>But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ <sup>29</sup>Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have **patience** with me, and I will pay you.’ <sup>30</sup>But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. <sup>31</sup>When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. <sup>32</sup>Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. <sup>33</sup>Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ <sup>34</sup>And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. <sup>35</sup>So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Let’s talk about what we just read:

1. Should patience be in proportion to what is owed? [10,000 forgiven, owed about 100]

---

<sup>4</sup> Shelly, Rubel. *In Step With The Spirit: A Study of the Fruit of the Spirit*. Baker Book House: Grand Rapids, MI. 1987. 85.

2. How does revenge perceive patience?
3. Doesn't patience have something to do with how we see ourselves? Romans 12:3:  
*For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.*

*Let's think a little bit more about the types of time? Do you prefer digital or analog? They both point to the same time. God works in two types of time: Chronos and Kairos. Now this is a heavy concept but dear Bible Study leader you are up to the task.*

*Kairos is to be thought of as God's time [Ecclesiastes 3:11 He had made everything beautiful in its time. Artist: Gungor Song: Beautiful Things.] A good example of an experience of Kairos might be where something is so delightful you lose track of time. Ever had that happen?*

*Chronos is a quantitative measure. The Olympics are all about chronos. Clearly this type can be helpful for keeping track of schedules and the life we lead but often when you know you need quality time with someone you're looking at a kairos need not a chronos need. Patience will ask us to trust Kairos and persevere through chronos.*

*So any character trait you want to develop it helps to have a model or mentor right? Who are some of the patient people you know? Hear the campers out. Perhaps ask why or how does that person have patience? Then move to patience as an expression of faith. How about Jesus' patience? 1 Tim 1:15-16:*

*<sup>15</sup>The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — of whom I am the foremost. <sup>16</sup>But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life.*

*How about God's patience? God is patient with us and this is spoken to many times throughout Scripture. **Psalm 103** *acclaims God's kindness and goodness**

*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me,  
 bless his holy name.*

*<sup>2</sup>Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
 and do not forget all his benefits —*

*<sup>3</sup>who forgives all your iniquity,  
 who heals all your diseases,*

*<sup>4</sup>who redeems your life from the Pit,  
 who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,*

*<sup>5</sup>who satisfies you with good as long as you live  
 so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

*<sup>6</sup>The LORD works vindication  
 and justice for all who are oppressed.*

*<sup>7</sup>He made known his ways to Moses,  
 his acts to the people of Israel.*

***<sup>8</sup>The LORD is merciful and gracious,  
 slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.***

*<sup>9</sup>He will not always accuse,  
 nor will he keep his anger forever.*

*<sup>10</sup>He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
 nor repay us according to our iniquities.*

*<sup>11</sup>For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
 so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;*

*<sup>12</sup>as far as the east is from the west,  
 so far he removes our transgressions from us.*

*<sup>13</sup>As a father has compassion for his children,  
 so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him.*

*<sup>14</sup>For he knows how we were made;  
 he remembers that we are dust.*

*<sup>15</sup>As for mortals, their days are like grass;  
 they flourish like a flower of the field;*

*<sup>16</sup>for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
 and its place knows it no more.*

*<sup>17</sup>But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting  
 to everlasting*

*on those who fear him,  
 and his righteousness to children's children,*

*<sup>18</sup>to those who keep his covenant  
 and remember to do his commandments.*

*<sup>19</sup>The LORD has established his throne in the heavens,  
 and his kingdom rules over all.*

*<sup>20</sup>Bless the LORD, O you his angels,  
 you mighty ones who do his bidding,  
 obedient to his spoken word.*

*<sup>21</sup>Bless the LORD, all his hosts,  
 his ministers that do his will.*

*<sup>22</sup>Bless the LORD, all his works,  
 in all places of his dominion.*

*Bless the LORD, O my soul.*

Let's talk about what we just read:

1. What stands out to you in those passages?
2. Why in the world would God want us to be patient and kind and good to one another?

Consider 1 Thessalonians 1:3

*Remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Remembering God's faithfulness can help us be patient. Remembering God's kindness and goodness can also help us trust. Which leads to two questions: 1) What is the difference between kindness and goodness? 2) How do we intentionally make an effort to remember?*

*Curiously, look at how Jesus responds to being called good.*

Mark 10:17-18

*17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone."*

*Are there different types of 'good?' Is there a goodness that God can live out that we as disciples cannot? What, by the grace of God, should we strive for?*

*If it fits within the study offer this little Lutheran insight. Martin Luther thought that to live a patient, good, and kind life required of us a kind interpretation of others' actions. Sure that can be challenging some times. Consider the Small Catechism on the Ten Commandments particularly 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment which reads:*

- 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment -- *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.* Perhaps it is worth mentioning that most know this as *You shall not lie.*
- What does this mean?  
*We are to fear and love God, so that we do not tell lies about our neighbors, betray or slander them, or destroy their reputations. Instead we are to come to their defense, speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light.*

Let's talk about what we just read:

1. How can we do that by being patient?
2. Where can we, seek to attribute kindness and goodness to the motives of others?

### Wrap Up

*So what one thing will you remember from this Bible Study? Was there a story or a scripture that sticks with you? If we want God to change the way we see and treat our neighbors, what are some reminders we can give ourselves to be PKG to one another? Let them brainstorm and remember to be encouraging.*

### Closing Prayer

*In the closing prayer you might choose to lift out particular concerns or gifts that were mentioned to demonstrate prayer as a personal. Let's close in prayer.*

*Lord, help us to be patient as you have shown us patience.*

*Lord, help us to be kind as you have shown us kindness.*

*Lord, help us to be good as you have shown us goodness.*

*In all these requests we know some times will be challenging and other times will be easier.*

*By your grace God, may we live out the fruit of the spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

### For You, Bible Study Leader

Take a deep breath. Put a smile on your face. You've done it. You blessed these campers just now. Believe it. God knows it. Off to the next activity.

## Additional Study Ideas

1. Additional Scripture to consider:
  - James 5:7 waiting on the Lord
  - Prov 14:29, 15:18
  - 2 Peter 3:8, 15
  - Romans 15:13 - NRF
2. Where does nature display patience? Sometimes here it is a matter of trapping/catching someone something.
3. Does motive contribute to whether patience is earnest? Example: A dog waiting for a treat – are they merely obeying or are they ‘being’ patient?
4. Think of movies where a character displays patience. This is a far more challenging endeavor than the contrary – lots of movies feature someone getting angry and then going out and losing their patience.
5. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory: How do those characters embody or lack the fruit of the spirit?
6. Some quotes from other sources to think on. Include them as/if you find them helpful:

Krentz, Edgar. Galatians Augsburg Commentary on the New Testament. Augsburg Publishing House: Minneapolis, MN, 1985.

“The Spirit has empowered; therefore the virtues are the fruit of the spirit. Peace is expressed in three modes in the second triad: patience, kindness, goodness. (Gal. 5:22) Patience is the quality of putting up with those who try to provoke you (of God, Rom 2:4; 9:22; of humans, 2 Cor 6:6, 1 Thess 5:14). Kindness is friendliness based on God’s friendliness to sinners, (cf. Rom. 11:22 and for the idea, Rom 15:7); 2 Cor 6:6 links it to patience. Goodness is a more unusual term, appearing in the NT only here and Rom. 15:14; Eph 5:9; and 1 Thess. 5:14). It practically forms a hendiadys with kindness, together describing that attitude that refuses to react in kind to attacks or insults or just plain boorishness. Gal. 6:10 catches its sense very well.” Pg. 83.

Barclay, William. The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians. The New Daily Study Bible. Westminster John Knox Press: Louisville, KY. 2002.

Patience: the Greek word used is *makrothumia*. This is a great word. The writer of 1 Maccabees (8:4) says that it was by *makrothumia* that the Romans gained control of the world and by that he means the Roman persistence which would never make peace with an enemy even in defeat, a kind of *conquering patience*. (Ital. mine) Generally speaking, the word is used of patience not in relation to things or events but in relation to people. The fourth-century bishop and preacher John Chrysostom said that it is the grace of those who could revenge themselves and do not, people who are slow to anger. The most illuminating thing about it is that it is commonly used in the New Testament of the attitude of God toward men and women (Rom 2:4,9:22; 1 Tim 1:16; 1 Peter 3:20). If God had been like us, he would have wiped out this world long ago; but he has that patience which puts up with all our sinning and will not reject us. In our dealings with one another, we must reproduce this loving, forbearing, forgiving, patient attitude of God toward ourselves.

Kindness and goodness are closely connected words. For kindness the word is *chrestotes*. It, too, is commonly translated as goodness. The Rheims version translates it as sweetness. It is a lovely word. The Greek historian and philosopher Plutarch says that it has a far wider place than justice. Old wine is called *chrestos*, mellow. Christ’s yoke is called *chrestos* (Mt 11:30), that is, it does not cause discomfort or irritation. The whole idea of the word is a goodness which is kind. The word Paul uses for goodness (*agathosune*) is a word peculiar to the Bible and does not occur in the secular Greek (Rom 15:14; Eph 5:9; 2 Thess 1:11). It is the widest word for goodness; it is defined as ‘virtue equipped at every point.’ What is the difference? (Ital. mine) *Agathosune* might, and could, rebuke and discipline; *chrestotes* can only help. The nineteenth-century Bishop of Dublin, R.C. Trench, says that Jesus showed *agathosune* when he cleaned out the Temple and drove out those who were making it a bazaar; but he showed *chrestotes* when he was kind to the sinning woman who anointed his feet. Christians need that goodness which at one and the time can be kind and strong. [Pp. 61-62]

Keating, Thomas. Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit. Lantern Books: Brooklyn: NY. 2000.

Long-suffering is certitude in God's unwavering fidelity to his promises. Our security is no longer based on anything we might possess or accomplish, but rather on our conviction of God's unfailing protection and readiness to forgive. Hence we are not easily disturbed by the ebb and flow of human events and our emotional reactions to them. Feelings continue to be felt, at times more strongly than ever, but they no longer dominate our awareness or our activity. We are content to wait with confidence for God's deliverance in every situation, especially during the prolonged periods of dryness and the dark nights. We have interiorized the words of the Gospel: "Ask and you shall receive. Seek and you shall find. Knock and the door shall be opened to you." Pp. 21-22.

Kindness (meekness) is freedom from the energy of hostility, hatred, or outbursts of anger. Anger is necessary for human health and growth. But it needs to be transmuted into a growing capacity to persevere in the pursuit of the difficult good, especially the immense goods of the spiritual journey and of the imitation of Christ. The growth of meekness opens us to the continual awareness of God's presence and the acceptance of everyone with their limitations. One does not approve of the harmful things that others may do, but one accepts them as they are and is ready to help whenever possible – but without trying to change them. One is even content with one's inability to change oneself as one would like while continuing to do what one can to improve, relying more and more upon God and less and less on one's own efforts. Pp. 19-20

Goodness is the affirmation of creation as good, together with a sense of oneness with the universe and with everything created. It is the disposition that perceives events, even the tragic things of life, as manifestations of God's love. It recognizes the beauty of all creation in spite of the damage that human selfishness has imposed upon it. As a result, gratitude to God abounds in our hearts and a positive attitude characterizes our relationship with others and with the wear and tear of our daily lives. Pg. 21.

## **Ideas to Incorporate Theme Throughout The Day**

1. Count to 3: to abide in patience once it's quiet have everyone hold up their hand and quietly tap pointer, index, ring fingers to give a three count of patience
2. Lines to integrate:
  - a. Encourage the compliment "Thanks for waiting."
  - b. Recognize when someone is kind or good: "When you \_\_\_\_, that was kind/good of you."
3. Themes for the Day
  - a. Patiently Waiting: It Will Get You Places – "Are We There Yet?"
  - b. 'K'onsider Kindness
  - c. Goodness Gracious! – God's Grace experienced in wondrous acts of Goodness to us
  - d. Wait For It

## **Other Songs, Stories, Thoughts, Questions, And Suggestions**

### **Songs** – From RTALC Song Book

1. Fruit of the Spirit
2. Be Bold (with be (*pause*) patient, be kind, be good)

### **Story**

Patience in judgment: The following story can be offered to consider whether judging a circumstance of another is kind or good. Often we need be patient and see what unfolds.

