

An orange with a green leaf and a splash of orange liquid. The background is a vibrant orange color. A single green leaf is attached to the stem of the orange. The orange is positioned in the center of the frame. A splash of orange liquid is visible at the bottom of the orange, creating a sense of freshness and movement. The text "FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters across the middle of the orange.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

WEEK 2 DEVOTIONAL
PATIENCE • KINDNESS • GOODNESS

PATIENCE, KINDNESS & GOODNESS

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

Galatians 5:22-23a (CEB)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

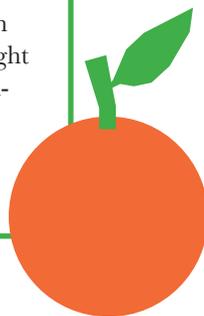
1 Corinthians 13:4-5 (NIV)

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other.

Colossians 3:12-13a (NRSV)

You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, so live your life as children of light. Light produces fruit that consists of every sort of goodness, justice, and truth.”

Ephesians 5:8-9 (CEB)



MONDAY

God is patient with us

Read: 1 Timothy 1:12-16 and 2 Peter 3:8-9

The apostle Paul listed qualities that reflect the character of God, who then grows them in us. He looked back on the days when, as an angry young Pharisee named Saul, he proudly persecuted and killed Christians (Acts 7:57-8:1, 9:1-2). Christ, he said, had displayed his “endless patience” even toward him. In the same letter he wrote that God “wants all people to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4). And Peter wrote that God is patient, “not wanting anyone to perish.”

The God the Bible describes, who dwells in eternity (i.e., beyond and above time), seldom if ever hurries. In fact, God often seems slow to our impatient humanity: “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise...Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish” (2 Peter 3:9). Have you ever had times when you found God’s patience frustrating? In what ways has that divine patience been a blessing to you?

Reflect on the stories you know about Jesus. Was he frantic or impatiently hurried in any of them? Were there times when he did not move as fast as the people around him wanted him to? Can you think of times when Jesus’ day-to-day dealings with his disciples, or others, vividly showed God’s patience toward fallible human beings like us?

PRAYER

God of eternity, I recall the times I have disappointed you by wandering away from the path you know is best for me, and I thank you for your profound, transforming patience. Thank you for never giving up on me. Amen.

TUESDAY

The Spirit grows patience in us

Read: Ephesians 4:1-6 and Colossians 1:9-12

Methodist scholar Maxie Dunnam wrote of Paul's characteristic word "therefore" in Ephesians 4:1, Paul has told that story of grace—the drama of salvation—and now can say 'therefore.' It is after we know that 'by grace [we] have been saved' (Ephesians 2:5) that we can be 'worthy of our calling'.... Our being and doing as Christians are expressions of what God in Christ has been and done for us.

Jesus told a story (Matthew 18:21-35) that contrasted God's patience toward us and our frequent lack of it with each other. In the story a king forgave a man who owed him a huge debt. In spite of the king's patience, the man cruelly insisted on jailing a person who owed him a rather small debt. How can that story help you grasp how patient God is with you? How can that awareness grow your ability to be patient with others?

In what big or small ways have you seen impatience damage you and other people, physically, mentally or spiritually? Facing things like a child's energy, an elderly person's slow pace, or a red light that lasts "too long," how can you allow the Holy Spirit to grow the fruit of patience in you?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, keep shaping my life into an expression of what you have done for me. Help me increasingly to treat others in a way worthy of my calling, given to me by your eternal patience. Amen.

WEDNESDAY

God is kind to us

Read: Romans 2:1-4 and Titus 3:3-8

Scholar William Barclay wrote, “Kindness and goodness are closely connected words. For kindness the word is *chrestotes*. It, too, is commonly translated goodness...Christ’s yoke is called *chrestos* (Matthew 11:30), that is, it does not chafe.”

Chrestotes also “suggests ‘usefulness’ and ‘employment’....It is not a word that simply communicates sentiment or compassion, but one that emphasizes utility. God’s kindness is active, supremely so when Jesus gave himself on the cross.

At many points, the gospels showed Jesus acting kindly out of his deep concern for hurting people (e.g. Luke 7:11-15, Matthew 9:36-38, Mark 8:1-8). How do these stories show, in everyday settings, “God our saviour’s kindness and love”? How did today’s readings expand the reach of God’s kindness to meet our most desperate spiritual need—“hope for eternal life”?

