

HOW TO LIVE OUT THE FRUITS OF
THE SPIRIT

When You're Frustrated & Fed Up

Journalling Guidebook

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The first fruit of the spirit is Love. Sometimes I wonder if God put these in order of importance and 'love' made spot #1 because it is so paramount to living a life aligned with Christ. Hmmmmm?

The Bible talks about a specific type of love called "agape" love. Agape love is focused on self-sacrifice, goodwill and devotion to others. It is much more than a feeling or admiration for another person. Agape love is being of service with a positive spirit that honours both the other person and God.

Jesus asks His followers to do much more than love people who are easy to love. He says to **"love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"** (Matthew 5:44)

How can we show agape love, or sacrifice, goodwill and devotion to others, when we are frustrated and fed up with them?

We can learn how from God Himself. One of the most well-known verses in the Bible is John 3:16 **"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."** This is the ultimate demonstration of love! The incredible, overwhelming gift that Jesus Christ made for each of us.

Love is God's true nature: **"He who does not love does not know God, for God is love"** (1 John 4:8). He wants to transform us so that our character is also defined by love.

When you practice agape love, you give freely without judging whether the other person deserves it or not. You give this love without expecting anything back. You give it because God gave it to you first.

Agape love is about so much more than a feeling - it is about God's ultimate will for your life.

And it isn't always easy....



How to show Love when You're Frustrated & Fed Up

Know that God loves this person as much as he loves you

Ascribe good intentions to people. Most people are hurting in some way and are trying to do their best. Love and extend forgiveness to everyone. Jesus on the cross prayed "forgive them father for they don't know what they are doing." Hurting people don't always think about how their actions affect others. Because they are in pain, their priority is themselves. God loves these people too and wants to heal them. You can choose to show God's love to them and remember to create boundaries and limits as needed for your own health.

You can only control how you show up

It is not about how they show up, it's about how YOU show up. I love a quote my mother-in-law uses that goes "Their actions reveal their character and your actions reveal yours." What is your character? Jesus directed us to **"Love your neighbour as yourself."** (Mark 12:31a) Since we can only control how we show up in any given circumstance, we can actively choose love over anger, knowing it's what God wants us to do. When you are weak, He will give you strength to love those you judge as unlovable (i.e. your children, spouse, co-worker, etc)

Pray for those who persecute you

Jesus said, **"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,"** (Matthew 5:43-44) He asks us to pray for people who persecute us, to PRAY for the individual who is not showing love to you. Give it over to God and ask him to heal the person or relationship in His timing. Also pray that He works in your heart to rid you of any resentment or negative thoughts. Rise above with the power of the Holy Spirit that is in you. **"With His strength, all things are possible"** (Matthew 19:26)!

"Love" Reflection Questions

What is one way you can show agape love to someone in your life today?

Name one person who you have had resentment toward that you could pray for right now. Write out your prayer for this person.

What does the quote "Their actions reveal their character and your actions reveal yours" mean to you?

What is one way you could display love to a person you don't especially 'love' right now to reveal the agape love God asks you to show them?

How will you show Love when You're Frustrated and Fed Up?

Write down some ideas that will support you in showing love when you're experiencing resentment and bitterness:

A spiral-bound notebook with a teal cover and a red vertical line on the left side of the page. The page is lined with horizontal grey lines. The spiral binding is on the left side, and the red line is positioned near the binding.



Most people think joy is a feeling, but it is not. Happiness is a feeling. Joy is a choice. Unlike happiness, joy is not based on circumstances. Joy is a sense of deep inner peace, given by the Holy Spirit. Joy comes from choosing God.

In difficult circumstances, it can be hard to be joyful however, we can live a more joyful life by fixing our eyes on Jesus and His greater plan for us.

The word "joy" is mentioned in scripture almost 200 times. Joy is obviously important to God. He wants us to live in joy with Him. Romans 15:13 reads **"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."** Trusting in Him and living with hope leads to joy.

