

Family Fellowship – w/c 19<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020

### **Fruit of the Spirit: Self-Control**

This week is the last of the series focused on the Fruit of the Spirit, ending with Self-Control. During the first half of the week the aim is to help the children to understand that it is God, and the Holy Spirit within us that results in the ability to practice self-control. If we think it is just a matter of us trying harder then we will ultimately fail and beat ourselves up about that failure.

Tuesday's thoughts will be focused on that need to rely on God and Wednesday will set out the example that Jesus set for us.

The second half of the week is aimed at asking the children to think what this means practically in their day to day lives, areas where we can ask God to help us practice the gift of self-control in our lives. As parents/grandparents etc we will have a fair idea of the challenges that are prevalent to our own kids everyday lives, so although the last 2 days focus on Thoughts, Speech and Actions, please take the opportunity to make the discussion relevant to your own family.

As individuals, and a Church family, we have experienced 7-8 months where exercising self-control during current circumstances, life-changes, frustrations and even loss is a daily challenge. This week may be a good opportunity to point the children towards God, as they perhaps struggle with school challenges and missing out on family/friends time.

**Prayer:** At the start of the week pray that both the children, and us as adults, engage in the family fellowship time and that God will teach us something new that we can apply in our lives, for his Glory.

*It may be useful to look at verses in alternative versions of the Bible in case there is one that makes the message clearer to the children.*

## Monday 19 October

**Chat:** Monday is a good opportunity to refocus on the Fruit of the Spirit we have learned over the past months. Before reading the passage ask the children how many they can name from memory.

**Read:** Galatians 5 v 22-23

**Chat:** After reading through the passage let the children choose one (or more) of the Fruit of the Spirit that we have learned to date. Encourage them to;

- a) Explain what they understand it to mean
- b) Give an example of how they might practically show this particular gift (potentially relevant to current circumstances?)

Encourage the answers provided and end by re-iterating the understanding that it is God and the Holy Spirit within us that helps us to act in Love, with Patience, with Joy ... etc

**Pray:** Give thanks to God that he has given us guidance in the Bible and help through the Holy Spirit to lead lives that are pleasing to him. Ask for God's help to trust fully in him and that you may help display the Fruit of the Spirit to others.

## Tuesday 20 October

**Read:** Romans 7 v 18-20

**Chat:** Do you ever find yourself knowing what the right thing to do is, and then do the exact opposite! Without wanting to, without setting out to do the wrong thing – you end up doing it anyway!

*(Encourage examples from the children)*

Paul refers to this in the passage. The first thing to understand is that although it is wrong – we all do this, adults as well, Paul too.

The ability to say no to these temptations, in other words not give in and do the wrong thing is sometimes referred to as having self-control. Being careful of what we think, say and do is very difficult and none of us can do it on our own.

The passage we read in Romans shows us we have a sinful nature, and because of that, self-control is not something we can succeed at on our own. The good news is if we trust in God and ask him to help us we can get better at controlling our words and actions and responses to people.

**Pray:** Take some of the examples that the children have shared above and pray specifically for God to help us depend on him and the Holy Spirit for the strength to make the right decisions in what we say and do. That we would look to him and focus on him before opening our mouths or making a decision.

## **Wednesday 21 October**

**Chat:** We talked yesterday about how we needed to look to God to help us for everything, including to be more self-controlled. Today's passage is to show us that when Jesus was tempted to do wrong he looked to God and God's word to resist temptation.

### **Read: Matthew 4 v 1-11**

**Chat:** Jesus was tempted by the devil when he was very tired, when he was alone, and when he was hungry. This meant that it would have been easy to do the wrong thing if he had taken his eyes off God. However, look at how Jesus reacted. He holds onto the promises of God, he knows the word of God, and speaks these words back to the devil.

The same way Jesus was tempted at his weakest moment; we can be tempted to give in and not have the self-control to do the right thing.

We are encouraged by this passage though; God is always there to help us as he was with his Son. We have the Bible and God's promises in there to hold onto just as Jesus held onto God's word.

If we ever feel it is too hard to do the right thing and we'll never get it right – think about how Jesus was able to show self-control in difficult circumstances because he depended on God and the Holy Spirit.

**Pray:** Today we give thanks for the Bible, that there are many examples that God has given us for encouragement when there are things we are struggling to say no to. Pray that we will ask for God's help and read his word when tempted and finding it hard to be self-controlled.