Jesus’ call to love our enemies was rooted in God’s kindness: “he is kind to ungrateful and wicked people. Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate” (Luke 6:35-36). That was why the letter to Titus reflected “a common saying” among early Christians about “our saviour’s kindness and love.” As a child, did you see God mainly as kind and merciful, distant and aloof, or angry and punitive? What helps you trust God’s kindness now?

PRAYER

O God, forgive me for times when I have told others (or myself) that you are a cruel tyrant. By your Spirit sharpen my perceptions to see and value your persistent kindness to me. Amen.

THURSDAY

The Spirit grows kindness in us

Read: 2 Timothy 2:23-26 and Colossians 3:12-13

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus asked, “If you love only those who love you, what reward do you have? Don’t even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing? Don’t even the Gentiles do the same?” (Matthew 5:46-47). To be kind to people who are kind to you is just good manners. But to be “kind toward all people”—that can only grow, over time, from opening your heart to the Holy Spirit’s supernatural presence.

The letter to Timothy echoed Jesus’ teaching: “Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:27-28). Acting like that is not natural to any of us. In what ways can you allow the Holy Spirit to reshape your natural impulses to grow the fruit of kindness toward all people in your life?

Colossians 3 invited God’s people to “put on” qualities closely related to those listed in Galatians 5 after “taking off” hurtful traits. That was different than calling out natural abilities. This life reflects [the Colossians] identity as the loved, forgiven, reconciled people of God in Christ. Could it be that “kindness” is not just a stand-alone quality, but interwoven with the other qualities listed in Colossians 3:12-13?

PRAYER

Come, Holy Spirit! Grow kindness in me, not as squishy emotionalism trying to please those I like, but as hard-edged, practical determination to live a life that reflects my Lord Jesus’ way of caring about people even as he worked to defeat evil with good. Amen.

FRIDAY

God is good (or generous) to us

Read: Ephesians 2:1-7 and Matthew 20:1-16

The word Paul uses for goodness [in Galatians 5:22] (agathosune) is a peculiarly Bible word and does not occur in secular Greek (Romans 15:14; Ephesians 5:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:11). It is the widest word for goodness. Matthew 20 used the word to describe the master's unexpectedly generous pay plan. When we say, "You're so good to me," we usually mean "generous" in some way. Ephesians 2 underscored God's generous, loving goodness in saving us by God's grace.

Does the master's way of paying the workers in the story feel unfair to you? It was not unfair, of course. No one was underpaid; it was just that some received 'unreasonable' generosity. That is what the kingdom of heaven is like. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul said Christ was treated as we deserved, and we are treated as he deserved. In what ways does that "unfair" and generous exchange draw your heart toward Christ's goodness?

Another way Jesus described God's generosity and goodness was to say, "He makes the sun rise on both the evil and the good and sends rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous" (Matthew 5:45). When have you seen God's goodness, God's lavish generosity, expressed in the beauty and bounty of God's created world in ways that amazed and encouraged you?

PRAYER

Good and generous God, in ways big and small your goodness shines out of this world as we move into fall. Thank you for the gift of life, and the many beauties and joys it holds. Amen.

SATURDAY

The Spirit grows goodness (or generosity) in us

Read: Ephesians 5:8-9 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Ephesians 5:8 did not say, as we might expect, something like “You belong to the light.” It used a stronger phrase: “Now you are light in the Lord, so live your life as children of light.” And that light produces fruit that consists of every sort of goodness (as well as justice and truth). The Spirit’s good fruit of generosity is not just about money. (Of course, it doesn’t exclude money, either.) Paul was writing in 2 Corinthians about funds he was collecting among the Gentile Christians to support poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem. But he kept using words like “everything you need always and in everything” and “You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous in every way.” He made it clear that God is generous with everything we need. That’s why we can generously share time, talents, energy and caring (as well as money) with others.

Ephesians was sure that, living in Jesus’ grace and power, Christ-followers can live as “children of light,” whose goodness, justice and truth bring Christ’s light to others. What is the source of the light that shines from your life in your best moments? Can you recall one or more times when you recognized that Christ’s light shining through you had brightened another life? What are some resources God’s generous goodness has placed most lavishly in your life? What are some resources others seem to have more of than you? Modern science agrees with the Bible that a grateful spirit is good for us (e.g., Proverbs 17:22). How does being grateful for what you have, rather than resenting what others have, help you be generous with anything you have an abundance of, so you can bless others as God has blessed you?

PRAYER

God, you are the ultimate source of all that is. Any good thing I have or am is a gift from you. Loosen my tight fists and grow the Spirit’s fruit of goodness and generosity in me every day. Amen.