Once there was an old man who lived in a tiny village. Although poor, he was envied by all, for he owned a beautiful white horse. Even the king coveted his treasure. A horse like this had never been seen before – such was its splendor, its majesty, its strength.

People offered fabulous prices for the steed, but the old man always refused. “This horse is not a horse to me,” he would tell them. “It is a person. How could you sell a person? He is a friend, not a possession. How could you sell a friend?” The man was poor and the temptation was great. But he never sold the horse.

One morning he found that the horse was not in his stable. All the village came to see him. “You old fool,” they scoffed, “we told you that someone would steal your horse. We warned you that you would be robbed. You are so poor. How could you ever protect such a valuable animal? It would have been better to have sold him. You could have gotten whatever price you wanted. No amount would have been too high. Now the horse is gone and you’ve been cursed with misfortune.”

The old man responded, “Don’t speak too quickly. Say only that the horse is not in the stable. That is all we know; the rest is judgment. If I’ve been cursed or not, how can you know? How can you judge?”

The people contested, “Don’t make us out to be fools! We may not be philosophers, but great philosophy is not needed. The simple fact that your horse is gone is a curse.”

The old man spoke again. “All I know is that the stable is empty, and the horse is gone. The rest I don’t know. Whether it be a curse or a blessing, I can’t say. All we can see is a fragment. Who can say what will come next?”

The people of the village laughed. They thought that the man was crazy. They had always thought he was a fool; if he wasn’t, he would have sold the horse and lived off the money. But instead, he was a poor woodcutter, and old man still cutting firewood and dragging it out of the forest and selling it. He lived hand to mouth in the misery of poverty. Now he had proven that he was, indeed, a fool.

After fifteen days, the horse returned. He hadn’t been stolen; he had run away into the forest. Not only had he returned, he had brought a dozen wild horses with him. Once again, the village people gathered around the woodcutter and spoke. “Old man, you were right and we were wrong. What we thought was a curse was a blessing. Please forgive us.”

The man responded, “Once again, you go too far. Say only that the horse is back. State only that a dozen horses returned with him, but don’t judge. How do you know if this is a blessing or not? You see only a fragment. Unless you know the whole story, how can you judge? You read only one page of a book. Can you judge the whole book? You read only one word of one phrase. Can you understand the entire phrase?”

“Life is so vast, yet you judge all of life with one page or one word. All you have is one fragment! Don’t say that this is a blessing. No one knows. I am content with what I know. I am not perturbed by what I don’t.”

“Maybe the old man is right,” they said to one another. So they said little. But down deep, they knew he was wrong. They knew it was a blessing. Twelve wild horses had returned. With a little work, the animals could be broken and trained and sold for much money.

The old man had a son, an only son. The young man began to break the wild horses. After a few days, he fell from one of the horses and broke both legs. Once again the villagers gathered around the old man and cast their judgments.

“You were right,” they said. “You proved you were right. The dozen horses were not a blessing. They were a curse. Your only son has broken both his legs, and now in your old age you have no one to help you. Now you are poorer than ever.”

The old man spoke again. “You people are obsessed with judging. Don’t go so far. Say only that my son broke his legs. Who knows if it is a blessing or a curse? No one knows. We only have a fragment. Life comes in fragments.”

It so happened that a few weeks later the country engaged in war against a neighboring country. All the young men of the village were required to join the army. Only the son of the old man was excluded, because he was injured. Once again the people gathered around the old man, crying and screaming because their sons had been taken. There was little chance that they would return. The enemy was strong, and the war would be a losing struggle. They would never see their sons again.

“You were right, old man,” They wept. “God knows you were right. This proves it. Your son’s accident was a blessing. His legs may be broken, but at least he is with you. Our sons are gone forever.”

The old man spoke again. “It is impossible to talk with you. You always draw conclusions. No one knows. Say only this. Your sons had to go to war, and mine did not. No one knows if it is a blessing or a curse. No one is wise enough to know. Only God knows.”

## Ideas to Adjust Study Down For Juniors

1. Focus on times when people might have to wait for them.

## Ideas to Adjust Study Up For Senior Highs

1. Spend a little on what holds us back from living out our fruit. If our social context encourages us to NOT be patient, kind, or good, is that abiding in love, joy, and peace? We might need to exercise self-control and move ourselves to a more promising life-giving social context. This age can delve a bit more into self-conscientiousness.
2. When considering the patience as enduring in loving-kindness the lyrics of Alanis Morissette's *Still* as God's patience/long-suffering for God's people.

I am the harm which you inflict  
I am your brilliance and frustration  
I'm the nuclear bombs if they're to hit  
I'm your immaturity and your indignance  
I am your misfits and your praised  
I am your doubt and your conviction  
I am your charity and your rape  
I am your grasping and expectation  
*I see you averting your glances*  
*I see you cheering on the war*  
*I see you ignoring your children*  
*And I love you still*  
*And I love you still*  
I am your joy and your regret  
I am your fury and your elation  
I am your yearning and your sweat  
I am your faithless and your religion  
*I see you altering history (His story?)*

*I see you abusing the land*  
*I see you and your selective amnesia*  
*And I love you still*  
*And I love you still*  
I am your tragedy and your fortune  
I am your crisis and delight  
I am your profits and your prophets  
I am your art, I am your bytes  
I am your death and your decisions  
I am your passion and your plights  
I am your sickness and convalescence  
I am your weapons and your light  
*I see you holding your grudges*  
*I see you gunning them down*  
*I see you silencing your sisters*  
*And I love you still*  
*And I love you (still)*  
*I see you lie to your country*

# **Parent Devotional**

## **Scripture**     *1 Timothy 1:16*

“But for that very reason I received mercy, so that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display the utmost patience, making me an example to those who would come to believe in him for eternal life.”

## **Reflection**

Today your child will learn about the Fruit of the Spirit of patience, kindness, and goodness. Patience might be the most antithetical to how most of culture encourages us to live, so this is no small challenge. Immediate gratification is thrust on your camper (and likely you too!) in advertising and news outlets which gratuitously overrate our capacity to see what is really going on. Counting to ten, taking deep breaths, etc. can greatly enhance our capacity to dwell in patience with ourselves and our neighbor. Let us consider how our God graciously deals with us? Let’s consider how we might concretely live out mindful patience, kindness and goodness this day. How can we be more mindful of how our words affect each other? What does God look at in our lives?

## **Family Activity**

Gather at the dinner table, or perhaps as you’re driving in the car in between activities:

- 1) Graciously ask, *without a defensive response*, “How could I be more patient or kind with you?” Adults ask kids **and** kids ask adults. Siblings ask siblings too could also be great.
- 2) Then the person *who has been asked* responds and prays in their own words or as follows:  
“Holy Spirit, help us to treat one another with patience and kindness as we seek to live in your love, joy, and peace. Help me to (*the requested change*) that we all might live in your Fruit of the Spirit.”

## **Closing Prayer**

God who makes all things grow, you have made us with unique and wonderful gifts. Help us to recognize how our gifts are given to bless the lives of this family and our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Give us courage and faithfulness to do our best to dwell in the Fruit of the Spirit that we might bless one another and find ourselves blessed as well. In Jesus’ name, *Amen*.

**“Fruit Of The Spirit”**  
**2015 RTLCL Bible Study- Day 4**  
**Being At My Best For All...**

## **Introduction To The Theme**

So far we have looked at who the Spirit is and how its fruit is given to us. We’ve looked at the three fruit characteristics which help create shalom for all (love, joy, peace) and the three characteristics that help us look out for all. Today we are going to look at the three characteristics (faithfulness, gentleness, self-control) that, when cultivated and lived out help put us at “our best” a place where we can be aware of others and their needs as well as our own.

Literally for my whole life my parents at Christmas time have hosted an open house for the congregation they were serving in. Every year the menu is the same: homemade cookies, punch and coffee. Our house was always a flurry in the weeks leading up to Open House: baking cookies, getting the house cleaned up and ready, making sure everything was set to go. With anticipation my siblings and I participated in the preparations and when the day finally came, we were washed, scrubbed, in our new Christmas outfits, and ready to “be at our best” as my mom would say.

“Being at our best” meant that for the next few hours we were focused on the people we were welcoming to our home. We had smiles for everyone, chatted with all and very politely served coffee, punch and helped keep the cookies plates full. While every once in a while we’d see if we could sneak a cookie or two...the whole of the time was not on ourselves, but how we could love on, serve and be there for others.

These characteristics we are talking about today are ones that can help us “be at our best” so our focus is not just on what “I” want, but what are the needs of those around me and how can I serve, live, and be in ways that uplift others. These characteristics are by no means easy. They are in fact very counterculture. For our culture says do what you want, have what you want and do it now have it now. It’s a “me first” world. Yet God calls us to lives that are so much more than just focused on “me”. And when we step into living God’s way, not only can we be changed/transformed, but we have the ability to change/transform others’ lives as well as we live the love of Jesus into their lives!

And the beauty of living in community this way, with everyone trying to “be at their best” for each other, is all are taken care of and everyone has others looking out for them. Even though it feels counter-intuitive to live this way – that somehow I’ll miss out and be shortchanged, the economy of God turns everything so that when we give we also receive. That’s the beauty of the gift of the Spirit – when we all live it out, we all also get to receive love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

## **Objectives For Today**

The purpose of this day is to help the campers:

1. Be introduced to the last of the three characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit: faithfulness, gentleness and self-control and see how they can cultivate these characteristics in their own lives.
2. Discover that how they choose to live can greatly impact those around them and impact their own lives.
3. Talk about how the Spirit and Christian community can help us cultivate these characteristics.
4. Understand and imagine how their attitude, their choice of how to live, act, etc can greatly impact how others interact with them.

# Morning Watch

## Welcome (Someone reads)

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven! (Ecclesiastes 3:1)  
Welcome to this time to be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*

## Scripture 1Corinthians 9:24-27:

*Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. <sup>25</sup> Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one.*

## Song **Thrive by Casting Crowns**

Here in this worn and weary land  
Where many a dream has died  
Like a tree planted by the water  
We never will run dry

So living water flowing through  
God, we thirst for more of You  
Fill our hearts and flood our souls with one  
desire

Just to know You and to make You known  
We lift Your name on high  
Shine like the sun, make darkness run and hide  
We know we were made for so much more than  
ordinary lives  
Its time for us to more than just survive  
We were made to thrive

Into Your word, were digging deep  
To know our Fathers heart  
Into the world, we're reaching out  
To show them who You are

So living water flowing through  
God, we thirst for more of You  
Fill our hearts and flood our souls with one  
desire

Just to know You and to make You known  
We lift Your name on high  
Shine like the sun, make darkness run and hide  
We know we were made for so much more than  
ordinary lives  
Its time for us to more than just survive  
We were made to thrive

Joy unspeakable, faith unsinkable  
Love unstoppable, anything is possible  
Joy unspeakable, faith unsinkable  
Love unstoppable, anything is possible

Joy unspeakable, faith unsinkable  
Love unstoppable, anything is possible  
Joy unspeakable, faith unsinkable  
Love unstoppable, anything is possible

Just to know You and to make You known  
We lift Your name on high  
Shine like the sun, make darkness run and hide  
We know we were made for so much more than  
ordinary lives  
Its time for us to more than just survive  
We were made to thrive

We were made to thrive

## Questions

- Do you ever think about the fact that God wants you to thrive – do well and be will in life?
- And when God gives us things like the fruit of the spirit – he's showing us ways to thrive?
- How might being loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-controlled be ways to thrive in life?
- How might having these "fruits" in our lives help God be known through us?

