



 Adventist
Family Ministries

2021
RESOURCE
BOOK

Living Fruitful Love

BY WILLIE AND ELAINE OLIVER

FAMILY TOGETHERNESS WEEK OF PRAYER, SEPTEMBER 5 - 11, 2021

Living Fruitful Love

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22, 23

Fruit comes in many different shapes, sizes, textures, and tastes. Farmers from around the world make great efforts to grow and produce fruit that will tickle our tongues and satisfy our tastebuds. Some fruits are round like oranges or blueberries. Some are fuzzy like peaches and kiwi. Some are large like papaya and watermelon. And some are tart like cranberries or sweet like mangoes. Producing fruit is no easy task. Many of us simply go to the local grocery store or market and pick up whatever fruit we like for a reasonable price. However, farmers have the difficult task of planting, nurturing, and cultivating the fruit we get to enjoy.

The Bible speaks about another kind of fruit that is not bought at the market or cultivated at the orchard or farm. In the book of Galatians, the Apostle Paul uses fruit to show what will happen to us when we choose to be filled with the Spirit of Jesus. The fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are virtues that are cultivated when we are filled with the Spirit of Jesus in our hearts. It is the result of having a relationship with Jesus and allowing His Spirit to flow in us and through us. We expect that an apple tree will bear apples, and an orange tree will yield oranges. In much the same way, we expect disciples of Christ to be filled with the Spirit and produce the fruit

of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

During this **Family Togetherness Week of Prayer**, our desire is for every husband and wife, every father and mother, every family and person that loves Jesus to produce the fruit of the Spirit in their lives each day. This resource has been created with the entire family in mind. Each day has three parts: a reading, a prayer, and an activity. In the reading, you will learn about a different fruit from around the world and you will also learn about the Fruit of the Spirit. Each day there is a prayer emphasizing the fruit of the spirit for that day. You can pray this prayer together as a family asking God to cultivate that fruit in your hearts and in your homes that day. There is also an interactive activity that you can do with your family to reinforce learning and get all family members involved in worship.

We encourage every member of the family to memorize Galatians 5:22, 23 by reciting and practicing it each day, while emphasizing the spiritual fruit of the day. We have included activities to help you with memorizing the text so that by the end of the week you will have stored this text in your brain and in your heart. We hope every member of your family will allow the Spirit of God to grow His fruit in them as they diligently water, weed, and participate in providing the conditions that will allow this to become a reality in their lives.



**Adventist[®]
Family Ministries**

Willie and Elaine Oliver, Directors
Seventh-day Adventist Church
World Headquarters



**SUNDAY
LOVE:
THE OVERARCHING FRUIT**



**MONDAY
JOY:
A FRUIT OF LOVE**



**TUESDAY
PEACE:
A FRUIT OF LOVE**



**WEDNESDAY
PATIENCE:
A FRUIT OF LOVE**



**THURSDAY
KINDNESS AND GOODNESS:
FRUITS OF LOVE**



**FRIDAY
FAITHFULNESS:
A FRUIT OF LOVE**



**SABBATH
GENTLENESS AND SELF-CONTROL:
FRUITS OF LOVE**

S U N D A Y

LOVE:

THE OVERARCHING FRUIT

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22, 23

Let's learn about fruit from around the World:

MANGO

Mango is usually an oval shaped or oblong fruit with a firm yellowish-red skin. It has a hard central seed, and juicy sweet-smelling pulp. Mangos are one of the world's most popular fruits, this is likely due to their creamy but fruity taste. It is not a surprise that mango is known as the King of fruits in India, with 500+ varieties of mangos. Today you can find mangos anywhere in the world, but they are native to Southern Asia, India, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Mango symbolizes love in India, and a basket of mangos is considered a gesture of friendship. In many Latin American countries, you'll find many street vendors offering mango on a stick, and in some places like in Mexico, they add lime juice and chili powder as a topping.



TODAY'S SPIRITUAL FRUIT IS

LOVE

In Galatians 5:22 and 23, the Apostle Paul announces: “But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Here, Paul arrives at the heart of the message being delivered between verses 13-26 on what it really means for someone to have freedom in Jesus.

In Galatians 5:13 Paul proposes: “For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.” By these words, Paul indicates that being truly free does not mean doing anything we feel like. Rather, living a life of obedience to God, representing the essence of God Who is love.

What we have come to know as the **fruit of the Spirit**, is really the culmination of the contrast the Apostle Paul is making between those who “Walk in the Spirit” (v. 16) and those who live by “the desire of the flesh” (v. 17). Essentially, the message being communicated is that if we belong to Jesus we will “love your neighbor as yourself” (v. 14).

The Bible is clear that love is the all-encompassing response of the true follower of Jesus. Yes, love is the result of a life lived for Jesus and lived in Jesus. And, just in case someone is thinking of love as a sentimental and fuzzy feeling, the Apostle Paul leaves no doubt about what he means when he shares: “Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant” (1 Cor 13:4).