God also asks us to live with joy even when circumstances are tough so that He can fill us with His Holy Spirit. **"More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame."** (Romans 5:3-4)

The Holy Spirit can encourage us to hold onto hope that on the other end of our suffering we can rediscover joy. There are times when suffering blocks out joy, even blocks out God. Continue to draw close to Him as much as possible and remember that joy can come from trusting that **"God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love Him and are called according to his purpose for them."** (Romans 8:28)

Choosing Joy is not always easy due to emotions that take over us at times. Set your mind on Christ and your thoughts will help alleviate the painful emotions. Remember, God provides for us the joy which He calls us to live in. Tap into His spirit and feel the joy that can only come from Him.

When you're in the thick of it and joy isn't coming naturally what do you do?

How to be Joyful when You're Frustrated & Fed Up

Say No to Sinful Desires

God didn't promise us an easy life and it can be extremely difficult to get your joy from Christ when you're used to getting it from an addiction or person. For example, shopping, over-eating and over-exercising can all be addictions that become so consuming that they take our focus off God. Be strong and learn to say "no" to anything that will lead you into sin. When you sin, guilt and shame can set in. These things will rob you of your joy. To live a joyful life, it is imperative that we align ourselves with what God wants for us. Is it always easy? No. Is it worth it? Yes!

Practice Gratitude

One of the easiest ways to feel joy is to recognize all of the blessings in your life. Keep a gratitude journal and jot down five things you are thankful for each day, or practice gratitude in your daily activities. For example, each time you wash your hands, think of something or someone in your life you appreciate. It might sound silly, but when you look at your blessings, you immediately feel more joyful. Do this everyday and you will see a significant jump in feelings of joy in your life.

Focus on Others

Sometimes we can get so consumed with our own problems we forget that everyone is fighting a battle. One way to increase your own joy is to make someone's day. Give a loved one a hug for no reason. Invite the new person at work or church for coffee. Compliment the grocery store cashier on her necklace. Smile and say hello to people. You could even set aside some money every month to bless someone who is struggling with a gift or card to encourage them. Slow down and recognize the opportunities you have to improve someone else's day. You can even volunteer your time, helping people less fortunate than you. Giving to others is proven to increase the joy of the giver. So go out and take the focus off you.

"Joy" Reflection Questions

What is one difficult circumstance in your life in which you're having trouble being joyful?

How can you choose to be joyful in this situation, knowing that God is in control?

Brainstorm a way that you can keep track of the things you're grateful for? (see examples above)

What is one way you could bless another person who is struggling right now?
When do you commit to do this by?

How will you feel Joy when You're Frustrated and Fed Up?

Write down some ideas that will support you in feeling
joy in difficult circumstances:





It's difficult to have peace when the storms of life blow us left and right.

Actually as humans, we are unable to have complete peace on our own. We can try hard to relax and work diligently at being peaceful, but ultimately we can only get our peace from God. It is a peace unlike anything the world can give and it is the antidote to fear and anxiety.

Jesus said, **"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."** (John 16:33) Peace with God overshadows conflict in the world.

To have the peace of God, we must surrender to Him and sacrifice our need to be 'right' and willful. Romans 5:1 tells us that **"when we give our hearts to Jesus, repent for our sins and respond in faith to the gift of God. He saves us."** This is how peace is received through the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:6 explains exactly where peace comes from: **"For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."** It's **"perfect peace,"** according to Isaiah 26:3. As we allow the Spirit to develop fruit in us, we will have true peace with God and each other.

"God's peace that surpasses all understanding will guard our hearts and minds during times of trouble." (Phil 4:7) When you're frustrated and fed up with people and the world at large, remember that you can find peace by focusing on God.

It is the only way to find true inner peace.

In the times when peace isn't coming naturally, there are strategies you can use to get yourself into the right mindset.

How to be Peaceful when You're Frustrated & Fed Up

Look UP

When we are agitated, it's easy to lose sight of God and focus on what's in front of us. In those moments we can look up - literally. Sometimes we look up naturally as we wave our hands in the air and exclaim "Why??!!" I physically look up now because it reminds me that He can give me peace. True peace is not always easy in the moment, but I know that He can give it to me in an instant. Look to God for peace and He will give you strength when you don't feel you have it.