## Prayer

Make the sign of the cross on yourself and say: Jesus loves me this much.  
Then pray: God, you are marvelous and mighty and you are abundantly kind and compassionate. And I thank you today that you are the God who is stronger than my biggest fear and you go with me wherever I go. Today, help me to thrive living for you and with you, In your name I pray, AMEN.

## Scripture Study

**1 Peter 3:13-16** <sup>13</sup> Now, who will want to harm you if you are eager to do good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you suffer for doing what is right, God will reward you for it. So don't worry or be afraid of their threats. <sup>15</sup> Instead, you must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it. <sup>16</sup> But do this in a gentle and respectful way. <sup>17</sup> Keep your conscience clear. Then if people speak against you, they will be ashamed when they see what a good life you live because you belong to Christ.

These verses set up well what it could look like to live a life at your best for others. The very first question – who doesn't like a good person? – sets up the idea that everyone likes someone who is seen as good. Not good as in goodie-two-shoes good per se, but good in that here is a person who looks out for others, who is nice to others and goes out of their way to bless others. One who doesn't think just of themselves, but has an eye and heart to see where others are.

It also recognizes that even when we are “at our best” with others – there will be some who might ridicule or make fun of us, tease us or even try to bully us for being a good person. But the call is still clear – we are to do good, keep our conscience clear and be respectful (vs 16) - be at our best for all people – even the ones we don't want to.

The promise is clear here, too. If we live faithfully – God will eventually reward – not like “I'm good, now I get a lollipop” but in God's way, God will reward us eventually. Do we have no need to worry or fear these places. Instead our lives should be lives of worship – lives lived in praise and glory of God, lives that recognize Jesus is Christ (Savior) AND Lord.

Verse 16 then is a gentle reminder – to live gently with folks. We don't have to stuff God down other's throats. If we are living out the fruit of the spirit, people will see us and we'll be seen as different in a good way. And they will be curious. Then when someone asks and we're given a chance to speak into their lives – we can boldly yet gently proclaim what God is doing in our lives. Not what someone else should be doing or “has” to do in order for God to love them, but simply witness to what God is doing in our lives. And when we live these kinds of lives, speak in these ways into other's lives...people will see and come to understand we live this way because we belong to Christ (vs 16).

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27** *Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. <sup>25</sup> Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one.*

So how do we live the kind of life talked about in the 1 Peter text? It isn't something that happens overnight. Living “at our best” is something that takes practice. Sometimes we'll do it really well and other times we will fail at it. But it's like learning a sport or a musical instrument or anything – we don't get good at it unless we work at it. Living “at our best” with Jesus takes work too. These verses use the image of a runner to help us know that perseverance and persistence is needed. Also verse 24... “run in such a way that you might win”. This does not say we'll all always win, but run the race in that way. Runner who say at the beginning of the race “I'll never win” rarely do, right? Our mindset matters as much as our willingness to work hard.

And then a great reminder in verse 25 – what we are running for – the prize – is not something like a trophy that's only here on earth – but rather we are “running” for the sake of relationships with others and with God – things that last for all eternity. THAT's a prize worth giving our all for!

## **Daniel 6:1-23 – Daniel and the Lions Den**

*Darius the Mede decided to divide the kingdom into 120 provinces, and he appointed a high officer to rule over each province.<sup>2</sup> The king also chose Daniel and two others as administrators to supervise the high officers and protect the king's interests.<sup>3</sup> Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers. Because of Daniel's great ability, the king made plans to place him over the entire empire<sup>4</sup> Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy.<sup>5</sup> So they concluded, "Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the rules of his religion."<sup>6</sup> So the administrators and high officers went to the king and said, "Long live King Darius!<sup>7</sup> We are all in agreement—we administrators, officials, high officers, advisers, and governors—that the king should make a law that will be strictly enforced. Give orders that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions.<sup>8</sup> And now, Your Majesty, issue and sign this law so it cannot be changed, an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked."<sup>9</sup> So King Darius signed the law.<sup>10</sup> But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.<sup>11</sup> Then the officials went together to Daniel's house and found him praying and asking for God's help.<sup>12</sup> So they went straight to the king and reminded him about his law. "Did you not sign a law that for the next thirty days any person who prays to anyone, divine or human—except to you, Your Majesty—will be thrown into the den of lions?" "Yes," the king replied, "that decision stands; it is an official law of the Medes and Persians that cannot be revoked."<sup>13</sup> Then they told the king, "That man Daniel, one of the captives from Judah, is ignoring you and your law. He still prays to his God three times a day."<sup>14</sup> Hearing this, the king was deeply troubled, and he tried to think of a way to save Daniel. He spent the rest of the day looking for a way to get Daniel out of this predicament.<sup>15</sup> In the evening the men went together to the king and said, "Your Majesty, you know that according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, no law that the king signs can be changed."<sup>16</sup> So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, "May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you."<sup>17</sup> A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel.<sup>18</sup> Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn't sleep at all that night.<sup>19</sup> Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den.<sup>20</sup> When he got up, he called out in anguish, "Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?"<sup>21</sup> Daniel answered, "Long live the king!<sup>22</sup> My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty."<sup>23</sup> The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.*

The story of Daniel is a great example of all three fruit characteristics we are looking at today. First faithfulness – Daniel was a Jew living in captivity in Babylon. In the ancient cultures, when an army conquered another city or land, oftentimes the leadership, rulers, nobility, upper classes were taken out of their home land and brought to the conquerors homeland. There, they would be given the chance to enmesh into the culture and leadership positions of the new land thus making them want to stay where they were instead of going back to a place where they would likely be slaves or so poor they would die. It was also a great way to make sure the conquered land didn't have any leadership to rise up against the conquerors

In Daniel 1 we learn that Daniel is one of these nobility who have been taken to Babylon. He is given the chance to prove himself in the king's court and does very well. When the story starts here in Daniel 6, Daniel has been promoted a number of times and even when the kings change, Daniel is still in favor. King Darius is about to make Daniel overseer of all the rulers of all the empire. That's a pretty prestigious place! Not surprisingly, there are those who didn't like this foreigner being lord over them or getting the spot they wanted. So they contrive to get Daniel out of the way.

In the midst of this, even when Daniel knows being faithful to God could get him killed – he still is. (verses 6-10). Even when Daniel is arrested and being taken to the lions' den, he remains self-controlled. He doesn't lash out at his accusers, he doesn't try to rally the king or yell out to him. He is

gentle enough that even the king wishes God to save Daniel (vs 16). Talk about some kind of self-control! He allows himself to be thrown in with the lions. I imagine he had to be pretty darn scared in those moments.

But Daniel lives. I wonder how long it took Daniel to realize the lions weren't going to hurt him? While the king agonizes all night long, Daniel is safe and in the morning, when the king shouts out in anguish (vs 20) Daniel's answer is an answer of gentleness and respect (vs 21) – long live the king! My God has saved me and proven I have not wronged you, O King. Daniel doesn't accuse – he simply states. And the king is overjoyed to pull this young man out to safety...even recognizing the power of God at work in the circumstances.

This is the power of a life lived in faithfulness and gentleness with self-control. Even kings will recognize the power of God at work – and if kings, then too, friends and families, teachers, neighbors and more!

### **Quick Review**

Start off with a quick review of the fruit characteristics you've learned so far. A helpful way to remember the groupings is that there are 3 one syllable (love, joy, peace) 3 two syllable (patience, kindness, goodness).

### **Intro Today's Characteristics**

After reviewing then you can introduce today's characteristics which are the 3 three syllable (faithfulness, gentleness and self-control). Then practice saying them together – until everyone can say all nine! Make it fun – see if anyone wants to try saying them by themselves. Or see who can say them the fastest or the loudest.

### **Ask Campers...**

*Think about your life at home. Is there someone in your life who is a great person to be around? Someone who is upbeat and nice...they seem to be happy most the time and see life as something to have fun with? Maybe they stay out of trouble and seem to do well in school? Who is a person in your life like that?*

After you ask the question – you go first unless someone is ready right away. Have each camper share as they are able. Always make sure campers know they can pass on questions like this. If someone can't think of someone right now, allow them to have time later if they think of someone.

Say something affirming like – *Isn't it great that we have such awesome people in our lives? Yeah, it is. Today as we talk about the last three characters of the fruit of the Spirit, we're going to talk about being those kind of people that others want to be around and the being the kind of people that can impact other's lives with Jesus' love.*

### **First**

Ask: *What are the three characteristics we're looking at today?* (faithfulness, gentleness and self-control)

Say something like: *I want to make sure we all understand what these three things really are – so I want you to help me out. OK everybody up and stand in the middle of our area together. What I'm going to do is read two options to the left will be one option to the right will be another. You have to pick which option you think is right or that you like best and head to that side. OK?* (everyone has to choose a side – no staying in the middle!)



5. **You tell it:** Learn the story for yourself – well enough that you can tell it well – perhaps with different voices, but certainly with enthusiasm and excitement. Stand up when you tell the story, use actions, move around, have fun.
6. **Sounds and actions:** Come up with sounds or actions for certain words and then every time that word is read the group has to do the corresponding sound/action. For instance every time the word “lion” is read everyone has to put up their claws and roar. Or every time “the king” is read, everyone has to bow down and say “hail, O mighty King”. If you have a creative group – let the group decide what the sounds and actions will be. The more you have the more fun it is! (just know the more you have you might need to jot the actions down so you can prompt the group)

### After The Story

Let’s talk about what we just read:

1. Where in the story was Daniel faithful?
  - a. To the king: vs 3 - Daniel soon proved himself more capable than all the other administrators and high officers vs 4 - Then the other administrators and high officers began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling government affairs, but they couldn’t find anything to criticize or condemn. He was faithful, always responsible, and completely trustworthy.
  - b. To God: vs 10 - But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God vs 23 The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God.
2. Where in the story was Daniel gentle?
  - a. He didn’t yell back at the king, allowed himself to be taken to the lions’ den, even when he is brought back out of the pit – he hails the king as king, doesn’t hold it against the king, make accusations, etc.
3. Where in the story did Daniel have self-control?
  - a. Part of Daniel’s faithfulness was the self-control he had to do what he knew was right – praying to God not the king – but he never throws that in the king’s face.
  - b. He didn’t struggle or run away, he calmly goes to the lions’ den, he walks into the lion’s den, doesn’t yell and scream at king, doesn’t demand justice for being wrongly accused.

### Break It Up

Have everyone stand or sit up very straight – or stand on the top of logs, rocks, whatever is handy and say the nine fruit characteristics from as softly as your group can to as loudly as they can shout them out! Then have everyone sit back down. ☺

Ask your campers: *This is a great story –but what does this have to do with today?*

Don’t expect lots of answers, but see where they go with the question.

Next ask: *Have you ever done anything that was “out of control”? What was it? What happened? How did you feel?*

After everyone who wants to has had a chance to share...ask: *Do you think the following are situations of self-control or the lack of it? If so tell me what leads you to think that...*

1. You want to learn to play the piano. So you practice every day for 30 min.
2. You get mad at your sister and so you walk into her room and mess everything up
3. You lost your phone...you’ve looked everywhere and can’t find it. When you tell your parents they tell you, you will have to replace it. You get mad and scream that’s not fair.

4. You see a new shirt/game/gadget you really want, but it's expensive. Instead of asking your parents, you find out how much it will cost and start earning \$\$ towards it by do odd jobs around, babysitting, etc.
5. The rule at your house is "no screens after 7pm". But you really want to play your new game, text your friends, so you sneak upstairs and play/text anyway.
6. You know house rules are in the mornings you're supposed to make your bed, wipe off the sink in the bathroom and tidy your room. Each day, you do it.

