



Session 1: The fruit of the Spirit is love

1-8 SEP

ICEBREAKERS

Cut up different (and unusual) fruits into small pieces and ask blindfolded volunteers to taste and identify them.

What are people's favourite fruits and why?

KEY THOUGHT

This issue looks at each of the nine qualities of the fruit of the Spirit, which can produce in us a harvest that will bring glory to God and transform His Church. The greatest of these is love.

KEY VERSE

'the fruit of the Spirit is love' Gal. 5:22

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. How does the wording of the *The Message* verses quoted by Selwyn (see 1 Sep) further your understanding of the fruit of the Spirit?
2. On 2 Sep Selwyn says, 'We must never forget that God's primary concern is that we might become holy - but remember the holier we are the happier we will be.' How do you respond to that?
3. Why is love greater than truth yet based on truth?

4. Honestly assess your level of maturity according to Selwyn's definition, found on 4 Sep: 'We are only mature to the extent that we can love and give out love to everybody.'
5. Discuss together how God's *agape* love is different to every other kind of love.
6. Why will *agape* love never fail even if it is not reciprocated?
7. What is the difference between an intellectual understanding and a spiritual revelation of God's love?
8. How have you received a personal revelation of God's love?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God' Eph. 5:2

PRAYER POINTERS

- Meditate on Galatians 5:22-23 and then picture Jesus on the cross. Then express your love and gratitude to God.
- Pray that as you study this issue together the Holy Spirit will help you understand more fully how He longs to develop the fruit of the Spirit in you more.

Session 2: The fruit of the Spirit is joy

9-14 SEP

ICEBREAKER

Recall a time when you have been 'full of joy'.

KEY THOUGHT

One of the consequences of salvation is that we can experience an overwhelming joy that transcends our circumstances.

KEY VERSE

'Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy' 1 Pet. 1:8

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What is your response to Selwyn's thoughts on joy (see 9 Sep): 'If you focus on finding joy it will elude you. But if you concentrate on finding love then joy will seek you out, as the natural outcome of love is an exuberance about life.'
2. How can joy be robust? (See 10 Sep.)
3. Discuss the differences between earthly pleasure and spiritual joy (see 11 Sep).
4. Can anyone in the group share a time of deep difficulty when they still felt God's joy in their heart?
5. How do you respond to the little boy's definition of joy from 13 Sep: 'Joy is Jesus'?

6. Why is Christian joy surprising?

7. What are some of the hindrances that can block joy in our lives?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit' Luke 10:21

'I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.' John 15:11

PRAYER POINTERS

- Thank God for so great a salvation and for all His blessings.
- Ask God to remove anything that may be blocking you from receiving joy, and ask Him to help you to let it overflow to others too.



Session 3: The fruit of the Spirit is peace

15-22 SEP

ICEBREAKERS

How many synonyms and antonyms can you think of for the word 'peace'?

What do you do to experience peace?

For example: play music, lie on a beach, go fishing etc.

KEY THOUGHT

God has made peace with us through the cross but also gives us His peace. This is not simply freedom from difficulties, but a deep spiritual tranquillity and contentment whatever happens.

KEY VERSE

'And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.' Phil. 4:7

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What is your own definition of peace?
2. Discuss the things that might cause you to lose a sense of peace.
3. How is the peace that comes from God more than that which touches the mind (see 16 Sep)?
4. Why are withdrawal and stillness different to peace (see 17 Sep)?
5. How can we keep our minds centred on God?
6. How does dependent faith in God result in perfect peace?

7. Selwyn includes a quote from Robert Nicoll on 20 Sep; read through it together and discuss your response.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'my peace I give you ... Do not let your hearts be troubled' John 14:27

PRAYER POINTERS

- Express any anxieties you have to God and spend time receiving His peace.
- Pray that you will not only have a growth in your experience of peace, but also be an agent of releasing God's peace to others.

Session 4: The fruit of the Spirit is patience

23-30 SEP

ICEBREAKER

What is the longest you have ever had to wait for something, and how did waiting make you feel?

KEY THOUGHT

Patience is an essential quality that, as it grows in us, will help us view all circumstances with a Kingdom perspective of being relaxed rather than reactive.

KEY VERSES

'And we urge you, brothers ... be patient with everyone.' 1 Thess. 5:14
'The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness ... he is patient with you' 2 Pet. 3:9

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. How can patience sometimes be confused with apathy, indifference and stoicism (see 25 Sep)?
2. What is the difference between redemptive anger and retaliatory anger (see 26 Sep)?
3. How do you handle tension and what can you learn from Jesus' response to it (see 27 Sep)?
4. How has your Christian experience changed you on the inside?
5. Who should have the last word in your life?

6. Have you ever experienced how humour and laughter can reduce situations to their proper size (see 30 Sep)?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.' 1 Pet. 2:23

PRAYER POINTERS

- Ask God to grow more of His patience in you.
- Thank God for the opportunities He provides for you to exercise His patience and ask Him to help you recognise them more readily.



Session 5: The fruit of the Spirit is kindness

1-6 OCT

ICEBREAKERS

Watch this video and discuss:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFTBBKIX760

Do you think we can sometimes be too embarrassed to be kind?

How have others been kind to you and how has that made you feel?

KEY THOUGHT

Kindness motivated by Christlike compassion is the essential flavouring at the centre of the fruit of the Spirit.

KEY VERSE

'as God's chosen people ... clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.' Col. 3:12

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. On 1 Oct Selwyn quotes Mother Teresa: 'Be the living expression of God's kindness ... give ... not only your care, but also your heart.' How well do you think you and your church fulfil her instruction?
2. Discuss together some of the definitions people have of kindness (see 2 Oct) and then agree your own together.
3. How should Jesus' sacrifice for us affect the way we treat others (see 3 Oct)?
4. How can kindness minister to its recipients?

