

## Nine Spiritual Elements for Christian Growth



**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**

When we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, the Bible says we receive supernatural help from the Holy Spirit. Because of that help, we can become more like Jesus, showing nine key characteristics—the fruit of the Spirit—in our daily lives. As we strive to grow as Christians, we can focus to improve these characteristics in our lifestyle; we will not only bring ourselves closer to God, we will become an example to others as to how a Christian should live, serve God and serve others.



The following devotions are prepared by TWP members to enable you to study, meditate and reflect how you can enhance your life through each of the nine “fruits”. Each devotion begins with a scripture and often includes others.

## 1. Love

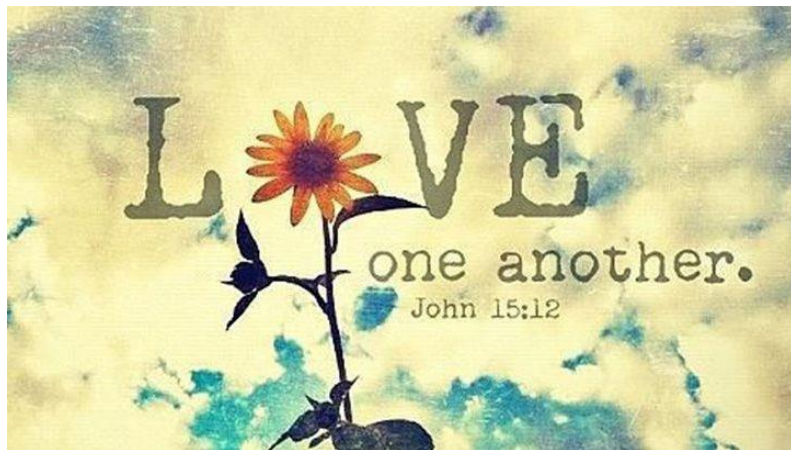
*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind & strength.  
Love your neighbor as yourself. Mark 12:30-31*

It's no coincidence that love is the first fruit listed in Galatians chapter 5. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God and love one another. When we love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and love our neighbors as ourselves, we show the world we belong to Jesus.

Our culture uses the word "love" so casually ("I love your dress!" "I love cheeseburgers!"), it can be hard to identify the kind of love Jesus spoke about in the Bible. What does it look like to love God with all we have? Like any relationship, love means setting aside time. Take time to talk with God and get to know Him through Bible study.

Until you know God loves you, it will be difficult to love God and love others. Once we love God, we can love others. But love isn't just something to talk about; Jesus taught us to *show our love* through actions. Find ways to love people through acts of service. Even a simple phone call can make a difference. Then share God's love with others. Do you know people who are hard to love? Love them anyway!

Dan and Rita Hull



## 2. Joy

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice. Philippians 4:4*

It's easy to rejoice when things are going our way. It's a different story when life is hard. But followers of Jesus are called to have joy all the time—not just when life is good. One of the keys to being joyful is knowing why we rejoice. We don't rejoice in worldly temporal things such as money, jobs, vacations, or relationships. We must rejoice in the Lord.

Billy Graham said, "Only the forward-looking Christian remains sincerely optimistic and joyful, knowing that Christ will win in the end. If you find yourself focusing on negatives, redirect your thoughts to Jesus and the promise of heaven. Nehemiah 8:10 states; *Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength*."

The hymn: "When We All Get to Heaven", written by Eliza Edmunds describes the joyful reunion when all believers will finally be together in our eternal home with Jesus. (John 14:2).

*My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance.* James 1:2-3

Diane and Tim Hutto



### 3. Peace

*I have said these things, 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

Jesus promised peace 2000 thousand years ago. He still promises it today. There is the peace of the world, the peace of God (the fruit of the Holy Spirit) and peace with God. We will know little of the first and none of the second until we have the third, “peace with God.” Romans 5:1 says that this peace comes from being “justified by faith,” that is, knowing Jesus as our Savior. Then, and only then, true peace comes from God, and there’s nothing like it!

Just as the fruit of joy does not depend on favorable circumstances, so God’s peace does not mean the absence of conflict or affliction. In fact, God gives us peace in the midst of tribulation. Nor is this peace dependent on circumstances, it focuses on God, and is confident and content that He is in control.