Stop the Wasteful Worrying

Stop worrying! Luke 12:25-26 says, **"Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"** Instead of worrying, practice presence. Stop your thoughts and be in the moment. Imagine there is no future or past, just right now. It's a peaceful place. You can also practice catching yourself at it. "Hey, I'm worrying again." I used to catch myself worrying all the time and once I noticed it, and gave those worries to God and focused on living in the moment, I had much more peace. Worry is a mental habit and habits can be changed.

Shift your Focus

What you focus on grows so shift your focus from fear to strength and courage. Fear will cause turmoil and when you are in fear you will not experience peace. Romans 12:18 reads, **"Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone."** When you are in turmoil, ask how you can show God's love to others. Displaying His love and sharing that with others will give you much more peace than focusing on yourself. Focus on love, faith and hope and let go of the fear.

"Peace" Reflection Questions

What does the Bible say about where we get our peace from? Where do you tend to get your sense of peace from?

What does it feel like inside when you are at complete peace? Describe this feeling.

What do you find yourself worrying about? How can you stop the cycle of worry and step into the feeling of peace you described in your last answer?

How can you live in peace with everyone and show God's love to others?

How will you feel Peace when You're Frustrated and Fed Up?

Write down some ideas that will support you in feeling peaceful when you are stressed:





Patience



Patience can be described as self-control, restraint or tolerance.

This definition presents the idea that patience is holding back, not reacting and letting things slide off your back (I like this imagery). You can choose not to retaliate when wronged or hurt by another person. You can extend grace to another, instead of demanding immediate payment. Patience is the long suffering the Lord has towards sinners who need Him.

When we're tested, the last thing we often feel is patience. I honestly think God uses circumstances that frustrate us to help us see where we can focus on Christ and His strength.

Lack of patience comes from thinking that things should be happening differently than they are. When we hold onto this belief, we are not fully trusting God and His plan.

When we are frustrated and fed up, we can model God's patience through our faith in Him. The Holy Spirit fills us with the fruit of patience so He can lengthen the fuse of our temper. The longer it takes for our temper to smolder under self-control, the more time we have to cool down. When we focus on the Holy Spirit, we can release our reactivity and vengeance to Christ and see patience rise within us.

The Holy Spirit is always at work in our lives, but we need to tap into it when we are frustrated and impatient. We have to make a conscious effort to rest in the patience that the Holy Spirit gives us. We follow God's lead and show understanding, forgiveness and grace to others.

This restraint helps us clear our minds and fill them up with a Christ consciousness so that we can properly deal with the situation at hand. Doing this means you have less regret and more peace as well.

There are situations that will prove difficult and patience will not show up as you wish it would. In these circumstances you can step into God's leadership as soon as you notice your lack of patience. Look to Him and take on a few strategies that will help guide you to a place of patience instead of reacting in a way that you may later regret.

How to be Patient when You're Frustrated & Fed Up

Make Yourself Wait - On Purpose

The best way to practice patience is to make yourself wait. A study published in Psychological Science shows that waiting for things actually makes us happier in the long run. Start with something small like waiting a few extra minutes to drink your coffee in the morning and then move on to something bigger. You will begin to gain more patience as you practice and soon you will be able to wait things out and not even get frustrated. I used to get frustrated when I was in a rush and there was a slow driver in front of me. Today, I can't tell you the last time I felt annoyed about a slow driver. This came from practice!

Alter Your Mindset

Your mind is powerful and you have control over your thoughts. You can choose to be annoyed about the situation or embrace it as an opportunity for growth. I'm sure one reason why I'm not stressed about slow drivers anymore is because I changed the way I thought about them. I realized that they weren't trying to annoy me and if I was really that bothered I could leave for my destination earlier instead of waiting until the last minute to fly out the door. The Bible tells us to take every thought captive. (2 Corinthians 10:5) You have a chance to do something about all thoughts that are not well-pleasing to God, before they enter your heart and become a part of you! Know that you have a choice as to how you think and react.