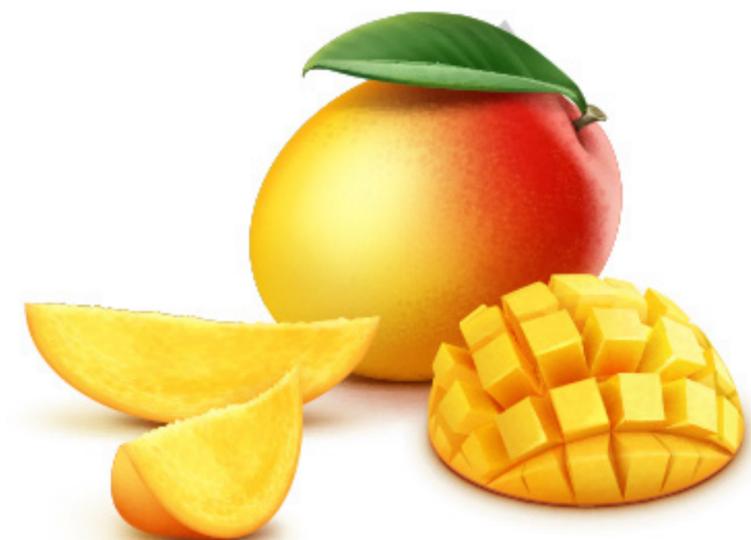
On the idea of producing the fruit of **love**, Ellen White says: “Obedience to the word produces fruit of the required quality—‘unfeigned love of the brethren.’ This love is heaven-born and leads to high motives and unselfish actions.” (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 519)

The truth is, farmers can plow, fertilize, and tend—but whether a crop succeeds in producing fruit is still the result of God’s divine gift of life. Likewise, it is through Christ’s freely given sacrifice that those living by His Spirit can expect to produce the Spirit’s fruit. This, of course, translates into being patient, kind, gentle and faithful in all our relationships; especially in our family relationships.

Today we urge you to pick the fruit of love. However, as a new day is born, pick a fruit each day that flows from God’s love—the central principle of your life—and by so doing become a blessing in your marriage, in your home, and in every one of your relationships until Jesus comes again.

PRAY:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Your precious love that surrounds us always. Help us to love one another with that kind of love today. In the name of Jesus, amen.



FRUITFUL **LOVE** ACTIVITY

You will need:

- A large sheet of paper for each person,
- Pencils, crayons, marker pens, etc.

Instructions:

- Give each of your family members a large sheet of paper and ask them to draw a big heart on the paper.
- Ask them to write inside their hearts ten things that other people have done which made them feel especially loved.
- When they have finished writing ten things that made them feel loved ask them to:
- Draw a red circle around the times someone said or wrote something loving.
- Draw a green circle around the times when someone did something to help you.
- Draw a blue circle around the times when someone showed you affection, like a hug.
- Draw a yellow circle around the times someone gave you a little gift.
- Draw a purple circle around the times someone spent time with you, doing something you enjoyed.
- Look at the colors on each of your hearts. What have you learned about the special ways in which you all like to be loved?
- Plan to do something loving for each person in your family this week, inspired by the ways they most like to be loved.



BIBLE VERSE ACTIVITY

You will need:

- Paper or card stock, in different colors if you like
- A heart template to draw around - fold paper and cut half a heart shape with the fold in the center - open out and check the heart shape, refold, and trim if necessary
- Scissors
- Pencils and coloring materials
- Hole punch (or cut slits in the hearts instead of punching holes)
- Yarn, string, ribbon, etc.

Instructions:

- Cut out one paper heart for each word in the Bible verse, plus an extra one for the Bible reference.
- Punch one hole on each side of each heart, near the top, in the same place on each shape, so that they can be threaded onto yarn, string, or ribbon to make a garland.
- Write each word from the verse on a separate heart shape and decorate the hearts if you like.
- Take it in turns to shuffle the hearts and then rearrange them in the right order to make the verse.

— **QUESTIONS** — TO TALK ABOUT TOGETHER

- Showing love to each other is a fruit of the Spirit because...
- Jesus showed love when...
- Other Bible characters who showed love for others were...
- I find it hardest to act in a loving way when...
- Some things that help me to be more loving to others are...
- One time that I was loving this week was when...
- One time when someone was loving towards me this week was...
- We can help each other to be more loving by...



M O N D A Y

JOY:

A FRUIT OF LOVE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22, 23

Let's learn about fruit from around the World:

KIWI

Kiwi fruit has light brown skin with an oval-like shape. Kiwi can be eaten raw, turned into a juice, added to baked goods, or used to season and garnish food dishes. The kiwi fruit was first found growing in China. At the beginning of the twentieth century, missionaries brought the fruit to the island of New Zealand, where it received its name “kiwi” after the small flightless bird native to the island.

Although Kiwi fruit is native to China and New Zealand, it can be grown anywhere the climate is consistently warm. They love sunshine and grow best against a sunny wall. Eating two kiwi fruits an hour before bedtime will help you fall asleep quicker, sleep more soundly, and feel better rested when you wake up in the morning.

TODAY'S SPIRITUAL FRUIT IS

JOY

Galatians 5:22 and 23 recites: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Close your eyes and think of a time when something filled you with joy. Perhaps it was seeing a loved one after not seeing them for a while or eating your favorite ice cream or receiving a surprise bouquet of balloons or flowers and it wasn't even your birthday. Maybe you received a promotion at work, or it was the birth or adoption of your child? Do you feel the flood of happy emotions filling your soul right now?

Dictionary.com defines joy as: “the emotion of great delight or happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying; keen pleasure; elation.” Another definition offered is: “a source or cause of keen pleasure or delight, something or someone greatly valued or appreciated.”

These definitions of joy are simply delightful and wonderful. Yet, what makes the joy that comes from having Jesus in your heart an exceptional and unique experience is that it goes beyond the moment. To be sure, this kind of joy stays with us regardless of what someone may or may not do for us. This joy is not on the surface only; rather, one that remains with us because we are filled with the Spirit of Christ.

This is the kind of joy Jesus was referring to when He said to the disciples, “These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full” (Jn 15:11). It is a joy

that is embedded deep within us so that we can brighten a room with a joyful attitude. We can make others happy to be around us and our attitude gives hope to others. Despite what challenges we are experiencing, our lives are filled with joy, and we can be positive and filled with encouragement for ourselves and for others.