God gave us spiritual gifts to serve others. Spiritual fruit also impacts others. He gave it to us so that others could tolerate our company. And as we experience the peace of God we are to become peacemakers—blessed peacemakers—within our family, our neighborhood and around the world. Jesus said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” (Matt. 5:9) Ray and Kay Neathery



### 4. Patience

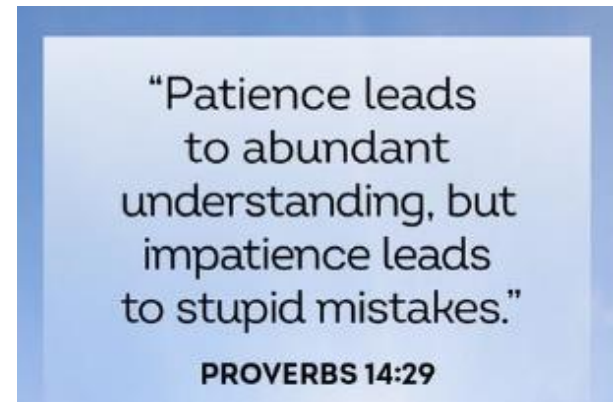
*Whoever is patient, has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.* Proverbs 14:29

We have all heard the saying “Patience is a virtue”, which originated from the poem *Pers Plowman*, by William Langland. It means “it is a good quality to be able to tolerate something for an extended period”. The definition of patience is **endurance**; even-tempered perseverance, the capacity for calmly enduring pain or trying situations.

Parents with young children pray constantly for patience. On one occasion Don was entering church while holding two of our children in his arms. A wise Christian woman asked him if he had been praying for patience. He replied “Yes! How did you know?”

She responded, “How does God answer your prayer for more patience?” Don could only stand there as if he had egg on his face when he realized that God increases patience through adversity. A better prayer from him would ask for mercy instead.

Patience involves waiting upon God’s timing and relying on the Holy Spirit for perseverance. The Lord tests us in unpleasant or demanding circumstances to enable His children to become stronger and more Christ-like. We must *be still and know that He is God* and will equip us on our path to wait for His perfect will to prevail. Alison and Don Greene





## 5. Kindness

*Kind words are like honey—sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.*  
Proverbs 16:24

Kindness is about being more than cordial. It's an intentional act that requires effort and genuine concern. Kindness comes from within, radiating the love of Christ.

Simple acts like giving up your place in line to a mom with children and taking a meal to a sick person are evidence of a kind heart. God wants all of us to manifest this spiritual gift—to remind all people what He originally intended for us here on earth.

A group of teenage boys planned a fun trip to Six Flags over Texas. They included a youth who had been born with a crippling illness. All day they wheeled Billy from ride to ride, safely loading him on and off the rides, attending to all his personal needs. All of us who knew of this act of kindness were moved beyond measure.

To show kindness every day in every way takes a great degree of humility. Philippians 2:3-4 says, *count others more significant than yourselves and look to the interests of others.* When you totally give your life to Christ, you will find that kindness becomes a natural act. Make an extra effort this week to offer a kind word, to demonstrate kindness to both friends and strangers.

E. M. and Ann Hay



## 6. Goodness

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

To practice goodness, we must first know what “good” means. Growing up, we were often told to “be good.” Maybe we understood this to be helping with household chores, not getting into arguments, or getting good grades so that we didn’t get in trouble.

But often the true meaning of “goodness” is overlooked. When we strive to be “good” only for our own benefit, it is not truly goodness that we practice.

God calls us to love everyone, including our enemies. Jesus said: *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another* (John 13:35).

We are to be just as much in love with each other as God is with us. When we act out of true goodness we seek the benefit of others. Our “good” actions come from selflessness, not for our own honor or recognition.

Goodness is sometimes as simple as small acts of kindness for others. It is in these acts of goodness that we reflect Christ’s character. And that brings glory to God’s name.

Randy and Becky Washington



## 7. Faithfulness

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for you are with me.* Psalms 23:4

Do you have someone to turn to with the most important things in life? Someone who sticks close by through the ups and downs? A loyal friend isn't to be taken for granted. You can be that kind of person, too.

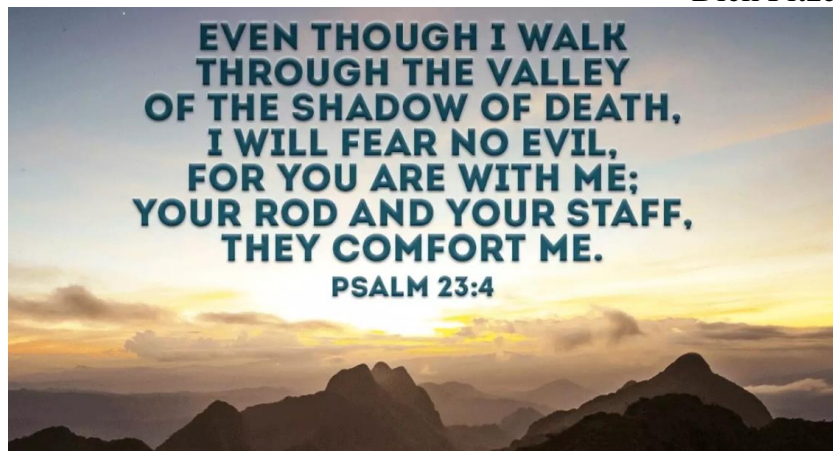
God is faithful. Are you faithful back? He wants us to be good stewards with what He's given us—time, talents, money, relationships. Can He trust you to treat or use these things wisely?