Take Inventory and Pre-Plan

You can plan to be prepared in situations that normally make you impatient by understanding what provokes you. You can write a list of anything you can think of that makes you impatient. This will help you make a plan for the times these situations show up. I pre-planned how I would react when I was following a Sunday driver or got caught in the slowest line at the grocery store. I realized I could choose to be aggravated or enjoy the few extra minutes I had to listen to a worship song and sing my heart out or check my email while I was in line. Thinking ahead of time about how you will show up in certain situations can help you see when you aren't practicing patience and then you will have the ability to shift faster.

"Patience" Reflection Questions

Name one situation in your life where you show up impatient a lot of the time. Go a little deeper and write down the root cause of your impatience in this situation.

Looking at the root cause of your impatience, how can you practice patience even with this going on inside you?

When you are in a rush and feeling impatient, how can you shift your thinking so you have a peaceful, patient heart?

How long could it take for you to step into patience when you are feeling the opposite? How can you do this in your own life?

How will you be Patient when You're Frustrated and Fed Up?

Write down some ideas that will support you in choosing patience, self-control and restraint when you want to immediately react:

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Kindness

I believe most of us like to see ourselves as kind people. We extend kindness to strangers by opening doors and helping our friends when they need a hand.

God wants us to look at kindness in a deeper way. The Greek root for kindness, as used in the New Testament, means uprightness or benevolence and describes the ability to act for the welfare of those who aren't so nice to us.

If you've ever been hurt by another person, you know that showing kindness to them can be tough. I understand that fully and so did Paul. When we have been hurt or offended, we tend to react in anger or bitterness. But kindness leads us to do just the opposite; to respond with love and forgiveness. Ephesians 4:32 says, **"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."**

In Ephesians, Paul also writes **"Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."** (Ephesians 4:31-5:2)

In summary, we are encouraged to let go of bitterness and anger, forgive each other and be kind, especially when we don't feel like it. Our ultimate goal is to be more like Christ and love others the way He loves us. This is easier said than done; however, it is what we strive for.

In situations where you find it hard to show kindness, what can you do to overcome feelings of anger or resentment?

How to show Kindness when You're Frustrated & Fed Up

Practice Self-Reflection

Reflect on what's coming up for you when you feel unkind. First, take notice of the fact that you feel unkind and then ask yourself why you are feeling an urge to act on that feeling. Is it because you've had a bad morning? Are you feeling hurt or insecure? Has someone said something that has made you angry or upset? If you want to be unkind because you're feeling hurt or insecure, acknowledge the part of you that feels those things. Deal with this hurt inside you without taking it out on the other person. If you have already been unkind to someone, take the time to apologize and own your behaviour. You can take responsibility for how you show up and let them take responsibility for how they show up.

Understand the Come From

When people are unkind, it's almost always because they are hurt, broken and not living in God's light. They are lashing out at others because they have so much hurt in them. You may have heard the saying "Hurt people hurt people," which means that people who have hurt inside them will release what they have inside unto others. It isn't pleasant for the receiver, but you can rise above it with the Lord's help. He can heal them when and if they are receptive. For now you may be the only person who is shining the light of Christ into their life. You can't control how others show up, but you can control how you show up. Be proactive, not reactive. Give kindness because that is your character and because you know God's love and can share it with others.

Make the Choice

Sometimes we overcomplicate things (or is it just me?), when we can just make a simple choice. Think about a child and how quickly they choose to be kind. When a friend is mean to them, they still offer half their cookie to them. When teenagers are frustrating, parents can act in kindness by choosing not to react in anger. They can choose to understand their child's emotions and not take their rant personally. It's an unnatural act that comes supernaturally through the Holy Spirit, but it is a choice and you can make it in an instant when you let go of bitterness.

"Kindness" Reflection Questions

Think of one situation in the recent past where you've been unkind. Explain what happened and how you showed up.