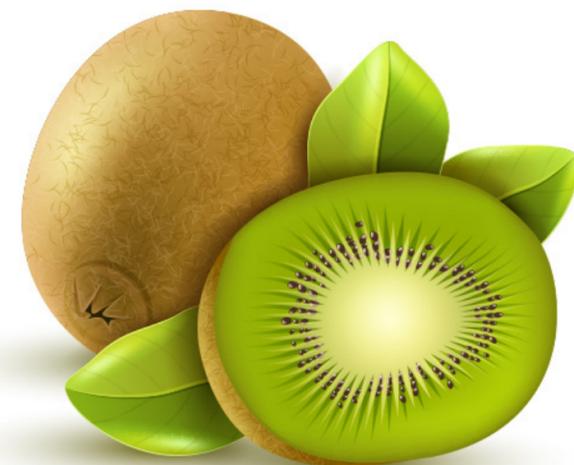
Many studies today show that laughter and positive emotions decrease pain and can reduce anxiety. Mental health experts say if you are feeling stressed, schedule a little time for joyful and fun activities, it will boost your ability to bounce back from stress, fight disease, solve problems and think flexibly. The wiseman Solomon tells us: “A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones” (Prov 17:22).

Ellen White shares godly counsel about how to develop and keep an attitude of joy when she offers: “The home may be plain, but it can always be a place where cheerful words are spoken and kindly deeds are done, where courtesy and love are abiding guests... Wherever the love of God is cherished in the soul, there will be peace, there will be light and joy.” (*The Adventist Home*, pp. 18, 19).

Choose the fruit of joy in your family today. Sing songs of gladness and worship as you allow the Spirit of God to fill your hearts with His everlasting joy, helping to create a space where angels love to dwell.

PRAY:

Dear God, how great it is to know that you care so much about us. It makes us leap for joy! Help us appreciate the daily blessings that you provide and find joy in every situation. In Jesus' name, amen.



FRUITFUL **JOY** ACTIVITY

You will need:

- Paper and drawing materials (optional)

Instructions:

- Encourage everyone in your group or family think about a time when they feel happy and joyful.
- Then ask each person to mime (act out without words) the time when they feel joyful for the rest of the family to guess.
- Enjoy doing this funny activity together
- Alternatively, everyone can write or draw something that helps them to feel joyful.
- Talk about the happiest things that happened in the last week and thank God for them.

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT TOGETHER

- Being joyful is a fruit of the Spirit because...
- Jesus showed joy when...
- Other Bible characters who showed joy were...
- When I am sad it really helps me when others...
- Some things that make me feel joyful are...
- I was joyful this week when...
- We can experience more joy in our family by...
- We can share joy with others by...
- Pray: Thank You, God, that we experienced joy this week when...

BIBLE VERSE ACTIVITY

You will need:

- A foam ball, balloon, or other soft and light object that you can throw to each other
- Strong inflatable balloons - yellow balloons with smiley faces if you can find them (or cut balloon shapes out of paper or cardstock)
- Permanent marker pens if you are using balloons, or other pens if you are writing on cardstock or paper

Instructions:

- Practice saying the Bible verse together. Or sing it together.
- Then stand in a circle with the ball or balloon. The person holding the ball says the first word of the verse and then throws the ball to any other person. The person who catches the ball says the second word in the verse, before throwing it to another person who says the third word, etc.
- Continue until you have completed the verse and the reference. Repeat the activity trying to complete the verse faster each time.
- Then search your Bibles for other verses about joy. Use permanent marker pens to write these joy verses on the balloons, and then hang them up in your home.
- Or write the joy verses on your cut-out balloons instead.



T U E S D A Y

PEACE:

A FRUIT OF LOVE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22, 23

Let's learn about fruit from around the World:

CRANBERRIES

The name cranberry is used to describe tart red berries produced by different plants. Fresh cranberries are stern, sour, and bitter. About 95% of cranberries are processed and used to make cranberry juice and sauce. Cranberry is widely used to promote overall health. It is especially beneficial to the eyes. They are also sold dried and sweetened. Cranberries are mostly grown and eaten in Canada, the United States, and Europe. The cranberries produced in Europe are smaller than the ones produced in North America.

Cranberry sauce is a traditional garnish at holiday dinners in the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, especially at Thanksgiving dinners in the United States and Canada.



TODAY'S SPIRITUAL FRUIT IS

PEACE

In Galatians 5:22 and 23, the Apostle Paul says: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

It is important to realize that there is only one fruit; love. All the other good qualities listed in the text are parts of the fruit of love. Today's trait of love is peace, which like love is to be seen different from the desires of the flesh like “hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions.” (v. 20). To be sure, the contrast between peace and the list of bad deeds could not be more noticeable. They truly come from different sources and lead to separate ending points.

The problem Paul is writing about in the Galatian church is one we are still wrestling with today: the separation between works and faith. On the one hand believing we can live a good life if we try hard enough, or the understanding that living a life of freedom is only possible as a result of God working in us by His Spirit. The truth is, depending on our own strength will only lead to actions of the flesh, while the *fruit of the Spirit* is a sign that Christ lives in us. This proof is often shown in the peace that we have.

In Romans 12:18 Paul reminds us: “If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all people.” This passage finds the Apostle Paul speaking about the importance of loving even when one is being treated badly. In fact, in the previous verse (17) he tells us how the people of God—those filled with His Spirit—should behave: “Never repay evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all people.” This, of course, includes how we should behave

with the members of our family; whether husband or wife, father or mother, daughter or son, sister or brother, aunt or uncle, cousin or grandparents; or any other person we are in relationship with.

