Introduction to Fruit of the Spirit Theme: Galatians 5:22, 23

Why Pray for the Fruit of the Spirit?
As Christians, our greatest desire is to become like Jesus. Jesus Himself told us several times in His Word that we need to be like Him. How can we recognize someone who is like Him? “You will know them by their fruits” (Matt. 7:16). What are these fruits? Paul tells us in Galatians 5 which fruit we will bear if we abide in Christ.

Christ longs to work His character in us so that we can be His witnesses to a world that is perishing. He wants us to be His channels so He can reveal Himself through us to those who do not know Him. “Our influence upon others depends not so much upon what we say as upon what we are” (Desire of Ages, p.142). We need the Holy Spirit in our lives to work in us the fruit of the Spirit. This is a work that we cannot do ourselves. We do not have the power to become like Christ. Only Christ’s power in us will shape and mold our characters and make us more like Him.

That is why we would like to pray in a special way during these eight days that the Holy Spirit will teach us how to abide in Christ and how to experience the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

Study guides will be provided for group and personal study and prayer. There may be more material than can be covered in the time available. Don’t feel you must cover everything. Encourage group members to do further study later at home. Let the Holy Spirit guide as to what is most needed by your group for the group study. However, remind the group of the theme and if the discussion goes to non-related issues, bring them back to the evening’s topic.

Suggestions for making these 8 Days of Prayer Powerful

Let us expect God to do special things for us individually and for the Mt. Tabor Church. But for this to happen, we must be willing to commit time, effort and dedication to this special week.

Two or Three…

It is nice to have more people, but you only need two or three. Whether you have a lot of people for Eight Days of Prayer 2015 or just a few, be assured that your prayers will be heard and answered in heaven. “Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:19, 20, KJV).

“Our Saviour follows His lessons of instruction with a promise that if two or three should be united in asking anything of God it should be given them. Christ here shows that there must be union with others, even in our desires for a given object. Great importance is attached to the united prayer, the union of purpose” (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 429).
Intercession…

Encourage each person to ask God to show them seven people to pray for during the ten days. These may be family members, friends, coworkers, church members, etc. Encourage them to pray that the Holy Spirit will work in them the fruit of the Spirit. Have them also ask God what else they should pray about for these individuals and how to reach out to them as God leads.

Claiming God’s Promises…

Encourage the members to claim God’s promises. This will help them increase their faith and remind them that nothing is impossible with God. We have provided a list of promises, but encourage the people to claim other promises as well. They will help people take their eyes off of their weaknesses and difficulties and set them on Jesus. For every weakness, for every struggle that we have, we can find Bible promises to claim. Encourage people to search for those promises and write them down so they can claim them in the future.

“With heartfelt simplicity we should state our needs to the Lord, and claim His promises with such faith and confidence that the congregation will know that we have learned to prevail with God in prayer. They will be encouraged to believe that the Lord’s presence is in the meeting, and they will open their hearts to receive His rich blessing. Their faith in your sincerity will be increased, and they will be ready to listen with willing ears to the instruction given by the speaker” (Evangelism, p. 146).

“God has a heaven full of blessings for those who will co-operate with Him. All who obey Him may with confidence claim the fulfillment of His promises. But we must show a firm, undeviating trust in God. Often He delays to answer us in order to try our faith or test the genuineness of our desire. Having asked according to His word, we should believe His promise and press our petitions with a determination that will not be denied” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p. 145).

Fasting…

Invite those joining you in 8 Days of Prayer to consider some type of fasting, such as fasting from TV, secular music, movies, the Internet, sweets, or other types of food that are hard to digest. Use the extra time to pray and study the Bible, asking God to help you and your congregation experience the fruit of the Spirit. Encourage the members to adopt a simple diet that will allow their brain to be more receptive to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Spirit…

Be sure to ask the Holy Spirit to show you how or what you should pray for in a person’s life or in a particular situation. The Bible tells us that we do not know what to pray for and that the Holy Spirit is the one making intercession for us.