Then ask: *In what areas of your life do you have a hard time having self-control?*

(Hopefully by now, campers will be willing to be pretty honest. Be aware some hard things might come up if they are: I can't control my temper, I can't control my habit of cutting/self-harm, I can't control my eating disorder, I have a hard time controlling my desire to drink/have sex, cheat, steal, etc. REMIND CAMPERS OF CONFIDENTIALITY – what's said in the group stays in the group. No one shares anything about anyone else! You also don't have to try and "fix" things here. Let the statements be said and let them be what they are at the moment. If you fear someone is going to hurt themselves or others, then get help after Bible study. Otherwise, let this simply be a time of stating some of the realities of their lives. As the leader it's always good to go first on an activity like that – so while you don't necessarily want to share your deepest darkest self-control issues – share a very real one.)

Ask you campers if it'd be ok for you to pray about these things. Then pray for your campers and the places they struggle.

### **Scripture**

Let's look at what else the Bible has to say.

Turn to **I Corinthians 9:24-27**. Have someone read it aloud.

Let's talk about what we just read:

1. What do you have to do in order to be a good runner? Or good at anything?
2. How do you think this might be talking about self-control as a whole?

Be sure and point out: Self-control – or any of the fruit of the spirit isn't something that happens overnight. Living "at our best" is something that takes practice. Sometimes we'll do it really well and other times we will fail at it. But it's like learning a sport or a musical instrument or anything – we don't get good at it unless we work at it.

Ask campers: *Why is self-control so important?*

*What does it have to do with being faithful and/or gentle?*

Here you're looking to help them make the connection that it's really hard to be faithful or gentle with others if we can't control ourselves. If they are up for it – talk about what it might look like to have self-control in faithfulness...or what might it look like to have self-control so you can be gentle with people.

Examples:

- Self-control in faithfulness might look like reading out of your Bible at least three times a week, or being a part of youth group on a regular basis, or praying before you go to sleep each night.
- Self-control for gentleness might look like not saying hurtful words to a sibling when mad, or learning to stand up against/not gossip so others won't get hurt, or learning to take responsibility for your actions instead of getting mad at/blaming others or doing what you're asked to do the first time so parents/teachers/leaders don't have to get on you and you in turn get mad.

Ask campers: *"In what ways is this statement true, or not? 'How I act/react greatly impacts how people interact with me.'"*

This is a conversation all about community and what it means to live in community together. Because the reality is that this statement is VERY true...whether they want to admit it or not. If they are struggling to see it – ask about interactions with teachers, coaches, etc. How do they interact with them? How do they interact differently than with parents? How do they interact with friends? How is this different than their interactions with siblings? Drawing some of these parallel relationships might also help them see. (for instance take a piece of paper and draw a line down the middle on one side have campers draw or list what their relationship is like with friends. On the other side of the line have them draw/list what their relationship with a younger sibling is like.

Say to campers: *Let's make a list to help us see what it could look like to have self-control and be faithful and gentle. (Take out a piece of paper and ask someone to be the scribe...not you!) Let's list all the benefits to being someone who is faithful, gentle and has self-control. Let's see how many things we can come up with in 3 min. Ready set, go!*

If they need help getting started you can ask questions like:

1. If you are a faithful friend, what might you get in return? (a great friend faithful to you)
2. What if you faithfully follow God? What could a benefit be? (knowing God more, being a servant to others, having God work through me to cheer others up, or bring joy to them)
3. What do you like about someone being gentle with you?

You could also have the group then list the benefits of being part of a community where people are trying to cultivate the fruit of the spirit. Then think about if that's the kind of people they spend their time with – why or why not?

### **On Our Way...Blessing Each Other**

Say to campers: *One of the greatest gifts we have is the gift of community. We are not made to journey life alone. So when we surround ourselves with others who can help us grow in the fruit of the Spirit it's even better. One thing community does with and for each other is bless each other. So to close our time today we are going to bless and remind ourselves that God is with us and finds delight in us in the form of a blessing. Depending on your group you can do this one of two ways:*

1. You as the leader will bless each person in the group...have one person at a time stand in the middle of the group and have everyone lay a hand gently on them while you say the blessing.
2. MORE ADVANCED GROUPS: Each member in the group blesses another member of the group – including you...have one person at a time stand in the middle of the group and have everyone lay a hand gently on them while a different person each time reads the blessing.

**BLESSING CARD reads:** (      NAME       may you know that you are deeply loved and valued by God. May you feel God's all-encompassing embrace, knowing that nothing will ever separate you from his love. Amen.

## Additional Study Ideas

1. Don't Bite It
  - a. Grab some kind of food – cookies, candy bars, gum –anything kids like will work. At some point, give every camper one piece of food. Tell them not to eat it.
  - b. Go on with the Bible study time. At some point tell students they can put the food in their mouth, but they can't bite or chew it. It has to just stay on their tongue.
  - c. See who can hold this for the longest. It is a lot harder for some than for others. You can then talk a bit about self- control and how hard it is at times to have self-control. You might want to brainstorm some other situations your campers can think of – times when it would be hard to have self-control.
2. Fruit Basket Upset
  - a. Each seated camper will silently choose one Fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness or self-control) without telling anyone else which fruit they have chosen. (if you're doing this with just your cabin, you could limit the fruits to choose from to the ones you're looking at today).
  - b. One camper stands in the middle of the circle and will call out one Fruit of the Spirit, such as "kindness".
  - c. The seated campers who chose "kindness" will then get up from their seats and move across the circle to any open seat left by another camper.
  - d. Meanwhile, the camper who called out "kindness" will also try to find an empty seat and sit down.
  - e. Most likely a new camper will be leftover to call out the next Fruit of the Spirit of their choosing and the game continues. What ties this game to its title is the camper standing in middle of the circle always has the option to call out "fruit basket upset", which means every seated camper no matter their chosen fruit will have to get up from their seat to find a new one. This can become a bit chaotic, but you are bound to hear some laughter, too. This game will not end with one winner, but there will be a camper in the middle of the circle when you decide the game is finished.
3. Fruit of the Spirit Stones
  - a. If your group is highly visual or needs to move around, or as older groups are into symbolism...take your group for a walk with the idea of each camper finding 9 stones big enough to write on. After everyone has 9 stones take sharpie markers and put one of the fruit characteristics on each stone (ie love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control). As you all write talk about how the fruit of the spirit characteristics could really be seen as things we need to build into/cultivate in our lives.
  - b. When everyone has their set done, have them choose the stone/characteristic they most need to cultivate and hold that stone. You could go around the circle and have each person explain why they chose the characteristic they did. Each person can then take their set of stones home.
  - c. Another option would be to have each person pick up just one or two stones and have them write down the 1-2 characteristics they most want to cultivate in their lives. Have each person share which ones they chose and why. Then pray for each other and commit to working on these. Send the rocks home with campers as a way to remember what they've committed to working on.

For a more advanced group:

4. The Fruit I See in You
  - a. Have your group stand in a circle with one member in the middle.
  - b. One by one have the group say to the one in the middle: " The fruit of the Spirit I see in you is \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_."

- c. The person in the middle they should face whoever is talking about them at the moment.
  - d. After everyone has had a chance to affirm the person in the middle pray for that person and then switch in a new person.
  - e. Do this until everyone including you has been in the middle and been affirmed and prayed for.
5. Take a look at 1 Peter 3:13-16
- a. Do Lectio Divina with your group, this is an ancient practice involving letting scripture speak to you. It empowers people and helps them realize that the Spirit speaks to us all – not just counselors or leaders or pastor or youth directors. But the Spirit speaks to them as well.
  - b. Here’s how it works:
    - i. Make sure each person in the group has something to write with and write on.
    - ii. Tell your group you are going to read a passage from scripture. They are to listen. Notice what jumps out at them – what words or phrases catch their interest.
    - iii. After you have read through the passage there will be a time of silence for people to think about what they just heard and to write down what caught their attention, if they had any questions, write those down too.
    - iv. Then you will read the scripture again and they will listen again. In the silence that follows they can write down anything else that caught their attention/came to mind. Ask if there are any questions now.
  - c. After everyone is ready – do exactly what you said you would. Read the text, leave some silence (like at least a minute or two – it’s ok if no one is writing, let them think about, swirl around their hearts and heads). Then read the text again and again the minute or two of silence.
  - d. Next have group members share what caught their attention, what did they hear? What questions or thoughts did they have? You don’t have to be able to answer questions, but you can mull them over as a group. Be prepared for some profound thoughts and ideas!
6. Follow Me Follow You
- a. Form pairs and have partners stand face to face. Decide which partner will lead first. Say: for the next 60 seconds, you’re to remain silent and become a human mirror doing exactly what your partner does. Ready? Go! After 60 seconds switch and have the other partner lead.
  - b. When you’re done, ask the following questions:
    - i. What was it like to be the follower?
    - ii. What was it like to be the leader?
    - iii. When you think of your life, are you a leader or a follower? How do you know?
    - iv. Think of the people in your life you follow/hang out with – are they people who help cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in you? If not – what do they cultivate in you? Is this good or bad?
7. At My Best
- a. Ask each person when are they at their best? What are they doing? How do they feel?
  - b. After everyone’s had a chance to share, talk about how much time they spend in that place? What keeps them from being there? What makes it hard to stay in the “sweet spot”?

## **Ideas to Incorporate Theme Throughout The Day**

- 1. All for One and One for All – (3 Musketeers/Castle/Medieval Theme)
  - a. The day is all about doing things together and being at our best for all
  - b. Could have a king and queen for the day who preside over things
  - c. Jesters could be the ones who do prayers – they have to wear a jester hat or costume
  - d. At one meal everyone at a given table’s hands would be tied together to the people on either side of you so everyone has to work together to eat

- e. Morning Worship could have knights and ladies leading
  - i. Invocation could be three people with an all for one and one for all kind of thing
  - ii. Speak as knights and ladies using ye and shalls, etc
2. All Camp could be a Renaissance Fair type thing with team games to play different games at different stations – period style games (looked online for medieval games <http://jducoeur.org/game-hist/game-rules.html#active>)
  - i. Jousting – could be the logs with the tug of war rope
  - ii. Three legged races
  - iii. Bobbing for fruit
  - iv. Blind Man’s Bluff
  - v. Hopscotch
  - vi. Shovelboard (kind of like shuffleboard but played on tables)
  - vii. Skittles – kind of like bowling
- b. Evening Worship could still be in the knight and lady kind of theme – the end of the day using period language...all candle light/firelight – no flashlights allowed
- c. Meals could be foods common in that era – Gruel (oatmeal), bread, game (chicken legs and wings), cheese, butter, honey, some fruits and vegetables like carrots, potatoes
- d. Meals could also be eaten in the manner of those days usually with only a spoon and a knife to be shared. A bowl or trencher (plate) could also be used.
3. The Amazing Race Day
  - a. All day long is a “race” – teams wear a certain color to identify them (red, blue, yellow, etc) by a piece of fabric or a stripe of paint, etc. Each part of the day has a “great race activity” to complete?
  - b. All Camp – Amazing Race – based off the Amazing Race on TV – each team is given a clue to where they have to go and what they have to do once there. Once the event is complete, to the satisfaction of a “judge” they are given a clue to the next place they have to go and thing they have to do. Be creative with the tasks to do. Pinterest is a GREAT supplier of awesome ideas...but some suggestions might be:
    - i. Whole team has to cross the creek barefoot in a minute or less
    - ii. Team has to play a round of Gaga ball until only one person is left
    - iii. Get the whole team on top of the bus and take a picture in 2 min or less
    - iv. Whole team has to crawl the length of the field together
    - v. Tie entire team’s legs together, then “3 legged” run to the other side of field
    - vi. Do an element on the low ropes successfully as a team
    - vii. Build a marshmallow launcher and shoot marshmallows into a bucket on top of your teammates head...you must get 10 marshmallows in the bucket before you can move on
    - viii. Detour ideas:
      1. Dress in a ridiculous costume and run 3 laps around the Great IAM
      2. Build a scooter and ride 1 lap around the open space
      3. cook eggs for the whole team over an open fire and then you have to eat them all
      4. Learn Jesus loves me in Spanish well enough to sing it out loud – then sing it or learn how to sign it using American Sign Language
      5. Nature Scavenger hunt (list of things they have to find like a pinecone, something fuzzy, something smooth, etc)
  - c. Meals - could be from different countries or a meal could be part of the race
  - d. Worship – morning could be the start of the race, evening the “finish line” or champion’s circle – emphasizing doing life together.