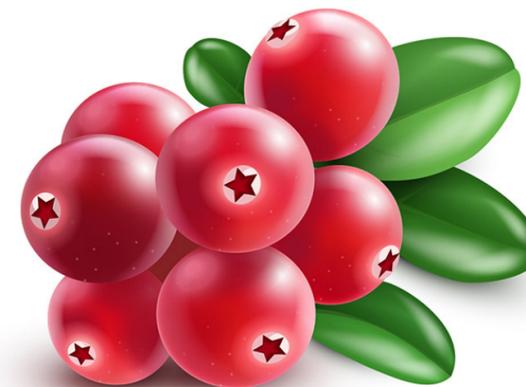
Paul makes clear, again, there is a difference in the behavior of the person led by the desires of the flesh and those who are controlled by the Spirit of God. Instead of hostility, anger and dissension, the person who is filled with God's Spirit will produce the fruit of love, displayed in a spirit of peace.

For the fruit of peace to be manifested in our lives each day, Ellen White in *Counsels for the Church* offers: “You need a daily baptism of the love that in the days of the apostles made them all of one accord...Surround your soul with an atmosphere that will strengthen spiritual life. Cultivate faith, hope, courage, and love. Let the peace of God rule in your heart” (*Counsels for the Church*, p. 175).

This kind of peace only comes as a result of being filled with the Spirit of God. So, today we encourage you to pick the fruit of peace not only about difficulties that you might be facing, but a relationship of peace with everyone in your family and others you are in relationship with.

PRAY:

Dear Heavenly Father, we ask for Your peace to be with us today. Help us to maintain a sense of Your presence and peace in our homes. May we find peace in every situation and circumstance as we always rely on You. In the name of Jesus, amen.



FRUITFUL **PEACE** ACTIVITY

You will need:

- A large piece of fabric, like a flat sheet or old tablecloth, to represent water
- A foam ball, sponge, or something light and unbreakable

Instructions:

- Read the story of Jesus calming the storm in Luke 8:22-25.
- Invite each person in the home to hold onto the piece of fabric, and imagine it is Lake Galilee.
- Practice making the fabric lake very still and calm, then very rough, by making big ripples in the fabric, and then calming the lake down by pulling the fabric tight again.
- Add the foam ball or sponge to the center of the fabric lake and pretend that it is the boat containing Jesus and the disciples.
- Then ask one of the children to retell the story of Jesus calming the storm. Ripple the cloth to make the stormy waves, and then pull the fabric tight again to calm the lake when Jesus commands the waves to be peaceful and still.
- Wonder together: How do you think the disciples felt before the storm, during the storm, and then when Jesus calmed the wind and waves? How do you think Jesus felt before the storm, during the storm and after it? What do each of you like best in this story? What is the most important message in the story for each of you? What does this story help us to understand about peace?
- Alternatively, half fill a plastic soda bottle with water. Tint it blue with a little food coloring, a drop of ink, or some paint. Add a cork or small piece of wood to the bottle to make a boat. Seal the bottle, turn it on its side, and use this bottle to illustrate the calm water, the stormy seas, and the peace after the storm.

BIBLE VERSE ACTIVITY

You will need:

- Cardstock, watercolor paper or heavy paper
- Crayons or painting supplies (paints, brushes, water, etc.)
- Or find a picture of a peaceful scene in a magazine or picture calendar.

Instructions:

- Cut out, or create with your art materials, a peaceful scene, perhaps with still water, flowers and trees.
- Use the picture or your artwork as a background and write the Bible verse on the picture to remind you of the peace that comes from God.
- Put the verse picture where your family will see it often or give it to someone who needs to experience God's peace.

— **QUESTIONS** — TO TALK ABOUT TOGETHER

- Being peaceful is a fruit of the Spirit because...
- Jesus helped people to experience peace by...
- Some Bible characters who were peacemakers were...
- Some things that make me feel peaceful are...
- It is hard for me to feel peaceful when...
- I was a peacemaker (I stopped an argument) this week when I...
- I experienced peace in a difficult situation this week when...
- We could experience more peace in our family by...
- Pray: Thank You, God, that we experienced peace this week when...

W E D N E S D A Y

PATIENCE:

A FRUIT OF LOVE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22, 23

Let's learn about fruit from around the World:

FIGS

Figs have a purple-colored outer skin and fade pink-to-white color flesh that makes it very appealing to the eye. It is shaped like a pear or a crushed teardrop, but its taste is nothing to cry about. On the contrary, the flesh is glossy and juicy, and they have a sweet, nutty taste and a chewy texture that makes it such a delight!

If you want to find an abundance of the most delicious figs, travel to Turkey, Egypt, Greece, or Morocco. Fresh as well as dried figs contain lots of good b-complex vitamins. They can be used for medicine and dessert.

TODAY'S SPIRITUAL FRUIT IS

PATIENCE

Paul writes in Galatians 5:22 and 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.”

Dictionary.com defines patience as: “the quality of being patient, as the bearing of provocation, annoyance, misfortune, or pain, without complaint, loss of temper, irritation, or the like.” Also, “an ability or willingness to suppress restlessness or annoyance when confronted with delay.”

Wow! It would really be something if each one of us could live our lives within the boundaries of these definitions about patience. Think about it. The relationship between a husband and his wife, or a wife and her husband would be completely transformed if instead of complaining, losing their temper or being irritated about everything they could just be calm. Well, for one, there would be greater peace in our homes. Our children would have the joy and blessing of growing up in an environment without tension and anxiety. Wouldn't that be something?