5. What motivates people to acts of kindness?
6. Why is Christlike compassion an essential flavour of kindness?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.' Eph. 4:32

PRAYER POINTERS

- Thank God for His overwhelming kindness shown in the saving sacrifice of Jesus.
- Ask God to fill you with His compassion that will produce a harvest of kindness.

Session 6: The fruit of the Spirit is goodness

7-13 OCT

ICEBREAKER

Search YouTube for 'The legacy of George Muller' and watch the first 5 minutes.

How did George Muller exemplify the goodness of God?

KEY THOUGHT

Goodness is a spiritual quality of purity and active concern for others that will radiate outwards and ultimately remind people of Jesus Himself.

KEY VERSE

'For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge' 2 Pet. 1:5

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. How would you describe goodness? Now take a look at the descriptions given on 7 Oct and see if you would amend your description in light of them.
2. Discuss how George Muller radiated God's goodness (see 8 Oct).
3. Can any of you pinpoint a time when you experienced God realigning your ego (see 9 Oct)?
4. How can Christians unwittingly slip into adopting pharisaic attitudes (see 10 Oct)?

5. Do you agree with Samuel Johnson and Selwyn that goodness requires us to think of others and act on those thoughts (see 11 Oct)?
6. Discuss the acronym JOY - 'Jesus first, Others second, Yourself last', and how Catherine Booth reflected this (see 12 Oct).
7. How does learning what it truly means to die to self affect our measure of goodness?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and ... he went around doing good and healing' Acts 10:38

PRAYER POINTERS

- Thank God for His goodness in providing a wonderful world and, ultimately, a glorious Saviour.
- Pray for the fruit of goodness to be cultivated in your life as an inner quality that inevitably results in you doing good.



Session 7: The fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness 14-19 OCT

ICEBREAKER

Place these people in the order you would trust them and explain your reasons why: parent, policeman, politician, publican, professor, painter, priest, preacher, publicist, plumber.

KEY THOUGHT

Faithfulness is a spiritual quality of unimpeachable honesty, utmost reliability and consistent trustworthiness.

KEY VERSE

'But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness' Gal. 5:22

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Have you ever told a lie that has saved you from, or got you into, trouble? Do you think whether you are willing to tell a lie or not is a good test of character?
2. Are you good at keeping your word or do you find that sometimes the busyness of life means you let people down? How have Selwyn's comments on 15 Oct challenged you in this area?
3. How may dishonesty handicap us?

4. Do you agree with Selwyn when he says, 'Lies eat away at our hearts the moment dishonesty is let in. We are not so much punished for our sin as by our sin' (see 17 Oct)?
5. Have you experienced any of the eight points of testing and, if so, how have you experienced God in the midst of them (see 18 Oct)?
6. Discuss the quotes of the minister and D.L. Moody found on 19 Oct - do they resonate with you at all?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Jesus said, "It is finished."' John 19:30
'Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness' Rev. 1:5

PRAYER POINTERS

- Confess any times when you have been dishonest or unreliable to God and others.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to cultivate in you the fruit of faithfulness.

Session 8: The fruit of the Spirit is gentleness 20-26 OCT

ICEBREAKER

Watch the video found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkMEj1Sc5fc
How does Uriah Heap's false humility make you feel?

KEY THOUGHT

Gentleness or humility is not having an inferior attitude but recognising the greatness of God and treating people with respect.

KEY VERSE

'clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."' 1 Pet. 5:5

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What is your own understanding of the link between gentleness and humility?
2. Why do people associate humility with a servile, grovelling spirit?
3. How does recognising the greatness of God help us to be humble (see 22 Oct)?
4. Is there anything that hinders you from correctly seeing yourself from God's point of view?
5. Why are true learners always humble (see 24 Oct)?
6. Why is gentle humility the best way to win people over (see 25 Oct)?

7. How do the five scriptures William Barclay highlighted help us to understand humility (see 24-26 Oct)?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart' Matt. 11:29

PRAYER POINTERS

- Humble yourself before God by acknowledging His greatness and wisdom.
- Ask Him to give you a correct perspective about your standing before Him, and ask that it will result in you reaching out more with gentleness to those around you.



Session 9: The fruit of the Spirit is self-control 27-31 OCT

ICEBREAKER

How good would you say you are at controlling your weight, words, habits, driving speed, temper etc?

KEY THOUGHT

We do not gain spiritual maturity through self-control; we gain control of the self through giving Jesus control of our lives and allowing the Holy Spirit to grow fruit in our lives.

KEY VERSE

'Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.'

1 Pet. 1:13

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What is the difference between self-control and Spirit-empowered control of the self?
2. How can brides or grooms be motivated to lose weight that has previously been impossible to shift? Why doesn't this same motivation work in our Christian walk?
3. Are you a person of impulse or consideration?

4. What is your response to this quote on 30 Oct:

'There is before each one of us an altar of sacrifice, unseen but real and present; and on this altar we are called to offer ourselves. There is some crucifixion of the flesh, some physical self-sacrifice, the abandonment of some bodily indulgence which the spirit of man knows that he is called to make.'

5. How difficult do you find it to stand still and allow the Holy Spirit to do His work in your life?
6. What has most impacted you in this issue and how will you change as a result?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."'

Matt. 16:24

PRAYER POINTERS

- Ask God to help you take your hands off the steering wheel of your life, and ask for His control to come instead, particularly in areas of your life that could potentially be harmful to your spiritual development.
- Pray for each other, that the Holy Spirit will further cultivate His fruit within you.