# Other Songs, Stories, Thoughts, Questions, and Suggestions

## RTLCL Songs

#16 Romans 16:19	#53 You Are the Light of the	#74 Every Move I Make
#24 I'll Do My Best	Word	#78 Lions
#37 Sanctuary	#54 Step By Step	#99 Psalm 121
#50 Light the Fire	#62 Ancient of Days (if using the Medieval theme)	

## Other Songs

1. *Lord I Need You* – Matt Maher <http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=1836138>
2. *Lay Me Down* – Rush of Fools <http://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/songdetail.aspx?iid=1903523>

## Additional Scriptures

1. Proverbs 25:28 - *A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls.*
2. Proverbs 15:1 - *A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.*
3. Proverbs 15:4 - *Gentle words are a tree of life; a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.*
4. Ephesians 4:2-3 - *Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. <sup>3</sup> Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.*
5. Colossians 3:12-15 - *Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. <sup>13</sup> Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. <sup>14</sup> Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace.*

## Ideas To Adjust Study Down For Juniors

With Juniors because they don't sit still as long and attention spans are shorter I might suggest an order that looks something like this following the headlines from above:

1. Fruit Basket Upset game
2. Review
3. Intro new fruit characteristics
4. First – you might use the following for definitions at the end of that section:
  - a. faithfulness – always being there
  - b. gentleness – speaking/acting/living in a polite, kind manner
  - c. self-control – being able to control own behavior
5. Bible Story/Telling the Story - I'd use one of the options either act it out, you tell it or sounds and actions (*with sounds and actions being my personal favorite*☺)
6. Break It Up
7. Ask your campers – skip the first question and go straight to “next ask and after everyone has shared”...you might want to skip over the question about what part of their life do they have trouble controlling – or just know that the answers might not be as “heavy” as older groups. You might need to prompt this age more.
8. Fruit of the Spirit Stones - While you are picking/making stones you can talk about why it would be good to be faithful, gentle and have self-control in their lives.
9. Blessing

## Ideas To Adjust Study Up For Senior Highs

I would really strongly suggest you use the “The Fruit I See in You” and do the Lectio Divina with the I Peter text. You'll be amazed at what they hear and what they glean out of doing scripture “study” this way.

# **Parent Devotional**

**Scripture** I Corinthians 9:24-27

*Do you not know that in a race the runners all compete, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win it. <sup>25</sup> Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable one.*

## **Reflection**

Today we are looking at the final three characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit: faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. While all three are important we are focusing on mostly on self-control – something campers at this age have a hard time with. Also – faithfulness and gentleness can really only happen with we have some control over ourselves. So, today – how are you doing with self-control?

As we've learned through the week the first set of characteristics are all about shalom for all. The second set is all about looking out for all and this third set is all about being at my best for all. Meaning putting my best self forward knowing that how I act and react with others impacts greatly how others act and react with me. We're discovering that life in community is better when we are all working towards being our best selves for each other as well. And while this is counterintuitive living, in God's economy, even when we live for others, we get blessed ourselves!

It's a hard lesson, but the underlying grace that is there for all of us, reminds us that even when we fail and we will God's is always faithful to us, his love is gentle and his ultimate control will someday make all things right. And right now – God holds us, walks with us and gives us strength to be people who cultivate faithfulness to the one who is faithful, gentleness with the one whose gentle arms cradle us and self-control for the sake of sharing love with all.

## **Family Activity**

Let each person in the family pick which one of these three they would most like to cultivate in themselves. Brainstorm with that person then ways they could cultivate that characteristic in their life. Let them choose how they want to move forward, but help keep each other accountable for what you've chosen. After each person has picked their characteristic and has some ideas for how to grow this in themselves, then as a family pray for strength and commitment to the journey.

In the days and weeks ahead – when you see each other living out those characteristics, when you see them growing- make note of them, point them out, celebrate them with each other!

## **Closing Prayer**

Gracious God, your love for us is so deep and unending and your desire for us to live lives filled with all kinds of good things is so great that you tell us outright what you long for in our lives and for that we thank you. As we seek to live more and more into being the people you love for us to be, give us ample opportunities, courage to step into them and grace when we slip and fall. Thanks for being a God who goes with us in in all. In your name we pray, AMEN.



**“Fruit Of The Spirit”**  
**2015 RTLCL Bible Study- Day 5**  
**Living Fruit-fully Wherever I Go**

## **Introduction To The Theme**

For some kids, going home and back into their ordinary lives is a hard transition to make...from the safety of this lovingly, lush place back to the reality of their lives and the world. Rainbow Trail, for some kids, is like the rain forest where there is plenty of nourishment to grow, feel safe and be bold in branching out; trying new ways to express faith. Not every kid will feel this way about Rainbow Trail; sometimes youth experience camp differently. What felt safe to one, might feel threatening to another. But one reality stands sure...this week has been enlightening for all of them in terms of understanding that the Spirit lives in them and the fruit of the Spirit are given to all equally.

The unfortunate reality is that not every youth will be eager to go home. Not every youth will enter a safe, loving place when they return to their everyday life. Many will...but many will not. For those that will, we rejoice and encourage them to continue living faithfully and fruit-fully at home, at church and in their circle of friends. For those that won't, we need to encourage them to understand that drawing on the Spirit's power will help them stand strong in the midst of some wilderness experiences. We also need to encourage them to recognize the places down the mountain where they can feel safe, secure, bold and fruit-full. Home, church, school and within their circle of friends can be those places. Sometimes just enlightening them about the fruits of the Spirit is enough. Sometimes, however, we need to encourage them to look for those Spirit-given gifts in the people around them.

They have heard the story of the Spirit's power and how that Spirit blessed them in the waters of their baptism with a possibility to develop a Christ-like character that manifests itself in “fruit of the Spirit.” They have come to understand from previous days' studies that everyone of them, baptized or not, have within them the seeds of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The question to address now is: “How can I continue to mature into the characteristics of the “fruits” even as I enter the real world and the wilderness places of my life?”

We go back to the beginning as a way of re-iterating the power of the Holy Spirit. We go back to the Jordan River. Our week began in the waters of Baptism, Jesus' Baptism to be exact. On that day at the Jordan River, crusty ol' John the Baptist dunked his followers into the flow of the river and declared them forgiven. John's strong hands baptized them with a Baptism of repentance to wash away their sin. It was probably during one of those intense water moments that John looked up and saw a man approaching who was familiar to him yet felt an energy about him that was different; almost regal. In an instant John recognized Jesus and humbly acknowledged him as “the Lamb of God”...the one who would be sacrificed for the sins of the world.

John knew his position in relationship to Jesus. Jesus came to baptize with the Holy Spirit...John just did the water routine. Ironically, even though Jesus was the perfect Son of God, Jesus asked to be baptized by John. John hesitated knowing that he was not even worthy to untie the strap of Jesus' sandal. But Jesus insisted so he honored Jesus' request by using his own strong hands to dunk Jesus' in the muddy waters of the Jordan River.

The moment Jesus was heaved out of the water the expansive sky parted and the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus. It was the power of God being poured out on Jesus. Immediately after that occurred Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit.

It was a remarkable contrast between the glory following Jesus' baptism and the challenge to be tempted by the devil. Our young people live in a world of contrasts, too, least of which is their time at Rainbow Trail compared to many of their lives in the real world. For Example:

1. Then the cool waters of the Jordan; now the barren wilderness.  
Then the comfort of Rainbow Trail; now the reality of life at home.
2. Then the huge crowds; now solitude and silence.  
Then a bunch of young people who mostly believe the same way. Now the world where we are sometimes made fun of for what we believe.
3. Then the Spirit rests like a dove; now the Spirit drives Him into the wilderness.  
Then feelings of comfort and peace. Now the chaos of life and the distractions of the electronic world; the news blaring stories of hatred and death.
4. Then the voice of the Father calling Him "Beloved Son"; now the hiss of Satan the tempter.  
Then the affirmation of cabin mates and counselors. Now the cut-downs, bullying and negative remarks of others who think they are better than them.
5. Then anointed; now attacked. Then blessed; now tempted. First the heavens opened; now hell.  
Then sunrises, sunsets, singing and peace. Now, early mornings and evenings when they wonder who they are and where they belong.

In a way, their going home and some events they may encounter will challenge and test them. They may even live through "wilderness like" experiences. Having said that, it is important to understand the concept of wilderness in ancient thought. In both the Old and New Testaments, the Greek noun (*Eremia*) is sometimes translated 'desert' and, just as often, translated as 'wilderness'. Neither 'desert', nor 'wilderness' is to be seen as an empty waste of burning-hot sand, like the Sahara, and similar places. Instead, the noun, and the adjective, relate to largely uninhabited areas, well outside of towns and villages.

Jesus often went off by himself to be alone. Sometimes we need that, too, and such a wilderness is a blessing. But, there are days when our youth experience the wilderness in the ancient sense of the word...a lonely place that can be desolate and suffocating. Many of the Bible images of spiritual struggle and progress, take that physical place, the 'wilderness', and set the human life ... the human soul ... within it. Bible Stories about people in the 'wilderness', almost always show that they were there for a particular time, and for a constructive purpose.

It may not seem to our youth that their "testing" will benefit them in any way. The "testing" may, to them, just be a hardship. The key to sending them down the mountain will be to help them understand that "testing" will come..."testing" that may possibly cause them to lean into the opposites of the fruit of the Spirit they have learned about at camp. They may revert to living into their own power rather than the power of the Spirit of Christ. Instead of being patient, they will lose their temper. Instead of being kind, they will lash out in hatred. Even if they fail, we must encourage them to at least try to mature their faith by living the fruit of the Spirit.

Take some time today to look back at the three studies (Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) and re-iterate to them those nine powerful traits. For your information, day two of this summer's study focused on love, joy and peace...a collective Shalom for all. Day three highlighted patience, kindness and goodness; outward offerings of love for all people. And finally, yesterday, day four looked at faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Those three fruits, when lived fully in our kid's lives will help them be the best they can be for others. And, by the time they leave here tomorrow we hope they will understand that these powerful traits will best flourish in good soil, places where others share their desire to bless others and the God who created them.

Three stories will form the basis of this study: 1) the story of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness from Luke and Matthew, 2) the story of the Vine and the Branches and, 3) the Parable of the Farmer scattering seed. The temptation story will emphasize the difficulty of living well and fostering the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit in one's life. The Vine and the Branches will support the idea that we must stay intimately connected to God, our power source, if we are to manage living faithfully and fruit-fully in our world. And, the scattering of seeds on different kinds of soil will emphasize that fruit-full living requires an environment and a support system that encourages shalom, love and a desire to be the best that God has created them to be. In the third story, the farmer sows seed on several types of soil; seed on good soil verses seed sown on rocky soil. The hope is that the campers will come to understand and accept that it is easier to mature the "fruit" of the Spirit and pollinate "seed" when they are surrounded by elements/people/places that are conducive to holy living.