Imagine, that instead of parents yelling and screaming at their children because they are a little late on Sabbath morning, they would simply allow the sweet Spirit of God to give them the patience to respond calmly and with composure rather than being agitated or frantic and destroying the main reason for Sabbath? We know it is important to get to church on time, but even being on time could not be more important than exhibiting the Spirit of Jesus in our homes.

Yes, this fruit of love called patience is something to really pray for during *Family Togetherness Week of Prayer*. While some may think developing this kind of patience is impossible—based on their current family situations—we hasten to remind you what Jesus has to say

about this kind of thinking: “With people it is impossible, but not with God;” Jesus says. “for all things are possible with God” (Mk 10:27).

The truth is, when we admit that we don't have the capacity or power to respond with patience in difficult family situations, it is when God can perform the impossible on our behalf. We only need to call on Jesus, and He will fill us with His Spirit and produce the sweet fruit of patience in our lives. Then our family relationships and all other relationships will have the capacity to be transformed by the presence of the Spirit of God dwelling in our lives every day.

Ellen White's counsel on patience is: “If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit” (*Gospel Workers*, p. 475). We are also reminded by the wise counsel of Scripture: “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Prov 15:1).

We pray you will allow the Spirit of God to help you develop greater patience in your response to the members of your family and to others. That regardless of how difficult the circumstances might be you will choose to “walk by the Spirit” (v. 16) instead of indulging “the deeds of the flesh,” (v. 19). This will ensure that your family interactions, and your relationship with everyone else, will be filled with God's love and bring greater blessings to your home and to the church every day. So, Pick the fruit of patience today.

PRAY:

Dear Heavenly Father, we ask You to grant us patience today. Help us to practice patience in our homes each day. And may we remember to be patient with everyone we meet today. In Jesus' name, amen.



FRUITFUL **PATIENCE** ACTIVITY

The Toothpick Challenges!

- **Toothpick stack:** Stand the bottle on the table. Use a jar with a wider mouth if you have younger children. Give each person 12 toothpicks (or use dried beans or small stones if you don't have toothpicks). Take it in turns to lay a toothpick in a balanced pile on the mouth of the bottle. If any toothpicks fall off the bottle during your turn, add them to your pile. See who can place all their toothpicks safely on the bottle/jar mouth first.
- **Toothpick drop:** Stand the bottle on the table about 40 cm from the edge. Give each person 12 toothpicks. Take it in turns to sit down at the table in front of the bottle. Hold a toothpick of about 8-10 cm above the mouth of the bottle and try to drop the toothpick into the bottle. If it falls on the table, you keep the toothpick, and the turn passes to the next person. Use a jar for younger children, so that the task is easier for them to manage.

Other patience activities:

- Alternatively, do one of these activities together: make a jigsaw, build a construction kit together, plant some seeds, build a tower using only a pack of index cards, etc.



BIBLE VERSE ACTIVITY

You will need:

- Scissors, newspaper or magazine, glue, and paper.

Instructions:

- This activity requires patience!
- Work on your own, or as a family, to make a mini poster of the memory verse.
- Find large letters in the newspaper or magazine.
- Cut them out so that each letter or number is on a separate rectangle of paper.
- Arrange the letters and numbers on a sheet of paper to spell out the verse and its reference, and then stick them down with glue.
- Add other pictures from the magazine or newspaper to decorate the poster.
- Place it where it will remind everyone in your home to be more patient – maybe on the bathroom door, inside the front door or in the kitchen!

— **QUESTIONS** — TO TALK ABOUT TOGETHER

- Patience is a fruit of the Spirit because...
- Jesus showed patience with others when...
- Other Bible characters who were patient were...
- I find it hardest to be patient when...
- Some things that help me to be patient are...
- One time that I was patient this week was when...
- We can help each other to be more patient by...
- Pray: Thank You, God, for helping us to be patient this week when...

T H U R S D A Y



KINDNESS AND GOODNESS:

FRUITS OF LOVE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22, 23

Let's learn about fruit from around the World:

GUAVA

Guava has a somewhat thick, green or yellow skin with pink on the inside. It is distinguished by a sweet and somewhat gritty texture. It is known as a tropical fruit that is native to Latin America including Mexico, Central America, the Northern Caribbean and South America.

Guavas contain four times more fiber than a pineapple and four times more vitamin C than an orange. Guavas have a high level of an ingredient called pectin, so it is used extensively to make candies, jams, jellies, and marmalade. In South America you'll find guavas at family gatherings often offered by the host as an appetizer with cheese and crackers.

TODAY'S SPIRITUAL FRUIT ARE

KINDNESS AND GOODNESS

Galatians 5:22 and 23 reads: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, **kindness, goodness**, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Kindness is the quality of being generous, considerate, and friendly. There are many ways to practice kindness such as opening a door, sharing food with someone who is hungry, helping someone carry a heavy load, or simply sharing a smile.

In Ephesians 4:31, 32, the Apostle Paul teaches the essence of kindness to the members of the church at Ephesus when he shares: “All bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander must be removed from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Here Paul is speaking to believers who are Jews and Gentiles, equally claiming to be a part of the family of God. As such, Paul reminds them, their family relationships should be informed by the values of God’s kingdom. This means putting away five sins in all of their relationships: bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and slander. Malice must also be removed. And replace these repulsive behaviors with kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. Since this is the way God behaves with us—Paul goes on to say—you should also behave this way with one another. These deeds, including kindness, are meant to build up families and develop unity in the body of Christ.