Being faithful to God also means not putting other things above Him. The Bible calls these *idols*—anything you worship or give “god-like” status to. An idol isn't necessarily a bad thing in and of itself—it could be work, social position, entertainment, looks—but can be a distraction when God doesn't come first. Is He at the center of all you do?

Our relationships are important to God. Are you loyal to those around you? Can people trust that you'll do what you say you'll do?

*Let your 'Yes' be Yes, and your 'No', No, lest you fall into judgment.*  
James 5:12

Dick Pitzer



## 8. Gentleness

*Don't let your unwholesome talk leave your mouth. Instead, say only what is helpful for building others up.* Ephesians 4:29

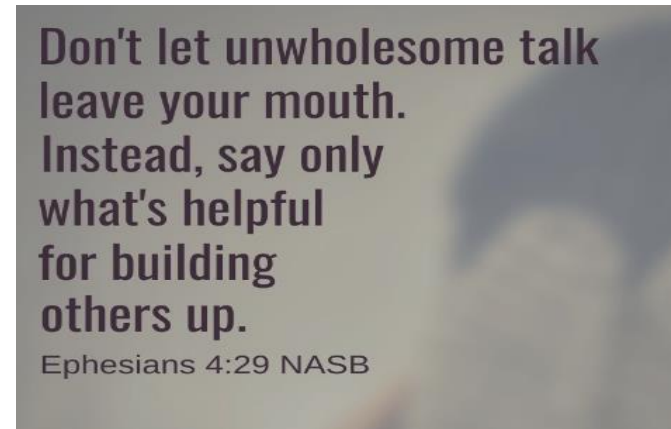
Who wants to be around someone that speaks in a manner that is harsh, abrasive, overly critical and angry? You're right; no one. Here are some ways to approach your own relationships with gentleness.

Ephesians 4:29 says: *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.* Build others up, don't tear them down. Believe the best, don't assume the worst. Distance yourself from harmful gossip. Anger may be justified, but how you deal with it can make or break relationships. It can also lead to bitterness, which helps no one.

Constructive criticism can be helpful, but be wary of criticizing others to the point of belittling them. Balance your feedback with compliments. Be mindful of your tone of voice and who's around when you offer input.

Gentleness is a strong hand with a soft touch. It is a tender, compassionate approach toward others. A gentle person still speaks truth, sometimes even painful truth, but in doing so guards his tone so the truth can be well received.

Cathie McDonald and Gary Elam



## 9. Self-Control

*God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.*  
2 Timothy 1:7

Our daily lives are sometimes flooded with temptations that often lead us to give in to our fleshly nature, which is to sin. It is then we must remember and lean on God's word that *He will not tempt us above what we are able to stand, but will provide us a way to escape.* (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Our choices of right and wrong not only affect ourselves, but those around us. They can create difficult circumstances, and at the end of each day we are forced to reflect on how we, as God's children, handled our God-given *self-control*.

Have you ever wondered why *self-control* is the last fruit of the spirit listed? Is it more difficult than love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness or gentleness?

Just like the athlete, we must practice *self-control* daily and apply it to our lives; for within it we will find all the fruits of the spirit.

When you find yourself tempted to give in to your fleshly desires which are not pleasing to God, take a moment and reflect on this gift that He has so freely given us; the spirit not of fear but of self-control, for it is the ultimate essence of our Christian walk with God.

Gary and June Allen



### MISSION, VISION, & CORE VALUES

Approved April 27, 2022

#### Mission

Go, make disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, teach them to observe all that Jesus commanded. Matt. 28:19-20



#### Christ-Centered

- We value the good news of Jesus as the reason for and the goal of everything we do.

#### Biblical Truth

- We value relevant Bible teaching that penetrates hearts, renews minds, and transforms lives toward growing Christ-likeness.

#### Genuine Worship

- We value worship that proclaims the glory of the triune God; celebrating his holy name, great power, and sovereign will.

#### Sacrificial Mission

- We value service and outreach that demonstrates our love for God by ministering to those in need and sharing the gospel with those who don't know Jesus.

#### Authentic Fellowship

- We value a faith family that shares spiritual gifts, personal resources, mutual acceptance, and caring accountability to encourage each other to become more like Jesus.

#### Sunday Worship Services

##### Sun City Campus

811 Sun City Blvd, Georgetown, TX 78633  
Traditional Worship

##### Rocky Hollow Campus

375 CR 245, Georgetown, TX 78633  
Praise & Worship

**Website:** [www.twptx.org](http://www.twptx.org) **Phone Number:** 512-869-1310

**Email:** [twp@twptx.org](mailto:twp@twptx.org)

**Visit our website for service times.**