## **Objectives For Today**

The purpose of this day is to help the campers:

1. intensify their realization that they possess the fruit of the Spirit and the characteristics that grow from it.
2. understand that what they possess Jesus possessed first by virtue of the Spirit of Christ.
3. discover places in their lives where they can feel safe to mature those fruits
4. understand that, while camp seems like an oasis from the world and fruits are easy to live into here, those same places of fruitfulness and safety exist in their world, i.e. church, home, within the circles of family and friends.
5. increase their knowledge about the "wilderness places" in their lives and the purpose they may serve.
6. affirm their characteristics given as fruit of the Spirit and help them see the importance of living into them where ever they go and live...not for their own good and glory, but for the sake of those their lives impact.
7. gain tools for living into the fruit of the Spirit, i.e. habitual prayer, worship, conversations with important people who live the same as they do and help them understand that the community of faith is where their Spirit-given gifts can be solidified and deepened.

# Morning Watch

## Welcome (Someone reads)

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven! (Ecclesiastes 3:1)  
Welcome to this time reflection and preparation for heading “down the mountain.”*

## Scripture Galatians 6:7b-10

*You will always harvest what you plant. Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. **But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let’s not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t give up.** Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.*

## Song *What Faith Can Do* Kutlass

Everybody falls sometimes  
Gotta find the strength to rise  
From the ashes And make a new beginning

Anyone can feel the ache  
You think it's more than you can take you're stronger  
Stronger than you know

Don't you give up now The sun will soon be shining  
You gotta face the clouds To find the silver lining

I've seen dreams that move the mountains  
Hope that doesn't ever end  
Even when the sky is falling  
I've seen miracles just happen  
Silent prayers get answered  
Broken hearts become brand new  
That's what faith can do

It doesn't matter what you've heard  
Impossible is not a word  
It's just a reason  
For someone not to try

Everybody's scared to death  
When they decide to take that step  
Out on the water  
It'll be alright

Life is so much more  
Than what your eyes are seeing  
You will find your way  
If you keep believing

I've seen dreams that move the mountains  
Hope that doesn't ever end  
Even when the sky is falling  
I've seen miracles just happen  
Silent prayers get answered  
Broken hearts become brand new  
That's what faith can do

Overcome the odds  
You don't have a chance (That's what faith can do)  
When the world says you can't  
It'll tell you that you can

I've seen dreams that move the mountains  
Hope that doesn't ever end  
Even when the sky is falling  
And I've seen miracles just happen  
Silent prayers get answered  
Broken hearts become brand new  
That's what faith can do  
That's what faith can do  
Even if you fall sometimes  
You will have the strength to rise

## Questions

1. Who can I lean on at home or at church that will help me stay strong?
2. Who can I help stay strong when their faith is faltering and the fruit of the Spirit are absent from their lives?
3. How will I deepen the fruit of the Spirit I possess?

## Prayer

Dear God, help me to believe in your love and trust that you are always with me. As I go home tomorrow, keep me strong. Give me courage to live the fruit of the Spirit every day of my life and not be afraid of what others might think or say. Make me a blessing to all people. This I pray by the power of the Holy Spirit and in Jesus name. Amen.

## Scripture Study

**Luke 4:1-13 The Temptation of Jesus** *4 Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River. He was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, 2 where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus ate nothing all that time and became very hungry. 3 Then the devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become a loaf of bread. 4 But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone.'" 5 Then the devil took him up and revealed to him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 "I will give you the glory of these kingdoms and authority over them," the devil said, "because they are mine to give to anyone I please. 7 I will give it all to you if you will worship me." 8 Jesus replied, "The Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'" 9 Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! 10 For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect and guard you. 11 And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'" 12 Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'" 13 When the devil had finished tempting Jesus, he left him until the next opportunity came.*

Jesus has just been baptized by John in the Jordan River where he also received the anointing by the Holy Spirit for his special work and ministry. He is rarin' to go except there is one problem. God must feel a need to do some prep work with Jesus before he is sent out into the regions to heal the sick and bless the oppressed. Jesus, "full of the Holy Spirit" is led out into the wilderness for some testy temptations by the devil.

### **Read Luke 4:1-13 with your campers**

The event at the Jordan was profoundly significant. Now Jesus is "led" by the Spirit into the desert. Mark's Gospel uses much stronger language: "The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness" (Mark 1:12). The verb in Mark is *ekballo*, "to cast out, to drive out." According to Mark this leading wasn't a gentle one, but perhaps almost a compulsion.

In Luke the Greek verb "led" is *ago*. Figuratively, it is the working of the Spirit on humankind. In the passive tense it means to "allow oneself to be led." Interestingly, the imperfect tense of the verb suggests that Jesus was led continuously by the Spirit during these 40 days. In other words, the text indicates that the Spirit didn't just send Jesus off into the desert and deposit him there to struggle with the devil and fend for himself. Rather, the Spirit spent the entire 40 days with Jesus.

You've got to wonder why it had to be the desert. Perhaps God thought that Jesus wasn't ready to enter into his public ministry, so the desolate wilderness of the Jordan plain north of the Dead Sea, and the arid Judean hills west of the Dead Sea were places he could be alone. I'm guessing he did a lot of praying. And looking at the nature of his temptations, the shape and meaning of his ministry and role as Messiah were determined here.

Let's talk about what we just read (Verses 1-2):

1. Why the desert? Do you have any idea why the Spirit might have led him to the desert?
2. Do you think the Spirit left him all alone the whole time he was out there?
3. What dangers lurk in the desert?
4. Have you ever felt like you were preparing for something important?
5. What were you preparing for? i.e. big soccer game, gymnastics meet, odyssey of the mind?
6. Did it wear you out? Did it scare you?
7. Did you find yourself wondering when it would finally be over?
8. How long was Jesus in the desert?
9. And...does the Bible say he ate and drank well.
10. What happens to your body when you don't eat or drink for a long time?

Perhaps Jesus was fasting on purpose or maybe there must wasn't any food out in the desert; no water for sure. In any case, fasting allows one to focus on the spiritual realm more intently. After the first few days, the hunger pangs subside because the body's metabolism changes. Fasting can produce clarity of mind and spirit. 40 days was a long time to be hungry and thirsty and a long time to be tempted.

The devil obviously tempted him where the devil thought he was weakest. That is, in his belly. The first temptation seems pretty simple. Jesus has been fasting for 40 days and Satan offers him a quick way to feed his hunger, to turn the rounded bread-shaped stones scattered on the desert floor into actual loaves of bread. The other alternative is for Jesus to hike 20 miles to the nearest town for food to break his fast. The devil's suggestion is instant, within Jesus' power, and he IS now very hungry. There comes a point in fasting where the hunger pangs return, and if you don't eat then, starvation and death take hold quickly. But there's another subtle temptation here, as well. The devil slyly begins, "If you are the Son of God..." He's basically saying to Jesus, "You may not be the Son of God at all. Prove it to me by doing this minor miracle." When we're new at any role we feel insecure. And when someone taunts us and doubts our role we're very tempted to SHOW THEM, to prove it.

Let's talk about what we just read (Verses 3-8):

1. What does the devil try to get Jesus to do?
2. In what ways have you been tempted to prove something because someone was taunting you?
3. How have you been tempted to live opposite the fruit of the Spirit?

The second temptation is about authority and worldly glory. The devil leads Jesus up to a high place and shows him the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. It sounds like a vision. Instantly, Jesus can see each of the kingdoms of his day: Herod's petty domain closest to him, then Rome's towering buildings and Caesar's court, and all the other empires on the Russian steppes, the Indian subcontinent, and ancient China. Jesus could see it all. Satan claims both ownership of and the power to bestow political power and material wealth and splendor. It's interesting that Jesus doesn't question it. Satan isn't able to draw him into an argument that God alone is sovereign and Satan's power is usurped from its rightful owner -- though Jesus' answer hints at this.

Part of the lie in this story is that Satan alone controls power and material rewards, and that the only way to reach them is the devil's way. But this IS a lie. The other way is to trust God and serve God in good times and bad, relying on God to elevate you; to lift you up if that is God's will.

Let's talk about what we just read (Verses 3-8):

1. The devil is claiming something here that he has no right to claim. What do you think it is?
2. When you are tempted at home...or in school...or with your friends (AND, you will be tempted) to live contrary to God's way and take short cuts even to succeed, what will your choices be?
3. Where will the power come from to stay true to yourself and the fruit of the Spirit that live in you?

The third temptation is when the devil "The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple" quoting Sacred Scripture to Jesus from Psalm 91:11-12. What Satan is implying is that if Jesus were to jump off the temple to the pavement far below, he wouldn't be injured -- angels would catch him, a kind of celestial bungee jump. The effect on observers in the temple, however, would be startling, the ultimate PR stunt. The visible miracle of one walked away from mortal injury. Jesus would be instantly famous, and perhaps would be acclaimed Messiah on the spot. This third temptation must be for popularity and public recognition.

Let's talk about what we just read (Verses 9-13):

1. Have you ever had dreams of fame? Of being a professional athlete or even a movie star?
2. Would you cut corners to get there? Would popularity be more important to you than being faithful to God?
3. What about your faith would you sacrifice to be well-liked at school; to be admired by your friends?
4. Have you ever bargained with God? What was that about?

Jesus answered the devil with the devil's own strategy, with words from Deuteronomy 6:16: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." In other words, do not take some action that forces God's hand; that seeks to manipulate God to do what God would otherwise not do. The passage Jesus was quoting referred to the Israelites' forcing God to act when they were thirsty at Massah in the wilderness. They had tested God by saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" If so, then prove it to us by giving us water.

Some random questions:

1. Is temptation or suffering necessary to our growth as disciples?
2. When have you suffered for the sake of the Gospel?
3. When you get pushed beyond your limits, do you lose faith?

Suggest to campers:

When you head down the mountain, you may be tempted, too, to denounce/reject all the beautiful things you know about your life in Jesus and the Spirit's gift of fruit...those wonderful traits that were born in you in the waters of your Baptism...love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control. Temptations to abdicate/abandon Jesus come pretty frequently in our lives. If we are honest with each other, we are tempted all the time.

Ask your campers: *How can we stay strong? How can we remain faithful and fruit-filled even when we are not surrounded by others who think and believe almost exactly like we do?*

## Here's How + Bible Study/Story Part 2

**John 15:4-8 Jesus is the True Vine and We Are the Branches** *4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. 5 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. 7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.*

We have already discussed the difficulty of leaving Rainbow Trail and heading back down the mountain. While not all of the places we spend our time will tempt us to live differently than at camp, some will. And yes, we will be tempted to ignore, even surrender those thriving characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit that live within us. We may surrender them to selfish and worldly desires. How do we remain strong? By staying connected to the flow of the source of power. Staying connected to Christ. Let's look at this text in detail after which we'll move on to one more story; the story of the Farmer Who Scatters Seed.

In John 15, Jesus and his disciples had just finished their gathering in the upper room in Jerusalem where they celebrated the Passover. They were making their way to the Garden of Gethsemane situated on the western slope of the Mt. of Olives. I'm guessing the disciples were anxious and a bit confused about what loomed ahead of them. In John 14:1 Jesus speaks to their anxiety and fear: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me." I'm supposing that the discourse in

chapters 15-17 was Jesus' calculated attempt to calm, instruct, and strengthen these courageous, though sometimes sheepish men. Had I been one of them I would have needed some critical prep for the ordeal that would take place in the 24 hours that would follow.