Jesus practiced kindness every day in a very bold and radical way for His time. His kindness often extended to the “least of these”,

people who were not treated so well in society. He healed lepers, cast out demons from those who were possessed, and fed people who were hungry.

As for the virtue of goodness, it literally means godliness—to be like God—holy, pure, and righteous. Just like kindness, a pure heart is required to cultivate the fruit of goodness. Daily we are to exhibit the goodness (godliness) of Christ as Psalms 23:6 says, “Certainly goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and my dwelling will be in the house of the Lord forever.” Goodness is about having the character of Christ. Of course, goodness is not just doing kind or good acts—practicing goodness needs to become a way of life.

Speaking about people who would exhibit these qualities in their lives, Ellen White said: “All who became the subjects of Christ’s kingdom, he said, would give evidence of faith and repentance. Kindness, honesty, and fidelity would be seen in their lives...So the followers of Christ will give evidence of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 107).

Being transformed by God’s Spirit is what being a Christian is all about. So, today, choose to water the fruit of kindness and goodness in your hearts and in your homes. As you share a smile or words of encouragement with family members, neighbors, coworkers and friends, may everyone recognize that you are “walking in the Spirit” (v. 16) rather than living by “the desires of the flesh” (v. 17), because the Spirit of God lives in you.

PRAY:

Dear Heavenly Father, You are so loving, kind and good to us each day. Help us to be loving, kind and good to one another every opportunity we get. In the name of Jesus, amen.



FRUITFUL **GOODNESS** ACTIVITY

You will need:

- Some good fruit or vegetables and some bad fruit or vegetables
- Plate and knife

Instructions:

- Cut open the good and bad fruit and vegetables.
- Look at them carefully. What is the difference between the good and the bad ones?
- Can you always tell, just by looking on the outside, if something is good or bad?
- Would you like to taste the bad ones?
- What can you learn about human goodness from looking at these fruits and vegetables?
- What's the most important message for you, today, as you think about good and bad fruits?
- The good news is that, even though we can't make the bad fruit good, God is completely and always good. He always forgives us when we are bad, and wants to help us be good, because He knows we will be much happier when we make good choices and develop good characters.
- Prepare the good fruits for eating, and bury the bad fruit in the ground, where it can turn to good soil and help other things to grow.

BIBLE VERSE ACTIVITY

- Work together as a family to create some actions for kindness and goodness. Practice your actions together and then teach Galatians 5:22,23 bible verse to another family at church or in your neighborhood.

FRUITFUL **KINDNESS** ACTIVITY

You will need:

- Paper and pens or pencils

Instructions:

- Ask everyone to draw around their hand on a sheet of paper.
- On the palm of the hand outline write about a time someone was especially kind to you. What did they do and how did their kindness make you feel?
- On each finger write one thing you could do to be kind to someone else in the next week.
- Take it in turns to talk about the times someone was especially kind to you.
- Then read all the kindness ideas that you wrote on your hands.
- Talk about how you can work together to do these acts of kindness.
- Did you know that being kind to others is one of the best ways to feel happy yourself?
- Do something kind for someone in your community. Work together as a family to bake bread, purchase groceries, or tidy their garden.

— **QUESTIONS** — TO TALK ABOUT TOGETHER

- I think kindness is...
- The kindest thing anyone ever did for me was...
- Kindness is important in relationships because...
- Kindness is a fruit of the Spirit because...
- Jesus was especially kind to others when He...
- One time that I tried to be kind this week was when...
- We can help each other to be kind by...
- I think goodness is...
- Goodness is a fruit of the Spirit because...
- Jesus showed us how to be good when He...
- Other Bible characters who showed goodness were...
- I find it hardest to be good when...
- Some things that help me to be good are...
- One time that I tried to be good this week was when...
- We can help each other to be good by...
- Pray: Thank You, God, for helping us to be kind and good this week...



F R I D A Y

FAITHFULNESS:

A FRUIT OF LOVE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22, 23

Let's learn about fruit from around the World:

MATOKE

Matoke is a staple fruit in East Africa. It belongs to the banana family. It is green on the outside and white on the inside. Matoke fruit is used mainly for cooking when they are green and unripe. It is cooked very similarly to potatoes. They need to soften and cook through to be eaten. It has a savory taste, with very little sweetness, making it a great companion to several main dishes.

The fruit is harvested green, carefully peeled, and then cooked and often mashed or pounded into a meal. In Uganda and Rwanda, the fruit is steam-cooked, and the mashed meal is considered a national dish in both countries.

TODAY'S SPIRITUAL FRUIT ARE

FAITHFULNESS

Galatians 5:22 and 23 reads: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, **faithfulness**, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Dictionary.com defines faithfulness as: “lasting loyalty and trustworthiness in relationships, especially marriage and friendship.” Also, “the fact or quality of being true to one’s word or commitments, as to what one has pledged to do, professes to believe.” And, “the fact or quality of being dedicated and steadfast in performing one’s duty, working for a cause.”

This is the *Family Togetherness Week of Prayer*, an apt opportunity to highlight faithfulness as a fruit of love that comes from being filled with the Spirit of God. True faithfulness in our relationship with others—especially in our families—is fueled by God’s love in us. Each time we keep our promises to one another and are loyal to each other in our family relationships it demonstrates the fruit of God’s love in our hearts. Every time we are faithful to our marriage vows, whether at home or on a business trip, we display the fruit of love through our faithfulness.