**Thursday 22 October**

*For Adults – As mentioned in the intro please feel free to alter the next couple of days to best suit your child's current situation. There may be something specific it may help to bring into the conversation when thinking about self-control. Children are adaptable but some of the challenges they are facing today are different from 8 months ago and as parents/grandparents etc we need to ask for God's help to discern those challenges and encourage children through them.*

**Read: Psalm 19 v 14 (Optional – James 1 v 19-20 / Prov 13 v 3 and 15 v 1)**

**Chat:** We have learned this week that God is there to help when we need to have self-control over what we think, say and do.

Today let's think about the things we say and what God teaches us about how good or hurtful our words can be.

In Psalm 19 we are told that everything we think (into ourselves) and everything we say (out loud) should be things that will make God happy. The verses in James and Proverbs all have the same message. When we say nice things it can make other people very happy and encourage them, but when we say nasty things, that can make people very sad. The tongue is one of the smallest bits of our body but if it is used to say hurtful things it can cause the most harm to people, our friends and even family.

Can you think of things that we say that can;

- a) Encourage and make others happy
- b) Hurt and discourage other people

Sometimes even when we know its wrong to say something it just comes out – that is where we can put into practice what we have learned this week. When we are struggling to have control over the things we say we need to pray to God to help us – trying on our own won't work (*Tuesday / Romans passage*)

**Pray:** Today we want to pray that God will help us to have self-control over what we think and the words we say. That the Holy Spirit will live in us and the fruit of that spirit will result in us saying encouraging and loving things to those around us. When we feel like saying something that isn't pleasing to God that he would help us to have self-control.

**Friday 23rd October**

**Read: James 1 v 19-20**

**Chat:** Yesterday we thought about having control over what we say – today we are going to think about what we do / how we act / how we react.

Can you think of a good way and bad way to react to the following situations? In each one, answer honestly how you might feel and what you might want to do

- Someone in school keeps hurting your feelings and leaving you out of games in the playground
- Your mum asks you to leave your toys/games console and tidy your room straight away
- When you really want something new but your dad or mum say you have to be patient

Having self-control in these examples can be doing something that is not easy to do, or something you really just don't want to do. That's why we need God's help – our natural reaction might be to get angry, be cheeky or be disobedient, but with the spirit of God in us we can gradually control what we say and what we do in a way that will please God.

**Pray:** Pray that God will help us to be in control of our actions. Maybe pray for our friends and family, giving thanks to God for them, forgiveness for when we say things we don't mean, and pray for opportunities to help them and encourage them.

## Saturday 24 October

**Chat:** Saturday can be used for reflection on one of two things – you choose what you feel would be more beneficial for the children.

- A) What we have learned this week on Self-Control
- B) A final overview of the Fruit of the Spirit

### A. Self-Control

Perhaps let the children start by running through what they remember first and if they have any questions or key points that they would like to discuss further

#### Recap Tips

- Romans 7, by default we are sinful and will not naturally be good at controlling our thoughts, words and actions
- It isn't something we can fix ourselves / and not something we should beat ourselves up about
- We need to trust in God, it is by him and the Holy Spirit we can help control our actions
- Use Biblical examples of those who demonstrated self-control – Jesus, Job, Joseph, Daniel etc if it helps
- Encourage the children that when they are tempted to say or do something that they know is wrong to focus on God, his word and pray to him.

### B. Fruit of the Spirit

Really a repeat of Mondays overview but potentially taking this a step further. As a family can each of the children (and maybe all the family) identify a fruit of the spirit where they feel they could pray to God to help them with and potentially challenge themselves by listing some practical ways they can show the love of God to others around them?

#### **Prayer:**

On Saturday it would be good to pray and give thanks for the week that has passed, asking the Children to name something they are thankful for. Also for the church service in the morning and that God would bless all who are have taken part and all who will tune in to watch.

## **Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October**

As always on Sunday ask the children to listen to the service and in particular the children's talk – was there any questions they might have from the children's talk? Maybe read through the Bible passage again if it helps. Encourage everyone to share the key message they took from the children's talk.

### **Prayer:**

Encourage the children to think about their church family and maybe jog their memory on some of the folks that they have not seen or thought of in a while. Depending on how many children you have ... encourage them not only to name some folks in the following groups, but also to remember something nice about them and suggest a prayer point for each.

Some ideas but not a conclusive list.....

- One of their friends they only see in church
- One of the new babies (and new parents!) in the church
- One of the ministry team
- One of the choir or musicians
- A leader in an organisation
- A person who maybe hasn't been too well
- One of the C.L.I.C.K leaders