



# *FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT*

MENTAL HEALTH BIBLE STUDY

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# FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT BIBLE STUDY

## **Galatians 5:22–23**

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." (NIV)

### **The Fruit vs. The "Opposite"**

To understand the Fruit of the Spirit, it helps to look at the "Works of the Flesh" (Galatians 5:19–21), which Paul describes as the natural leanings of human nature without spiritual guidance.

### **Fruit of the Spirit vs Works of the Flesh**

Love vs. Hatred

Joy vs. Despair/ Bitterness

Peace vs. Anxiety/Discord

Patience vs. Impatience/Irritability

Kindness vs. Harshness/Indifference

Goodness vs. Malice/Hatefulness

Faithfulness vs. Unreliability/Betrayal

Gentleness vs. Arrogance/Aggression

Self-Control vs. Impulsivity/Excess

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## **PATIENCE**

- The Scripture: *"Whoever is patient has great understanding." (Proverbs 14:29)*
- The Mental Health Fact: Patience is essentially Emotional Regulation. When we practice "waiting," we are strengthening the neural pathways between the Amygdala (impulse) and the Prefrontal Cortex (logic). Practicing patience prevents emotional outbursts or feelings of panic.
- Reflection: Identify one "waiting" moment today where you can practice "patience".

## **KINDNESS**

- The Scripture: *"Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones." (Proverbs 16:24)*
- The Mental Health Fact: Acts of kindness cause the release of Serotonin and Endorphins. These hormones don't just cause "nice feelings", it physically lowers blood pressure and reduces the stress hormone Cortisol.
- Reflection: What is one "kind word" (encouragement) you can give yourself or someone else today?

## **GOODNESS**

- The Scripture: *"For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth." (Ephesians 5:9)*
- The Mental Health Fact: Living a life of "Goodness" can be described as following one's core values, which is known as Value-Congruent Living. When our actions match our internal beliefs, we reduce Cognitive Dissonance and increase resilience and mental well being.
- Reflection: Which of your core values did you honor today?

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## **FAITHFULNESS**

- The Scripture: "Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures. (Psalm 119:90)
- The Mental Health Fact: Having someone that is faithful to us, helps us develop a sense of security. Knowing God remains a consistent spiritual anchor provides a "Secure Base in our lives. This allows the brain to move out of "Survival Mode" and into a state of confidence because our brain knows it has a safe place to return to.
- Reflection: List out three things about God's character that have never changed, even when your feelings fluctuate.

## **GENTLENESS**

- The Scripture: "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near." (Philippians 4:5)
- The Mental Health Fact: Did you know self criticism actually activates the brain's fight or flight system? However, Gentleness towards oneself activates the part of our brain that releases oxytocin. This shuts down the fight or flight response to failure and allows for faster emotional recovery.
- Reflection: If you made a mistake today, what would God say to you right now?

## **LOVE**

- The Scripture: "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear." (1 John 4:18)
- The Mental Health Fact: By reflecting on being loved, the brain releases Oxytocin. This love hormone helps calm the amygdala, which is the part of the brain responsible for fear. Showing oneself love, acts as a protective shield against the symptoms of a panic attack.
- Reflection: Visualize a moment you felt truly safe and loved. Take a moment to reflect on that feeling for 30 seconds.

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## JOY

- The Scripture: "The joy of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)
- The Mental Health Fact: While happiness comes and goes, joy is a state of being content. Although happiness and joy are wonderful positive emotions, joy on the other hand is an emotion one experiences despite life circumstances. Joy is developed through identifying one's life purpose and being able to develop resilience, despite life's circumstances.
- Reflection: Name one thing you are grateful for today that has nothing to do with anything you earned?

## PEACE

- The Scripture: "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds." (Philippians 4:7)
- The Mental Health Fact: Being at peace replicates a regulated Nervous System. One can practice moments of peace by slowing your breath and focusing on God's presence. Practicing breath work helps the body move out of survival mode and into a state of rest and peace.
- Reflection: How might you practice peace in your busy life?

## SELF-CONTROL

- The Scripture: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." (2 Timothy 1:7)
- The Mental Health Fact: Self-control is developed in the Prefrontal Cortex. When we are stressed or traumatized, the logical part of our brain shuts down leading to impulsive reactions. Practicing self control helps strengthen the Prefrontal Cortex to not shut down in high anxiety and stressful situations.
- Reflection: Name one boundary you can set today to protect your emotional and mental wellbeing?