While faithfulness is an outcome of life in the Spirit (vs. 22), sexual immorality, impurity, indecent behavior (vs. 19) are indications of the desires of the flesh at work. We must ask ourselves the question: am I faithful like Joseph was when he was tempted by Potiphar’s wife? Joseph’s response to Mrs. Potiphar’s inappropriate advances was: “How then could I do this great evil, and sin against God?” (Gen 39:9). Being filled with the Spirit of God means having the fuel to walk by the Spirit in faithfulness and at once standing against the desires of the flesh. These two forces are antagonistic, contradictory, discordant and incompatible with each other. One

comes from the One Who is the light, while the other comes from the prince of darkness.

We each have been given the choice to either walk by the Spirit (vss. 22, 23) or to engage in the deeds of the flesh (vss. 19-21). To walk by the Spirit means we will bear the fruit of obedience, which is what faithfulness is all about.

Addressing what it means to live a life of faithfulness Ellen White shares in *The Ministry of Healing*: “We need constantly a fresh revelation of Christ, a daily experience that harmonizes with His teachings. High and holy attainments are within our reach. Continual progress in knowledge and virtue is God’s purpose for us” (*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 503).

Yes, faithfulness is only faithfulness when we continue to grow in our daily walk with Jesus and live a life compatible with His teachings. This is only achievable when we are filled with God’s Spirit. So, pick the fruit of **faithfulness** today, not only in the easy matters of your family relationships, but also in the more difficult and challenging ones that demonstrate you have chosen to walk with Jesus.

May God bless us to be faithful today and every day until Jesus comes again.

PRAY:

Dear Lord, thank You for loving us so much that You stay close to us no matter what we do or where we go. Help us to remain steadfast in our love and in our faithfulness to You and to each other. In the name of Jesus, amen.



FRUITFUL **FAITHFULNESS** ACTIVITY

You will need:

- Objects to create a short obstacle course, either indoors, on a carpet, or outside on soft grass.
- Soft scarf or fabric to use as a blindfold.

Instructions:

- Set up an obstacle course with safe items to walk around, a blanket to crawl under, something low to climb over, etc. try to include about 5-6 different objects to negotiate.
- Then, blindfold each child in turn and have an adult guiding them carefully and safely through the obstacles.
- The adult will always make sure the child is safe, but holding their hand, and/or, giving them very clear instructions about how to move under and around objects.
- Once every child has been safely guided through the obstacles, sit down together and talk about the experience. The adult is faithful to the child. They are committed to keeping them safe and being with them through the ups and downs of their journey, and they don't let them down. How is this like God's faithfulness to us? How we can be faithful to God and to others, even when life is difficult?



BIBLE VERSE ACTIVITY

You will need:

- Large, smooth, pale stones; paint, permanent marker pens, etc.; varnish/sealant/slightly diluted white PVA glue.

Instructions:

- Clean the stones and paint them with a pale color. When they are dry, use paint or permanent marker pens to write each word of the verse, and the Bible reference on a separate stone.
- Take it in turns to arrange them in the correct order for the verse, until you have learned it well.
- If you wish, you could varnish/seal the stones to protect the paint and writing. Perhaps you could arrange them in your garden, or by your doorstep, to remind people to be faithful.
- You could also write an encouraging Bible verse or word on a colorful stone, varnish/seal it and leave it for someone to find. Or you could give it to them as a little gift, to encourage them to be faithful.

— **QUESTIONS** — TO TALK ABOUT TOGETHER

- I think faithfulness is...
- Faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit because...
- Jesus showed us how to be faithful when He...
- Other Bible characters who were faithful to God and others were...
- I find it hardest to be faithful/loyal/trustworthy when...
- Some things that help me to be faithful/loyal/trustworthy are...
- One time that I tried to be faithful this week was when...
- We can help each other to be faithful to God by...
- Pray: Thank You, God, for helping us to be faithful this week when...

S A B B A T H

GENTLENESS AND SELF-CONTROL:

FRUITS OF LOVE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22, 23

Let's learn about fruit from around the World:

DURIAN

In Thailand, durian is considered the king of fruits. It is one of the world's smelliest fruits and has a unique taste. To some, durian tastes like a mixture between scrambled eggs and flan (sweet egg-based dessert). It is usually a very large size and has a spiky, hard outer shell. On the inside it has a smelly, custard-like pulp with large seeds. It is a beloved fruit throughout most of Southeast Asia. Durian fruit is only grown in places with tropical weather. If by chance, the daily temperatures drop below 22 °C (72 °F), it will stop growing.

Most people will say “it smells bad but tastes so good!” This bad smell reputation has not prevented many people from enjoying its wonderful taste! It is considered a glorious delicacy.



TODAY'S SPIRITUAL FRUIT ARE

GENTLENESS AND SELF-CONTROL

Galatians 5:22 and 23 reads: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **gentleness**, **self-control**; against such things there is no law.”

Gentleness has a special quality that is often included with other virtues fueled by the love of God. In Paul’s letter to members at the church in Ephesus he states: “with all humility and **gentleness**, with patience, bearing with one another in love.” (Eph 4:2).

Made up of Jews and Gentiles and a conflicting mixture of ideas and customs, Paul shares with the Ephesians that harmony in their church is only possible through the presence of God. Basically, believers must be filled with the Spirit of God to exhibit God’s love through the fruit of **gentleness**, among several others (and self-control, of course).

Like the Ephesian church, every family—even if both spouses are from the same ethnic group—contains differences of opinions and customs that often clash in the process of negotiating everyday life. Yet, if we are filled with the Spirit of God, we too can relate in our families with gentleness, rather than outbursts of anger and selfish ambition.

