11-4-2026 – Fruit of the Spirit – Week 5

Spiritual fruit from H.S. – Produces **more of God**, **less of us**. **Transforms** us:

- 2 Cor. 3:18 - "And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image."

We are changed by the Spirit to reflect the nature of God.

- Part of the **changing process** is in **seeing** the **need** for change; recognizing that response was not God's fruit, but our nature.
- This is a transformational change . . . it takes time. Don't beat yourself up. A fruit tree takes 2-5 yrs after transplanting to produce.

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

1 – **Gentleness**. What is gentleness?

Not just combo of kindness & love; no need for a separate fruit/ spirit.

- Quality of being calm, kind, soft & free from violence or harshness.
- Genteel. Softness of manners; mildness of temper; sweetness of disposition; meekness. – Noah Webster's 1828.
  - The words that jump at me? Softness. It's tenderness.
  - **Gentleness** is how I see Jesus, and God.
- Matthew 11:29 – "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
  - Isaiah 40:11 – "He tends His flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young."
  - "See, your King comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey"
  - **Jesus displayed gentleness** – He saw Mary at the tomb; "Mary"
  - **He** stood at Lazarus' tomb and wept.

    - **He** said to the woman caught in adultery, "Where are your accusers? I don't condemn you either. Go, leave your life/sin."
- He was a **King, yet He lived as a servant**. His gentleness did not weaken His authority; it reveals the gracious character of our King who receives sinners and cares for the weary.
    - **Paul** urges us to have the mind of Christ in us. (Phil. 2:5)
        - It's in gentleness that we can lead others to Jesus.
            - Won't happen by shouting matches. Signs. Protests
            - Paul wrote that he tried to appeal to the Corinthians "by the meekness & gentleness of Christ" 2 Cor. 10:1
        - In reaching people for Jesus, he wrote in **1 Thessalonians 2:7** – "we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother caring for her children."
        - Consider **2 Timothy 2:24-25** – "A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, & be patient with difficult people. Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people's hearts, and they will learn the truth."
- **Gentleness** is a fruit that is seen in both our **actions & reactions**.
    - **Action** – It's how we reach out to care for the grieving.
        - It's how we talk to others about our faith.
            - **1 Peter 3:15** - But in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give a defense to everyone who asks you the reason for the hope that is in you. But respond with gentleness and respect,
        - It's how we treat others who are struggling; have failed.
            - **Ephesians 4:2** – "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

        - It's the way God is with us when we're fragile… hurting… been wounded:
        - "A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out" – Matt. 12:20; **Isaiah 42:3**.
    - **Re-action** – It's how we respond when we're insulted.
        - **1 Peter 2:23** - When they heaped abuse on Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats, but entrusted Himself to Him who judges justly.
        - It's how we address problems; someone has done wrong.
            - **Galatians 6:1** – "Brothers, if someone is caught in a trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him with a spirit of gentleness."

- As Christians, we are called – challenged – to live w/ Gentleness:
  Colossians 3:12 – "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with hearts of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."
    - As Christians, we're called to turn down the volume of dissent; down a notch. . . not argue. . . be calm . . . be people of peace.
    - **Prov. 15:1 - NIV** – "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."
      New Living Translation – "A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare."

  And that leads us right into the **final fruit – Self-Control.**

2 – **Self-Control**.

Self-control - ability to manage impulses, emotions, thoughts, and actions.

- It's "**impulse control**" – stopping to think before acting rather than reacting immediately.

    - Think of it as mastering desires & impulses to align w/ our Master's (God's) will.
- It's "**emotional regulation**" - Managing intense feelings like anger, frustration, or excitement without being controlled by them.
- Self-control is having a **filter** … not saying everything we think.
    - Most people will say… yep, I need more self-control.
    - If you're asking how to develop self-control?
        - Remember – all is tied to surrender to H.S.
        - This isn't just about will power; biting your tongue; or white knuckling thru temptation.
        - It's an active partnership w/ God & the H.S.
            - Self-control can develop as we draw closer to God & admit our need to better reflect we're His child.
    - **Self-Control** - as explained by Bible – is **knowledge in action**. It's knowing we must be better… we must live to higher standard… we must be patient… we must be kind & show love.

2 Peter 1:3-9 -

3 By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. 4 And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires. 5 In view of all this, make every effort to respond to God's promises. Supplement your faith with a generous provision of moral excellence, and moral excellence with knowledge, 6 and knowledge **with self-control**, and self-control with patient endurance, and patient endurance with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love for everyone. 8 The more you grow like this, the more productive and useful you will be in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Self control is a fruit of the Spirit developed thru knowledge & **maturity**.

- We don't develop this 'til we see the need for it. Maturity. Wisdom.
- God gives us the ability to live with self-control
    - **2 Timothy 1:7** - "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and self-control."

Paul writes about in 1 Cor. 9 about how **athletes train**.

- **English Standard Ver. - 1 Cor. 9:25** – "Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable."
    - We have an imperishable destiny … Heaven is forever.
    - So we should run our race with purpose. Be disciplined.
    - **Eng. Std Ver. – 1 Cor. 9:27** – "But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified."
        - Paul is saying he has to walk in the truth he's proclaiming.
        - He didn't want moral compromise to ruin his witness, or lead him down a path away from God.
- Just as athletes train rigorously, believers must exercise spiritual discipline – Self-Control - to grow in maturity; to be light/shines.
    - Our witness can be ruined with a lack of self-control.
    - Lack of self-control also makes us vulnerable to attack/Enemy.
        - **NLT – Prov. 25:28** – "A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls."
            - Broken walls left a community vulnerable to attack.
            - Lack of self-control puts us in same position.
                - Anger, for example, allows Enemy fight us w/ regret. Shame. Or lead to acting in anger…

- **Ephesians 4:26-27** - “Be angry, yet do not sin.” Do not let the sun set upon your anger, / and do not give the devil a foothold.”

Here is the final point – none of us are perfect. But God forgives.

- Producing the fruit of the Spirit takes time… surrender… willingness. It’s the work of God in us. Just **be open to the change God desires**.