What caused you to act on the urge to be unkind in that particular situation?

How can you deal with the feelings going on inside you and take full responsibility for how you show up (whether you choose kindness or not)?

Looking at the situation above (or any situation where you've been unkind), how can God help you choose to show kindness toward another when you don't feel like it?

How will you show Kindness when You're Frustrated and Fed Up?

Write down some ideas that will support you in being kind when you are hurt or offended:





Goodness



What does being "good" actually look like? God shows us goodness through giving us unmerited grace, love and life. When He created the things of earth (including human beings), he called them "good."

Sometimes people have trouble believing God is good all the time, but that lack of belief comes from the enemy. Psalm 100:5 states, **"For the Lord is good; His loving kindness is everlasting, and His faithfulness to all generations."** This is just one of many examples in the Bible that explains God's goodness. Satan is a master of taking good gifts from God and perverting them for our destruction.

Thankfully, there is good news because we have the truth! God has promised us that he won't abandon us and that he will be with us in every step of our journey to Heaven, both in the seen and the unseen. The bible says ...we serve a **"God who is in you and is greater than he who is in the world."** (1 John 4:4) and His goodness is unending.

Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we can embody God's goodness. Jesus gave us the ability to reflect His goodness because He took our sins upon Himself. We can show goodness in the ways we interact with the world and everyone in it. We get to choose what is good and point others to Him.

True goodness means we are living our life for Christ because we want to thank Him for all that He's done and bless those around us. When we love others in our actions or words, we spread His goodness.

So in order to show God's goodness to others we are encouraged to **"not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith (fellow believers)."** (Galatians 6:9-10)

In times when the sin in us is providing a roadblock to show the goodness of God, we can look at some strategies to unlock that Godly goodness within.

How to show Goodness when You're Frustrated & Fed Up

Step Outside of Yourself

God's goodness can be revealed in the simple ways we honour others. Lending a helping hand when a friend needs to move, volunteering at your local food bank, choosing to include someone who others look down upon and lovingly telling the truth when it's difficult, are all ways we demonstrate the goodness of Christ. It does not come from an exchange of services, but from a desire to show the goodness of God to all people, regardless of who they are and what they believe. When we step outside of ourselves and look at how we can serve others, we are showing God's goodness.

Choose Right over Wrong

Goodness is a true commitment to choosing right over wrong, good over evil. As the Bible tells us in Matthew 5:16: **"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."** Why is this important? Because we represent God's goodness here on earth. We have His light in us and can shine that on others. By showing God's character through our words and actions, we show other people His goodness. This ability is a blessing from Him and I believe it provides us with a responsibility to be His hands and feet here on earth.

Dwell in Him

The only way we will be able to truly show God's goodness is by being in relationship with Him. We cannot give what we don't have and being with Him allows us to have Him in us abundantly. In John 14:2 Jesus says, **"In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you."** God is good and he has already prepared a place for us so when we dwell in Him we experience the goodness and can give it to others. He created us to dwell in His goodness and as you continue to move forward, you can show God's goodness to everyone you meet.

"Goodness" Reflection Questions

How can you believe that God is good all the time?

How can you show the goodness of God's character here on earth?

How does 'dwelling in God' allow us to show His goodness to others?

Now that you understand more about God's goodness, what is one way you can show His goodness to someone this week?

How will you show Goodness when You're Frustrated and Fed Up?

Write down some ideas that will support you in showing goodness to others when you want to turn in the other direction:



Faithfulness

Have you ever heard something and thought to yourself, "I'll believe it when I see it." It's easy to slip into doubt and cynicism, as we live in a broken world, and many of us have gone through painful experiences that cause us to lose our trust in others. For this reason, faithfulness can be challenging.

As Christians, we know that it is important to be faithful to God. It is one thing to believe in Him, but another thing entirely to be faithful to Him. Faithfulness comes from a place of trust and loyalty. Hebrews 11:1 says, **"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."**

When we are truly faithful to God, this forms the way we live. For example, we are able to be more loyal and loving toward others. It is different than being faithful to a person or political party - those promises of faithfulness are often broken because people change and political parties are run by humans and therefore are imperfect. God, on the other hand, is perfect and never changes.