And then, **self-control**, which is self-explanatory. The person who bears this fruit of love is best described as someone who lives in his or her circle of control. Someone who is self-aware, who understands that the only person he or she can control is himself or herself. In our families we tend to concentrate on controlling what others should do—according to our opinions—rather than

concentrating on regulating our own response to what others are doing. What we know, based on the stories in the Bible and also the findings of social scientific research, is that the more we focus on managing our response—being patient, kind and gentle—as a result of being filled with God’s Spirit, the more peace and joy we will experience in all of our relationships.

In describing a home where the fruit of gentleness and self-control are in use, Ellen White communicates: “Every home should be a place of love, a place where the angels of God abide, working with softening, subduing influence upon the hearts of parents and children” (*The Adventist Home*, p. 18).

For this reason, our prayer today is that each family in God’s church will experience a greater measure of *Family Togetherness*, because the presence of God’s Spirit in the members of your family will produce the fruit of love each day. Love expressed in joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **gentleness** and **self-control**, as you relate to each other until Jesus comes. So, pick the fruit of gentleness and self-control today!

May God bless us today and every day to walk by the Spirit, and together with our families be ready for the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!

PRAY:

Dear Heavenly Father, You are so kind and gentle with us. Help us today to practice gentleness and self-control in every situation in all of our relationships. In the name of Jesus, amen.



FRUITFUL **GENTLENESS** ACTIVITY

You will need:

- A raw egg, or something else that is fragile but can be safely broken (you might like to boil the egg first if you will need the egg to eat later)
- A small plastic bag into which you can put the egg
- A box, several inches/centimeters bigger than the egg
- Anything you can find to protect the egg when it is packed into the box – such as feathers, moss, bubble wrap, tissue paper, soft fabric, cotton wool, etc.
- String, tape, etc. to secure the box

Instructions:

- Carefully put the raw egg into the plastic bag. This will help to keep the contents of the egg safe to use in cooking later.
- Work together, using the packing materials, to create a safe place for the egg inside the box, trying to make sure that the egg will not break if the box is dropped.
- Once you have packed the egg safely, tie the box with string or secure it with tape.
- Now, gently toss the packaged egg from one person to the next around the group.
- Each time you toss the box, describe one way that you can be gentle to others.
- When you the box has been passed around the family 2-3 times, let the youngest person let go of the box so that it falls onto a hard floor.
- Let the oldest person in the group carefully unpack the box to see if the egg is still uncracked. Be happy together if the egg is all in one piece! You have been very careful to protect the egg!
- Discuss what you have learned about gentleness by doing this activity.

Alternative gentleness activities:

- Spend time learning how to care for a baby, or a young or small creature.
- Do a craft activity that requires a gentle touch.
- Go on a scavenger hunt for objects that remind you of gentleness.
- Spend a few moments being gentle in some way with each person in your family.
- Blow bubbles together – they are fragile and need us to blow gently.
- Practice cracking eggs, gently, without losing any shell, or breaking the yolk, and then make your favorite dish with them.

BIBLE VERSE — ACTIVITY —

- Say the bible text gently to each other.
- Or try writing the Bible verse on the ground outside, or on a wall, using a gentle feather dipped in water.

— **QUESTIONS** — TO TALK ABOUT TOGETHER

- I think gentleness is...
- Gentleness is a fruit of the Spirit because...
- Jesus was gentle when He...
- Other Bible characters who were gentle were...
- I find it hardest to be gentle when...
- Some things that help me to be gentle are...
- One time that I tried to be gentle this week was when...
- We can help each other to be gentle by...
- Pray: Thank You, God, for helping us to be gentle this week when...

FRUITFUL **SELF-CONTROL** ACTIVITY

NOAH'S STORY

You will need:

- A jar of buttons (or use nuts, small stones, safe seed pods, etc.)

Instructions:

- Take 5 buttons each
- Take it in turns to tell the story of Noah to each other without using the following words: boat, ark, ship, water, rain, animals, creatures, wood, dove, flood, mountain, people
- Every time the storyteller uses one of the “forbidden” words, they must put one of their buttons back into the jar.
- The winner is the person who has the most buttons left when everyone has had a chance to tell the story.
- Or repeat the activity until everyone has managed to tell the story without losing any of their buttons.
- You can repeat this activity with different Bible stories. Work together to choose the “forbidden” words.



BIBLE VERSE ACTIVITY

You will need:

- Paper, Pen or pencil

Instructions:

- Try writing Galatians 5: 22,23, using the hand that you don't usually write with or put the pen/pencil between your toes and try to write the verse.
- You will need to work harder at controlling the different part of the body to help you write!

— **QUESTIONS** — TO TALK ABOUT TOGETHER

- Being able to control ourselves is a fruit of the Spirit because...
- Jesus showed self-control when...
- Other Bible characters who showed self-control were...
- I find it hardest to be self-controlled when...
- Some things that help me to be more self-controlled are...
- One time that I was self-controlled this week was when...
- We can help each other to be more self-controlled by...
- Pray: Thank You, God, for helping us to be self-controlled this week when...

By Willie and Elaine Oliver with Activity Ideas by Karen Holford

Willie Oliver and Elaine Oliver are directors of the Department of Family Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists World Headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA.

Karen Holford is the Director of the Department of Family Ministries of the Trans-European Division.

Editorial Assistants: Dawn Venn, Karen Miranda.

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RESOURCE
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Living Fruitful Love

BY WILLIE AND ELAINE OLIVER



**Adventist®
Family Ministries**

**DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MINISTRIES
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS**
12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904, USA
301.680.6175 office
family@gc.adventist.org
family.adventist.org

 /AdventistFamilyMinistries

 @WE_Oliver

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