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“We must not only pray in Christ’s name, but by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This explains what is meant when it is said that the Spirit ‘maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.’ Romans 8:26. Such prayer God delights to answer. When with earnestness and intensity we breathe a prayer in the name of Christ, there is in that very intensity a pledge from God that He is about to answer our prayer ‘exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.’ Ephesians 3:20” (Christ’s Object Lessons, p.147). Claim Romans 8:26 and ask the Holy Spirit to show you whom to pray for and what to pray for concerning certain people or situations.

Sharing…

Take note of special blessings you have received or evidences of God’s working in the lives of others during the 8 Days of Prayer. Be prepared to share these experiences with the Mt. Tabor Church family on Sabbath, January 17.
Introducing Conversational Prayer

1. Let group members know they do not need to pray aloud if they are not comfortable doing so. They can pray silently.

2. Instruct the group members to keep prayers short – just a sentence or two. Pray for one or two things and then let someone else pray. The idea is to think of the entire group as praying one prayer – when someone else is speaking, that too is your prayer.

3. Encourage prayer requests to be made in prayer rather than talking about them. Talking about the requests will take up most of your prayer time. Satan is thrilled if he can keep us talking about the problem instead of praying about it. If a list of needs is voiced before praying, many will think they need to pray for everyone on the list. Remind folks that what someone else mentions in prayer – that is your prayer too.

4. When someone prays a request, another person may pray a prayer of agreement before adding another request or other item to their prayer. (Matt. 18:19) If no one does this, the leader may ask, “Who would like to support this request in prayer?”

5. Don’t pray around the circle – members should pray at random so a person who does not feel comfortable praying will not feel exposed.

6. Any person may pray more than once during a time of prayer. However, try to help keep any one person from dominating the time.

7. At the start of a time of prayer the group leader may describe a prayer plan – such as following the ACTS format (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) – or any other prayer format. The leader then will verbally signal when it is time to progress to another segment of the prayer time. This may be done by modeling the type of praying the leader is suggesting.

8. If someone deviates from the format (such as praying a long prayer), the group leader should take the next opportunity to pray and model the requested format.

9. Let the group know that listening is also a vital part of praying. Don’t be afraid of silence between prayers – it is an opportunity to listen for God’s voice and also may give a quiet person an opening to pray.

Varied Prayer Formats

1. ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). Spend a short time in prayer on each of these areas.

2. Praying through the alphabet. For each letter of the alphabet, people in the group call out an attribute of God starting with the letter being focused on and praise God for how that attribute affects their life.

3. Popcorn praying – like praying through the alphabet, but using another format.

4. A prayer time of only prayers of Praise to God. Or a prayer time of thanksgiving for things God has done in each person’s life. Or prayers of intercession for a certain need.

5. Praying a psalm. Such as Ps. 23: “Lord, I thank you for being the Shepherd of my life…”

6. Praying (instead of just repeating) the Lord’s Prayer: For “Hallowed be Thy name,” express the meaning of the various names of God in the Bible.

7. Break up prayer time with appropriate praise choruses.
Questions to consider after studying the evening’s topic for Personal and Family Study

• Does this passage remind you of anything God has done for you? Praise Him for this.
• Does it remind you of one of God’s character traits? Praise Him for who He is.
• Does this passage convict you of any sin that you have not confessed? Do not be afraid to confess it. We encourage you to confess private sins privately and to confess publicly only your public sins. Thank God that He forgives you according to 1 John 1:9 and gives you victory over this sin.
• Does the passage reveal anything you still need to surrender to God? Surrender it to Him.

• Does the passage reveal anything you would like God to teach you? Ask Him to teach you.
• Does the passage talk about something you would like to have in your life, if only you had the power? Tell God about it and ask for His power.
• Does the passage talk about something you would like to see in the lives of your family and friends? Tell God about it.
• Has God spoken to you through one of these verses? Tell Him about it. Journal about it.