The Bible gives many examples of God's unchanging ways:

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8)

"God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind. Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?"
(Numbers 23:19)

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change." (James 1:17)

"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."
(Isaiah 40:8)

"Even when we're unfaithful, He is faithful." (2 Timothy 2:13)

Faithfulness requires us to submit our ways to God, realizing that we are in need of a Savior and that He is in control of our lives. Proverbs 19:21 says, **"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."** We get to live in His will and take action to do so while still being open to what He has for us.

We are to be faithful to God, because He is faithful to us. When you are feeling more fear than faith, what can you do to turn your focus back on God?

How to have Faith when You're Frustrated & Fed Up

Stop Trying to Control the Outcome

The Biblical story of Abraham is a beautiful illustration of faithfulness. Abraham and his wife Sarah struggled to trust God, but learned the value of faithfulness. They waited many years for God to fulfill His promise of giving them a son. Because of her lack of faith, Sarah insisted that her maid have a son with Abraham. This resulted in pain and conflict. However, when Abraham and Sarah put their faith in God, Sarah was able to give birth to Isaac even though she was well past childbearing age. Submit to him just like Abraham and Sarah and you will see that He honours that with his blessings in His timing. Trying to control things can lead to pain and faithfulness can lead to peace.

Develop your Relationship with Him

We can grow in our faithfulness by having a personal relationship with Christ. If we are truly faithful to Him and obey His commands, this will be evident in our lives. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."** When we trust in God and are faithful to Him **"we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."** (Romans 8:28)

We can have faith that God is who He says He is and we can continue to be faithful to Him by staying close.

Remove the Roadblocks

Think about the ways you show your faithfulness to God. Are there things that are getting in the way of your faithfulness? What areas of your life have you not given over to Him? Through spending time in prayer, ask God to make these areas clear to you, so that He can grow you in your faithfulness. Ask Him to reveal your blind spots so you have a clear path to His promises of faithfulness and can step into greater trust in Him.

"Faithfulness" Reflection Questions

How can you practice faithfulness in God when you feel He hasn't yet answered your prayers?

How does the story of Abraham and Sarah give you hope in faithfulness?

How does a strong, connected relationship with God build your faith muscle?

Pray and ask God to reveal any areas within you that have not surrendered to Him in faith. What did He reveal to you? How can you surrender this/these to Him?

How will you have Faith when You're Frustrated and Fed Up?

Write down some ideas that will support you in keeping the faith when you see yourself going wayward:

A spiral-bound notebook with a teal cover and silver spiral binding. The notebook is open to a blank page with horizontal ruling lines. A red vertical line is drawn near the left margin.



Gentleness



The word "gentleness" reminds me of a newborn baby, a feather floating in the wind or a cat tending to her kittens. I think it's actually pretty good imagery for "gentleness," as they all show a very soft and innocent image. I often think that gentleness comes with real, God-centered love.

When we look at the word gentleness, it can also be defined as tender-hearted, mild-mannered, merciful, sympathetic, forgiving, compassionate and understanding. It means being tied to God so closely that we can grant mercy and forgiveness to others in the same way that He gives those things to us. He gives us the strength to do this when we are frustrated and fed up.

Christ followers are expected to demonstrate gentleness as one of the fruits of the Spirit, but what does that look like exactly? Why is gentleness important and how do we develop gentleness in our lives?

When you turn on the news or scroll through social media, you will often see a depiction of the world we live in - one that is not always gentle and kind. We are surrounded by images of violence, anger, betrayal, hate, poverty and struggle. We also see many people who have hurt inside and do not respond to others in a gentle manner. It can be quite brutal out there.

There are ways to show a gentle spirit to others. When you surrender to God's desire for a gentle heart, you relax, get grounded in the Holy Spirit and feel His presence. Surrender is allowing God to control a situation and not trying to alter it to suit your own needs. It is holding on to the outcome lightly instead of tightly. This can easily bring about a gentle spirit. Why? Because in those moments you have moved away from the stress and worry and are tapped in to the Holy Spirit. This helps you show the gentleness of Christ - the lamb of God.