Jesus uses a literary format called an allegory or expanded metaphor. A metaphor is a figure of speech where a comparison is made between two objects for the purpose of illustration. There are actually four characters in Jesus' illustration in this text. 1. There is a tiller of the ground, a vinedresser. He does everything within his power to see that the plant bears fruit. If it does not, the fault is not his. Jesus identifies the tiller as his Father. 2. There also is the "vine." The vine is the source of life for the branches. It provides the water and nutrients by which the fruit is produced. Without the vine, no fruit could ever result. Branches are utterly dependent upon the vine. Without Christ, of course, there is no spiritual life or hope. Jesus identifies himself as the "true" vine. The Greek term denotes that which is genuine in contrast to that which is counterfeit or pretentious. 3. The "branches" are identified explicitly as the Lord's "disciples" (v. 8). 4. There is that ambiguous "they" to which reference is made in verse 6. Maybe these are responsible for gathering the withered/pruned branches, and committing them to fire for burning. Maybe "they" correspond to the reapers mentioned in the parable of the tares in Matthew 13.

Jesus in this text, emphasized the necessity of "abiding" Greek...*meno* (i.e., remaining) joined to him. Seven times in this text there is this stressed urgency of "remaining" with the vine (Christ). The verb *meno* (118 times in the NT; 67 times in John's writings) carries the idea of sustaining a union with, continuing with, being steadfast, or enduring.

For those who abide in the Lord, there is the promise that they may "ask" God for those things necessary for their personal spiritual development. It is clear that God will respond to our prayers. This promise, of course, is not without limitation. But then there are some verbal warnings. I almost didn't include this because I don't want to scare our campers. However, the text is very clear... "Every branch that does not bear fruit is to be "taken away" (v. 2).

It is important to note that six times in this text Jesus uses the expression "in me." If we are in union with Christ we will be productive in fostering the growth and depth of the fruit of the Spirit, those characteristics that live within us. If we do not stay connected, our heart and soul will wither and die.

### **Read John 15:4-8**

Let's talk about what we just read:

1. What does it mean to abide in Christ?
2. What happens when we don't?
3. What's the importance of staying connected to Jesus?
4. What happens to a vine when it cuts itself off from the food source, the branch?
5. Where can our connection to Christ be strengthened?
6. What happens to the fruit if it falls from the vine before it is ripened?

### **Now, About The Environment Where Fruit Flourishes + Bible Study/Story Part 3**

Not only is it important to stay connected to Jesus, it is also important to encourage our campers to find places in their everyday lives that will bless and affirm the characteristics they possess by virtue of the gift of the fruit of the Spirit. They navigate many venues: school, home, time with friends, time with other athletes, band members, club participants and the church. Our task is to help them understand that in all those places, good soil is possible and the development of the fruit of the Spirit very real. Their job is to find and live into the most positive "good soil" possible so that their life in Christ will

be deeply and richly blessed. So, let's look at one more Bible Story that will emphasize the importance of good soil that helps the characteristics they possess, grow. Please remind them that they possess no less a measure of them than Jesus did.

Here's Where + The Characteristics of Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control Will Flourish

**Read Matthew 13:3b- 23 New Living Translation (NLT)** *"Listen! A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup>And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. <sup>5</sup>Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. <sup>6</sup>But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup>Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup>Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup>Let anyone with ears listen!" <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" <sup>11</sup>He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup>For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. <sup>13</sup>The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.' <sup>14</sup>With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says: 'You will indeed listen, but never understand, and you will indeed look, but never perceive. <sup>15</sup>For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn—and I would heal them.' <sup>16</sup>But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. <sup>17</sup>Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it. <sup>18</sup>"Hear then the parable of the sower. <sup>19</sup>When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. <sup>20</sup>As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; <sup>21</sup>yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. <sup>22</sup>As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. <sup>23</sup>But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."*

I love what Karoline Lewis at Working Preacher suggests: It's not about how much fruit is produced. It's about the way in which God's Word has taken hold in you. This is not a competition about who hears God's Word better. It's about what the hearing creates in you, how the hearing encourages you to live.

Indeed, this is not about how many attributes/characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit you can deepen and mature. Instead it is about how deeply and solidly God's Word has taken a hold of your heart and life. If God's Word has really touched you, then I suspect that you will find places to foster growth and deepen your life in Christ. Our prayer is that our campers want very badly to be filled by the Spirit, connected to Jesus and planted firmly in good soil. Unpack this last story of Scripture with them and help them know that in all facets of their life, blessed fruit means living and thriving. They simply need to listen for and open their eyes to the affirmative Word of God.

In this parable, as in most parables, Jesus uses allegories that the people can relate to. Here Jesus speaks according to the agricultural customs of His day. In those days, seed was scattered first, then it was plowed into the ground. In this parable, the seed falls on four different types of soil.

1. The wayside was the path where people walked and nothing could grow because the ground was too hard.
2. Stony places refers to a place where the soil was thin, lying upon a rocky shelf. On this ground the seed springs up quickly because of the warmth of the soil, but the seed is unable to take root because of the rocky shelf.
3. Among thorns describes soil that is fertile - perhaps too fertile, because thorns grow there as well as grain.

4. Good ground describes soil that is both fertile and weed-free. A good, productive crop grows in the good ground.

Notice that the difference in each category was with the soil itself. The same seed was cast by the same sower. You could not blame the differences in results on the sower or the seed, but only the soil.

Please help our campers understand that it is “good ground/soil” where they will continue to live, grow and flourish as they have at camp. They have a choice. They can be more connected to the world or to good soil. Not all of their interactions with the world are negative. But they are more likely to fall away from Jesus in their connection with the world than with others who believe and love as they do.

Let’s talk about what we just read:

1. Where is the “good soil” in your life?
2. Who wants you to grow in your faith and develop the characteristics/attributes of the fruit of the Spirit?
3. Name those friends and family members who really care about your faith life and honor it.
4. And whose faith life are you blessing with your own good words of affirmation and love?

### A Related Story About Soil

A soil expert named Sophie Parker says the secret to growing the juiciest veggies and fruit is in the soil. Plants are completely dependent on the soils in which they grow. They absorb their water and nutrients from the soil, and a healthy, moist, nutrient-rich soil will allow for the growth of much more disease- and pest-resistant plants that’ll produce luscious fruits and vegetables.

Good soil means food fruit. If one’s heart is fertile...open to growth...rich fruit will come from it. If your heart is a place of welcome, attributes of the Spirit will abound.

Help campers to understand that their loving attitude, their peaceful disposition, the joyful manner and the other six attributes of the Spirit’s fruited gift has everything to do with the goodness and softness of their hearts.

### **Closing Prayer**

God, you are my friend and my parent; you protect me, help me grow, and empower, by your Holy Spirit, to change. I know leaving camp tomorrow will be hard. It’s so safe here and so easy to show my faith to others. Please help me to find places in my life that keep me strong, faithful and excited to grow in the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit. Also, help me every day to love you more and more. Help me every day to encourage others to do the same. Thank you for loving me in Jesus; the one who was tempted, who is the Vine, and who sows the seed s of love in the good soil of my heart. Amen.

## Additional Study Ideas

1. Additional Questions
  - a. In what ways can the characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit influence the way I live in the world?
  - b. How can the fruit I possess (older youth) make a God-shaped impact on the world?
2. Create bags...perhaps grocery bags decorated like baskets. Have the kids decorate them and then hang them on their bunks. Have pieces of construction paper available of varying colors that the kids can use to cut/create different fruits. Each night have them write a Spiritual attribute on a piece of paper; one for each cabin mate that they will place in a cabin mates' bag. At the end of the week, perhaps the last night, have the campers sit in a circle and discover the wonderful compliments about the fruit others have seen them bear during the week.
3. Do something positive and "Hands On"
4. Planting and tilling a garden...can older kids take time to create/build raised garden beds for planting of herbs, etc. that will be used in meals during the Fall Season of RTLC or dried and used in subsequent seasons of the camping year?
5. Or, how about planting trees on this day; a final and lasting gift to the camp but also a way to help them understand the concept of good soil, growth, and fertilizing.
6. Simply dramatize the story of the Farmer Sowing on Different Kinds of Soil or the Temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness. Both stories will lend themselves well to role-playing. Creating a dramatic presentation of Jesus vs. the Devil could be a ton of fun.
7. Take colored construction paper and cut or tear pieces into "fruit-like" objects. On one side write a sin or temptation that is problematic for you. On the opposite side write the attribute of the fruit of the Spirit that will counteract/snuff out the problem. Place all of the fruits into an offering-like basket with your cabin mates and counselor and pray over them. Ask God to make you strong to live "fruit-fully" and "faithfully."

## Ideas To Incorporate Theme Throughout The Day

1. Plant trees or other living things
2. Baskets of fruit at worship or on meal tables throughout the day

## Other Songs, Stories, Thoughts, Questions, and Suggestions

### **Songs**

1. Shut De Do
2. Be Bold
3. The Spirit Intercedes
4. I'll Do My Best
5. Isaiah 43
6. One Name
7. Live Christ
8. Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing
9. Lord, Let My Heart Be Good Soil, ELW ??

### **Scripture**

#### **I Thessalonians 5:12-28** Paul's Final Advice and Greetings

*12 Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance. 13 Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other. 14 Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. 15 See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good*

*to each other and to all people. 16 Always be joyful. 17 Never stop praying. 18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. 19 Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. 20 Do not scoff at prophecies, 21 but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. 22 Stay away from every kind of evil. 23 Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. 24 God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful. 25 Dear brothers and sisters, pray for us. 26 Greet all the brothers and sisters with a sacred kiss. 27 I command you in the name of the Lord to read this letter to all the brothers and sisters. 28 May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

## **Ideas To Adjust Study Down For Juniors**

*The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde (Note: Oscar Wilde intended this story to be read to children)

Every afternoon, as they were coming from school, the children used to go and play in the Giant's garden. It was a large lovely garden, with soft green grass. Here and there over the grass stood beautiful flowers like stars, and there were twelve peach-trees that in the spring-time broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and in the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat on the trees and sang so sweetly that the children used to stop their games in order to listen to them. 'How happy we are here!' they cried to each other.

One day the Giant came back. He had been to visit his friend the Cornish ogre, and had stayed with him for seven years. After the seven years were over he had said all that he had to say, for his conversation was limited, and he determined to return to his own castle. When he arrived he saw the children playing in the garden.

'What are you doing here?' he cried in a very gruff voice, and the children ran away. 'My own garden is my own garden,' said the Giant; 'any one can understand that, and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself.' So he built a high wall all round it, and put up a notice-board.

### **TRESPASSERS WILL BE PROSECUTED**

He was a very selfish Giant. The poor children had now nowhere to play. They tried to play on the road, but the road was very dusty and full of hard stones, and they did not like it. They used to wander round the high wall when their lessons were over, and talk about the beautiful garden inside. 'How happy we were there,' they said to each other.

Then the Spring came, and all over the country there were little blossoms and little birds. Only in the garden of the Selfish Giant it was still Winter. The birds did not care to sing in it as there were no children, and the trees forgot to blossom. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass, but when it saw the notice-board it was so sorry for the children that it slipped back into the ground again, and went off to sleep. The only people who were pleased were the Snow and the Frost. 'Spring has forgotten this garden,' they cried, 'so we will live here all the year round.' The Snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak, and the Frost painted all the trees silver. Then they invited the North Wind to stay with them, and he came. He was wrapped in furs, and he roared all day about the garden, and blew the chimney-pots down. 'This is a delightful spot,' he said, 'we must ask the Hail on a visit.' So the Hail came. Every day for three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle till he broke most of the slates, and then he ran round and round the garden as fast as he could go. He was dressed in grey, and his breath was like ice.

'I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming,' said the Selfish Giant, as he sat at the window and looked out at his cold white garden; 'I hope there will be a change in the weather.'

But the Spring never came, nor the Summer. The Autumn gave golden fruit to every garden, but to the Giant's garden she gave none. 'He is too selfish,' she said. So it was always Winter there, and the North Wind, and the Hail, and the Frost, and the Snow danced about through the trees.