Prayer Suggestions

• Pray that God will teach you how to abide in Him.
• Pray that God will give you love in your heart for the lost.
• Praise God that gladness is a fruit of righteousness.
• Pray that God will give you His peace that surpasses all understanding.
• Ask the Lord to teach you how to repay good for evil. Pray for those specific situations in which you have to learn to repay good for evil.
• Ask God to give you the strength to be kind to everyone, including your family members and enemies.
• Ask God to show you how to manifest goodness toward your family members and your brothers and sisters in Christ.
• Pray that God will make you faithful in the small things. Tell him some of those small things where you need to learn to be faithful.
• Ask God to teach you how to be gentle.
• Ask God to help you hate the things of the world and give you love for Him and Him only. Tell Him about those things that you need to learn to hate.

• Mission to the Cities around the world.
• Pray for the young people in our church that they will find joy in following Christ. Lift up the young people from your church by name in prayer.
• Pray for increasing emphasis on the wonderful doctrine of Biblical creation with our earth being created in six, literal, consecutive days by the word of the Lord.
• Pray for the worldwide unity in every church and entity and respect for accepted church policy/process and full engagement in the mission of the church.
• Pray for humility in our lives so we will be united in our submission to God’s leading and the process of the church to make commonly-agreed upon decisions.
• Pray for the 60th General Conference Session in San Antonio, for the delegates and the decisions that are going to be made there. Pray that the Holy Spirit will lead in every decision that needs to be made.
• Pray for expanded emphasis on “Revival and Reformation” throughout the world.
Lesson 1 – Love

Read Galatians 5:22,23 and I John 4:7-21

Questions to consider:

1. Read Galatians 5:22,23 in its context with verses 16-25. What contrast is made here?

2. Why is the “fruit of the Spirit” singular and the “works of the flesh” (KJV) but “acts of the sinful nature” are stated as plural?

3. Some have suggested that love is the fruit of the Spirit, and the other qualities that follow are all parts of love. Why might this be?

4. “Love” is used in so many different ways in our culture. List ways in which God’s love as described in I John 4:7-21 is different from what we often call love today.

5. Since God’s love is so different from what we often call love, how can we receive the “Fruit of the Spirit” kind of love so it becomes present in our lives?

6. How would others know that the “Fruit of the Spirit” love is present in my life?
Application questions:

1. Do these passages remind you of anything God has done for you? Praise Him for this.

2. God is love (I John 4:8). How has God shown his love to you?

3. Do these passages convict you of any sin that you have not confessed? We encourage you to confess private sins privately and to confess publicly only your public sins. Thank God that He forgives you according to I John 1:9 and gives you victory over this sin.

4. Do these passages reveal anything you still need to surrender to God? Surrender it to Him.

5. Do these passages reveal anything you would like God to teach you? Ask Him to teach you.

6. Do these passages talk about anything you would like to have in your life if only you had the power? Tell God about it and ask for His power.

7. Do these passages talk about something you would like to see in the lives of your family and friends? Tell God about it.

8. Has God spoken to you through these passages? Tell Him about it. Journal about it.
Lesson 2 – Joy and Peace

Read Galatians 5:22, 23; Habakkuk 3:17-19; Isaiah 12:2, 3; John 14:25-27; Matthew 6:25-34

Questions to consider:

1. What most gives you joy? What takes joy away from you?

2. Would you have joy in the conditions described in Habakkuk 3:17-19? How could you come to have joy in such conditions?

3. Read James 1:2-4. What does James reveal is the source of joy even during trials? Read Hebrews 12:2. What enabled Jesus to endure the shame and pain of the cross?

4. In John 14:27 Jesus said the peace He gives is not “as the world gives.” How is Jesus’ peace different from that of the world?

5. In His sermon on the mount (Matthew 6:25-34), what did Jesus say is the way to avoid worry?

6. For many people peace is the absence of strife. And for many, both joy and peace depend on external circumstances. How does the Bible definition differ from this?
Questions to consider cont.