Gentleness is not weakness. Although gentleness in the Bible is also translated as "meekness". It does not mean weakness, per se. Gentleness requires quite a bit of strength and self-control. It requires humility and thankfulness toward God, and polite, kind behavior towards others. The opposite of gentleness is anger, a desire for revenge, and self-importance. So how do we steer away from these things and move toward a life of gentleness that mimics Jesus?

How to be Gentle when You're Frustrated & Fed Up

Reserve Judgment

We are so quick to judge at times. We first judge ourselves and then others. Gentleness remembers that we are all sinners and we are all trying to find our way through this world that can sometimes be very rough and unkind. We can first reserve harsh judgment toward ourselves and be gentle in how we correct and steer our own hearts. We can then show gentleness toward others, knowing that God is the ultimate judge. James 4:12 says, **"There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy; but who are you who judge your neighbour?"** Showing gentleness instead of casting judgment allows you to be filled with more joy and share that joyful abundance with others.

Put Others First

Gentleness puts others first and doesn't ask for anything in return. Gentleness shows love, helpfulness, service, kindness and grace, even to the most difficult people. The Bible explains Jesus' gentleness, saying, **"A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out."** (Isaiah 42:3). Jesus affirms His own gentleness as well: **"I am gentle and humble in heart"** (Matthew 11:29). The apostles also took on the gentleness of Christ: **"By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you"** (2 Corinthians 10:1). Therefore if we want to be more like Christ, we get to to be gentle to others as He was.

Give Grace-filled Responses

Gentleness is a calm, grace-filled answer, even when the words might hurt the recipient **"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted"** (Galatians 6:1). When we receive a difficult message in a gentle way, we are much better able to receive it for the truth it is. Proverbs 15:1 says, **"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."** Responding with grace can dissolve an argument or soften even the toughest person.

"Gentleness" Reflection Questions

Name one person in your life that you want to show more gentleness toward? How will you do this?

Who can you give to and expect nothing in return this week?

How does being 'gentle' reveal the character of Christ in you?

When you receive anger and resentment from another person, how can you still show up gentle and kind in your response?

How will you be Gentle when You're Frustrated and Fed Up?

Write down some ideas that will support you in being gentle when you would prefer to lash out:





Self-Control



For many people, this is the most difficult "Fruit of the Spirit" to master. This is because it involves our temperament and winning a tough battle we fight within ourselves every day.

What is this battle? It is the battle between good and evil, God and the enemy. Our "SELF" or "EGO" produces desires we know that we shouldn't satisfy. EGO has been said to represent 'Edging God Out.' When our ego is at work, I believe we are edging God out. God wants to be close to us - Jesus said, **"whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."** (Luke 9:23). Every day, our "SELF" or "EGO" feels desires that we must seek to deny or control in order to live the life God desires us to live.

Lack of self-control can be so detrimental to us that the Bible clearly says, **"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away."** (Matthew 5:29).

Obviously this is not set in stone as an action to take when we sin, but the metaphor illustrates the power of sin - the fact that it can affect our whole being.

Paul says that Christians are to exercise self-control like the Greek athletes, only our goal is eternal, not just during our time on earth. **"Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever."** (1 Corinthians 9:25) He also says, **"I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified."** (1 Corinthians 9:27) Paul knew that discipline was crucial to his spiritual growth.

So if you want to practice self-control, remember there is a battle inside you and when you say NO to sinful, fleshly desires (or EGO), you are not Edging God Out - you are keeping Him close to your heart and His will prevails in you. It is not always easy to do this and it may cause initial frustration, but you will feel better in the long run. Aligning with God's will is the best way to live in the fruits of the spirit and stay closely aligned with who He desires you to be.

There are some key ways to recognize when your flesh is in the thick of the battle, fighting against God's best for you.