One morning the Giant was lying awake in bed when he heard some lovely music. It sounded so sweet to his ears that he thought it must be the King's musicians passing by. It was really only a little linnnet singing outside his window, but it was so long since he had heard a bird sing in his garden that it seemed to him to be the most beautiful music in the world. Then the Hail stopped dancing over his head, and the North Wind ceased roaring, and a delicious perfume came to him through the open casement. 'I believe the Spring has come at last,' said the Giant; and he jumped out of bed and looked out.

What did he see? He saw a most wonderful sight. Through a little hole in the wall the children had crept in, and they were sitting in the branches of the trees. In every tree that he could see there was a little child.

And the trees were so glad to have the children back again that they had covered themselves with blossoms, and were waving their arms gently above the children's heads. The birds were flying about and twittering with delight, and the flowers were looking up through the green grass and laughing. It was a lovely scene, only in one corner it was still Winter. It was the farthest corner of the garden, and in it was standing a little boy. He was so small that he could not reach up to the branches of the tree, and he was wandering all round it, crying bitterly. The poor tree was still quite covered with frost and snow, and the North Wind was blowing and roaring above it.

'Climb up! little boy,' said the Tree, and it bent its branches down as low as it could; but the little boy was too tiny. And the Giant's heart melted as he looked out. 'How selfish I have been!' he said; 'now I know why the Spring would not come here. I will put that poor little boy on the top of the tree, and then I will knock down the wall, and my garden shall be the children's playground for ever and ever.' He was really very sorry for what he had done.

So he crept downstairs and opened the front door quite softly, and went out into the garden. But when the children saw him they were so frightened that they all ran away, and the garden became Winter again. Only the little boy did not run, for his eyes were so full of tears that he did not see the Giant coming. And the Giant stole up behind him and took him gently in his hand, and put him up into the tree. And the tree broke at once into blossom, and the birds came and sang on it, and the little boy stretched out his two arms and flung them round the Giant's neck, and kissed him. And the other children, when they saw that the Giant was not wicked any longer, came running back, and with them came the Spring. 'It is your garden now, little children,' said the Giant, and he took a great axe and knocked down the wall. And when the people were going to market at twelve o'clock they found the Giant playing with the children in the most beautiful garden they had ever seen.

All day long they played, and in the evening they came to the Giant to bid him good-bye. 'But where is your little companion?' he said: 'the boy I put into the tree.' The Giant loved him the best because he had kissed him.

'We don't know,' answered the children; 'he has gone away.' 'You must tell him to be sure and come here to-morrow,' said the Giant. But the children said that they did not know where he lived, and had never seen him before; and the Giant felt very sad.

Every afternoon, when school was over, the children came and played with the Giant. But the little boy whom the Giant loved was never seen again. The Giant was very kind to all the children, yet he longed for his first little friend, and often spoke of him. 'How I would like to see him!' he used to say.

Years went over, and the Giant grew very old and feeble. He could not play about any more, so he sat in a huge armchair, and watched the children at their games, and admired his garden. 'I have many beautiful flowers,' he said; 'but the children are the most beautiful flowers of all.'

One winter morning he looked out of his window as he was dressing. He did not hate the Winter now, for he knew that it was merely the Spring asleep, and that the flowers were resting.

Suddenly he rubbed his eyes in wonder, and looked and looked. It certainly was a marvellous sight. In the farthest corner of the garden was a tree quite covered with lovely white blossoms. Its branches were all golden, and silver fruit hung down from them, and underneath it stood the little boy he had loved.

Downstairs ran the Giant in great joy, and out into the garden. He hastened across the grass, and came near to the child. And when he came quite close his face grew red with anger, and he said, 'Who hath dared to wound thee?' For on the palms of the child's hands were the prints of two nails, and the prints of two nails were on the little feet. 'Who hath dared to wound thee?' cried the Giant; 'tell me, that I may take my big sword and slay him.'

'Nay!' answered the child; 'but these are the wounds of Love.' 'Who art thou?' said the Giant, and a strange awe fell on him, and he knelt before the little child. And the child smiled on the Giant, and said to him, 'You let me play once in your garden, to-day you shall come with me to my garden, which is Paradise.' And when the children ran in that afternoon, they found the Giant lying dead under the tree, all covered with white blossoms.

Let's talk about what we just read

1. What happens when we hoard/are selfish with the gifts God has given us?
2. What happened to the Giant? In the beginning...at the end of the story?
3. The fruit of the Spirit are ours to grow like a beautiful garden and then use for the glory of God and to bless others.

## Ideas To Adjust Study Up For Senior Highs

### 1. Study 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)

*The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

Let's talk about what we just read:

1. What are the temptations in your life?
2. What have you "endured"? Have you been pushed beyond your breaking point?
3. To whom do you turn when you were tempted to do wrong?
4. Can you feel God's presence with you when you struggle?
5. What prayer did you or could you have prayed to invite God into your temptation?
6. Would God's presence have made a difference in your strength to resist the temptation?
7. How could the attributes of the fruit of the Spirit have helped you in your time of need?
8. Which attribute, were in more fully developed in you, have made a difference in your temptation?

### 2. Discuss ways that teens can avoid temptation. The following handout page can be copied and given to campers if desired. It came from a website entitled [Christianteens.about.com](http://Christianteens.about.com).

## Avoiding Temptation

(from [www.christianteens.about.com](http://www.christianteens.about.com))

Christian teens face temptation every day, and not everyone is prepared to overcome those temptations. At some point most people are faced with the desire to submit to sin, whether it is gluttony, cheating, and more. Sometimes those temptations are minor, so they are pretty easy to overcome, but other times the desire seems too great. Remember, though, that temptation is not the sin, even Jesus was tempted. We only sin when we give into the temptation. Here are some things you can do to help you avoid and overcome temptations:

- 1. Identify Temptations** - Everyone is a little different, so it is important to know what temptations are difficult for you to overcome. Some people may find that gossip is more alluring than sex. Others may find that even holding a date's hand is too much of a temptation. When you know what tempts you the most you can be proactive about handling that temptation.
- 2. Pray About the Temptation** - Most Christian teens know the temptations that are difficult to overcome. For instance, if you find gossip a problem, ask God to provide you with the strength to walk away from the gossip and to know what information is gossip and what is real information.
- 3. Avoid the Temptation** - When we know what temptations are the most difficult for us, we can prepare ourselves for those situations. In some cases we can even avoid the temptation itself. For instance, if premarital sex is a temptation, then you can avoid being in situations where you might find yourself giving into that desire. If you are prone to cheating, then you may want to position yourself during a test so that you cannot see the paper of the person next to you.
- 4. Use Your Bible for Inspiration** - The Bible is there to offer Christian teens advice and guidance, so why not use it? Scripture verses like 1 Corinthians 10:13, "You are tempted in the same way that everyone else is tempted. But God can be trusted not to let you be tempted too much, and he will show you how to escape from your temptation" can help inspire you in moments of temptation. Try to look up what the Bible says on your areas of temptation for inspiration and guidance.
- 5. Use the Buddy System** - Do you have a friend or leader that you can trust to guide you in facing your temptations? Sometimes it helps to have someone else you can talk to about your issues or even brainstorm ways you can avoid temptation. You may even ask to meet regularly with your friend to hold you accountable.
- 6. Use Positive Language** - What does positive language have to do with avoiding temptation? It actually has more to do with avoiding temptation than you may think. You need to believe God can help you overcome the desire to sin in order to actually overcome it. Avoid saying things like, "It's too hard," or "I'll never be able to do this." Remember, God can move mountains. Try changing how you approach the situation and say, "God can help me overcome this," or "It's not too hard for God."
- 7. Give Yourself Alternatives** - In 1 Corinthians 10:13, the Bible states that God can show you how to escape from your temptation. Allow yourself to see that escape. If you know your temptations, know how you can overcome. Give yourself alternatives. For instance, if you are tempted to lie to protect another person's feelings, try considering other ways to word the truth so it doesn't sound so harsh. If people around you are getting into drugs, try making new friends. Alternatives aren't always easy, but they can be the path God creates for you to avoid and overcome temptation.
- 8. It's Not the End of the World** - While avoiding temptation makes life a lot easier, it can be discouraging when we do give into that sin. We all make mistakes. That is why God offers us forgiveness. While you should not sin knowing that you can be forgiven, you should know that God's grace is available. So add 1 John 1:8-9, "If we say that we have not sinned, we are fooling ourselves, and the truth isn't in our hearts. But if we confess our sins to God, he can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away," to that list so you know that God will always be there ready to catch you when you fall.

If you fall into temptation and choose to live opposite the fruit of the Spirit, ask for God's forgiveness, ask for forgiveness from the person you hurt, and make sure you forgive yourself, too. Don't dwell on the negative but move forward in a new way. God in God's goodness washes our sins away as often as we ask God to and then God allows us the privilege to start again.

But please remember, that even though God's grace is abundant and overwhelmingly rich, repentance means "turning around" and putting effort into not falling into sin again. It's not easy to live differently and positively, but by the power of the Holy Spirit we can live and thrive with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control as the modus operandi for our lives.

# **Parent Devotional**

## **Scripture** Colossians 1:9-14 (paraphased to read directly to someone)

*“So, while you were gone, we prayed for you. We asked God to give you complete knowledge of God’s will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then, we asked God to give you strength to live in ways that will always honor and please the Lord, and that your life will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, we prayed that you will grow as you learn to know God better and better. We also prayed that you will be strengthened with all God’s glorious power so you will have all the endurance and patience you need. So now and every day, may you be filled with joy, always thanking your Father in heaven for the beautiful attributes the Spirit has planted in you from the moment you were baptized; the attributes of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, goodness and self-control.”*

## **Reflection**

Today is your child’s last day at camp. Tomorrow you will retrieve them, watch them sleep as you drive home, encourage them to shower when you arrive back at your house, and then you hope they will tell you about their experience at RTALC. This last day’s study is designed to encourage them to live the “fruit of the Spirit” at home, at school, at church, with their friends and family. Living this way is not easy. They need to be surrounded by a positive, affirming atmosphere. Please read the scripture above to them when they come home. You will bless them if you remind them of their goodness.

Your children are hearing three powerful stories today. One is about Jesus’ baptism and temptation in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13). We are all often tempted to live opposite of those beautiful attributes the Spirit has given them. They and we need strength to resist.

The second story is teaching them that resistance comes when they are deeply connected to Jesus. The story is the vine and the branches from John 15:4-8. Staying connected to Jesus is paramount to living fruit-full lives.

Finally, the third story is about a farmer sowing seeds on four different kinds of soil (Matthew 13:3b-23). The point of this story is to encourage them to create places where they will thrive and to hang out with people who will be good soil for them. It is our prayer that they will come home with an understanding that the characteristics they possess are no different than the characteristics Jesus possesses. They are given to us to be used for the glory of God and to bless other people.

Please read these stories before they come home so that you can discuss with them the power of resisting temptation, staying connected and living into places of good soil. The other thing you must do, if you are willing and able, is to start (continue) praying before every meal, praying with them before they go to bed at night, and praying for them daily. Your prayers are a powerful example of what you believe and how deeply you want Jesus to live in your home.

## **Family Activity**

Take colored construction paper and cut or tear pieces into “fruit-like” objects. On one side write a sin or temptation that is problematic for you. On the opposite side write the attribute of the fruit of the Spirit that will counteract/snuff out the problem. Place all of the fruits into an offering-like basket and pray over them. Ask God to make you strong to live “fruit-fully” and “faithfully.”

## **Closing Prayer**

Holy God, I realize you have given me a huge responsibility. I know my child(ren) are a gift from you and I am grateful for that. I also know you have charged me with their development and growth and challenged me to help them live well in the world to your glory. Make me strong today as I anticipate their coming home. Through the power of the Holy Spirit enlighten me, too, about the attributes we all possess by virtue of our baptism. I want to live into those attributes as much as I want my child(ren) to as well. Help me to do that this very day. I pray this in Jesus’ holy name. Amen.