7. How would others know that the “Fruits of the Spirit” joy and peace are present in my life?

Application questions:

1. How has God brought joy and peace into your life? Praise Him for this.

2. Romans 14:17 says “The kingdom of God is … righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” What do I need to do to experience more of that peace and joy?
Lesson 3 – Longsuffering or Patience


Questions to consider:

1. How does Paul connect love with patience in I Corinthians 13:4?

2. What events and actions in Jesus’ trial and crucifixion tested His longsuffering or patience?

3. If you were treated as Jesus was, what feelings would you have had?

4. How can what Jesus went through in His trial and crucifixion help your attitude when you are unjustly treated?

5. What attitude of Jesus enabled Him to react with patience toward His persecutors? I Peter 2:23.

6. To what does Peter say we are called? I Peter 2:20-23

7. How can we develop the kind of patience Jesus had?
Lesson 4 – Kindness and Gentleness

Read Galatians 5:22, 23; Philippians 2:1-11; James 3:13-18; Colossians 3:12-17

Questions to consider:

1. What circumstances make it difficult to be kind to someone?

2. Do we deserve the ultimate kindness with which God has treated us in Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross? (see Romans 5:8)

3. Philippians 2:5 says “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.” How will accepting the example of Jesus affect how I treat others?

4. According to the example of Jesus, is there ever a time when it is alright to treat others unkindly?

5. How does James 3:13-18 contrast heaven’s “wisdom” with earthly attitudes and actions?

6. How would the atmosphere in my home, in my church, at my work, be different if by God’s grace I always followed the counsel of Colossians 3:12-17?
Questions to consider cont.

7. How will others know that the “Fruits of the Spirit” kindness and gentleness are present in my life?

Application questions:

1. How has God helped you to be kind to someone who was unkind to you? Praise Him for this.

2. "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." (Proverbs 15:1) How can you use this principle in applying discipline, or in reacting to a tense situation?
Lesson 5 – Goodness

Read Galatians 5:22, 23 and Romans 12:9-21

Questions to consider:

1. Carefully ponder each phrase of Romans 12:9-21. After reading these verses, how would you define goodness as a fruit of the Spirit?

2. Which part of the goodness portrayed in this scripture do you find particularly helpful to you right now? Which part is most challenging?

3. In verses 9-13, how does goodness operate within the family of faith?

4. In verses 14-21, how does goodness respond to those who are outside – maybe even hostile toward – the family of faith?

5. What do you find challenging in verses 17-21? Verse 20 tells us how to treat an enemy. What could be accomplished by “heaping burning coals on his head?”
Application questions:

1. Of the things listed in these verses, which two are easiest for you to do? Which two are the most difficult?

2. Is showing goodness and loving your enemies:
   (a) nice, but unrealistic
   (b) for Jesus and apostle Paul types only
   (c) a result of following Christ?

3. How is Christ causing the fruit of goodness to grow in you?

4. What relationship in your life most needs this lesson? Take a moment in silence to ask for God’s forgiveness and for the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control -- for this relationship.
Lesson 6 – Faithfulness and Self-Control (Temperance)

Read Galatians 5:22, 23; Hebrews 11; Matthew 4:1-11

Questions to consider:

1. Hebrews 11 tells of men and women of the Bible who were faithful even in difficult situations. Choose one of the following and tell how he or she was faithful and what their example means to you.

   Abel
   Enoch
   Noah
   Abraham
   Joseph
   Moses
   Rahab

2. What characteristic of faithfulness did all of these people exhibit? Hebrews 11:13-16, 39.

3. In what condition was Jesus when Satan came to tempt Him? How did Jesus keep from allowing hunger or physical need overcome His self-control?

4. How will others know that the “Fruits of the Spirit” Faithfulness and Self-Control are present in my life?
Application questions:

1. What most often overwhelms your self-control? What steps or attitudes could strengthen your will power?

2. What principles can you find in Proverbs 23:1-8 that might encourage self-control?