How to have Self-Control when You're Frustrated & Fed Up

Understand when You're Edging God Out

If you've ever caught yourself behaving in a way that makes you cringe, then your ego is likely to blame. The ego is the part of us that needs to feel special, seeks approval and feels lacking in some way. When we feel this way, we can be more easily led into sin. Why? Because EGO is 'Edging God Out'. Instead, be strong and pay attention to your motivation for certain things. When you aren't sure if you're sinning, go back to the Bible and measure your choices up against God's word. Notice when you are following a fleshly desire out of your own ego, rather than a desire planted in you from God. The ego can keep you from God's plan - self control can keep you on the path God desires for you.

Die to Yourself and Give your Desires to God

Paul is a great example of servanthood and often worked to exhaustion on behalf of those he served. He said, **"I labor for this, striving with his strength that works powerfully in me."** (Col. 1:29) He did not serve in his own human strength, but with God's power. Paul was not perfect, but he understood why self-control was so pivotal to his walk with Christ. He understood Jesus' teachings: **"The gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it."** (Matthew 7:14) If we want to stay on the narrow path to life, we must work to practice self-control and align our choices with what He would want for us. Jesus said that to be His disciple, one **"must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."** (Matthew 16:24)

Keep the Faith and Look at the Bigger Picture

When we really see and believe what God is for us by grace through Jesus Christ, the power of wrong desires is broken. Therefore, the fight for self-control is a fight of faith. **"Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses."** (1 Timothy 6:12) Self-control is not always easy - we are human beings and our flesh is weak. Jesus said, **"the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."** (Matthew 26:41) Controlling your fleshly desires is much easier when you have faith in something bigger than that 'thing' you desire.

"Self-Control" Reflection Questions

What is one area of your life that your EGO takes hold and are more concerned with looking good, feeling special and seeking approval?

When you notice yourself showing up in EGO, or looking for others to make you feel good, how can you shift that and focus on God?

How does Self Control allow you to stay on the narrow path God desires for you?

How does faith in God allow you to better control your fleshly desires?

How will you be Self-Control when You're Frustrated and Fed Up?

Write down some ideas that will support you in **using self-control...**



Additional Reflection Questions

What does your heart long for?

How do you want to be remembered?

How would you show up if it didn't depend on any person or circumstance, but simply your choice to be a certain way?

If you could consistently live out the fruits of the spirit by taking one small step right now, what would you do?

If you were to call me 3 years from today and tell me how the tools you learned and implemented from this book changed your life for the better, what would you say?

Summary

We all get frustrated and fed up at times (maybe more than we'd like to admit ;). God expects us to feel this way and He gives us very clear instructions on how to overcome these feelings and live out the fruits of the spirit, even in our frustration.

When you are grounded in His word and promises, it is much easier to show up with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Life is going to be challenging, even when you feel you are completely tuned in to God. Jesus says, **"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."** (John 16:33) He has already overcome! Reading His word and reflecting on the person He desires you to be is paramount to being able to live out the fruits of the spirit.

Know that God will give you strength in the moments you feel you don't have what it takes to be fruitful. Pray to Him and ask for His power to help you show up in a way that honours Him, honours you and honours others.

I would encourage you to write notes in each of the sections to solidify your thoughts around who you want to be when the going gets tough. How do you want to show up in life when others hurt you? How do you want to better control yourself so you can refrain from regret and shame about a choice you made or words you said in the heat of the moment? If you were to wake up and envision yourself living out your life in a fruitful way, what would that look like when you're feeling beaten down?

Do you want to let life happen to you and react to your circumstances or do you desire to stay tuned in to the Holy Spirit and shine light in the darkness?

Life is a journey and if you can take one small step in the right direction every day, you will see the amazing changes in your ability to live out the fruits of the spirit in all circumstances. Start this week and when you notice the frustration rising in you, challenge yourself to live out just one fruit of the spirit in a way you may not have done before - in a way that honours God.

Thank you for reading this guidebook and please reach out with any questions, comments :)

Alana Palm

