

WOMEN'S R&R BIBLE STUDY 2026



*Cultivating God's Character
In Our Everyday Life*



STUDY CALENDAR

WEEK 1: SEPT. 14/15

WELCOME

WEEK 2: SEPT. 21/22

INTRODUCTION

WEEK 3: SEPT. 28/29

LOVE

WEEK 4: OCT. 5/6

JOY

WEEK 5: OCT. 12/13

PEACE

WEEK 6: OCT. 19/20

LONGSUFFERING

WEEK 7: OCT. 26/27

KINDNESS

WEEK 8: NOV. 2/3

GOODNESS

WEEK 9: NOV. 9/10

FAITHFULNESS

WEEK 10: NOV. 16/17

GENTLENESS

LESSON 10: NOV. 23/24

SELF-CONTROL

WELCOME

Welcome to our 11-Week study on the Fruit of the Spirit! I'm so excited to study this topic together. Although the phrase "Fruit of the Spirit" comes from Galatians 5, the idea of fruit produced by the Spirit flows throughout the New Testament. Although the Fruit of the Spirit is singular in the Greek, all of the characteristics listed come from the same source. Every believer should bear the entire of the Spirit, not trying to practice them in piecemeal fashion, but yielding ourselves totally to the Holy Spirit, so we grow in all the virtues mentioned. But for the sake of our study, we will be studying them one at a time, focusing on one each week, praying that the Holy Spirit would help us grow spiritually in that area. Kind of like a fruit challenge!

Each week we will use the same format. In section one, our particular fruit will be defined, examining key Scriptures. In the next section, we will look at how Christ embodied that fruit, looking at various examples from His life. We will then look at some other Bible characters and how their lives were either full of fruit or lacking. In section 4, we will discuss how that fruit is manifested when our lives are challenged through adversity or pressure. In our fifth and final section, we will take the time to reflect and apply what we've learned. We will be asked questions about what we learned, what spoke to our hearts, and how we can live it out in our everyday lives. A Fruit Reflection Section will be included for you to process your thoughts and experiences.

We will meet in the Fellowship Hall together and then break into small groups to go over the homework.

If you have any questions, please contact Kelly at kbell@calvarymurrieta.com



FRUIT PAINTINGS BY GENESIS REEDER

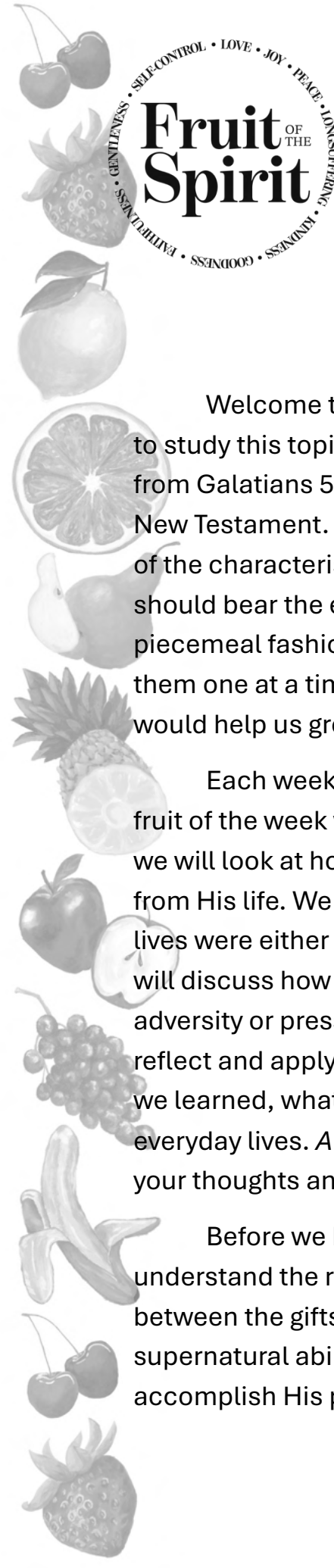


WEEK ONE

INTRODUCTION

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

Galatians 5:22-23

A circular logo with the text "Fruit OF THE Spirit" in the center. Surrounding the text are various fruits and the words "SELF-CONTROL • LOVE • JOY • PEACE • LONGSUFFERING • KINDNESS • GOODNESS • FAITHFULNESS • GENTLENESS".

Fruit OF THE Spirit

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

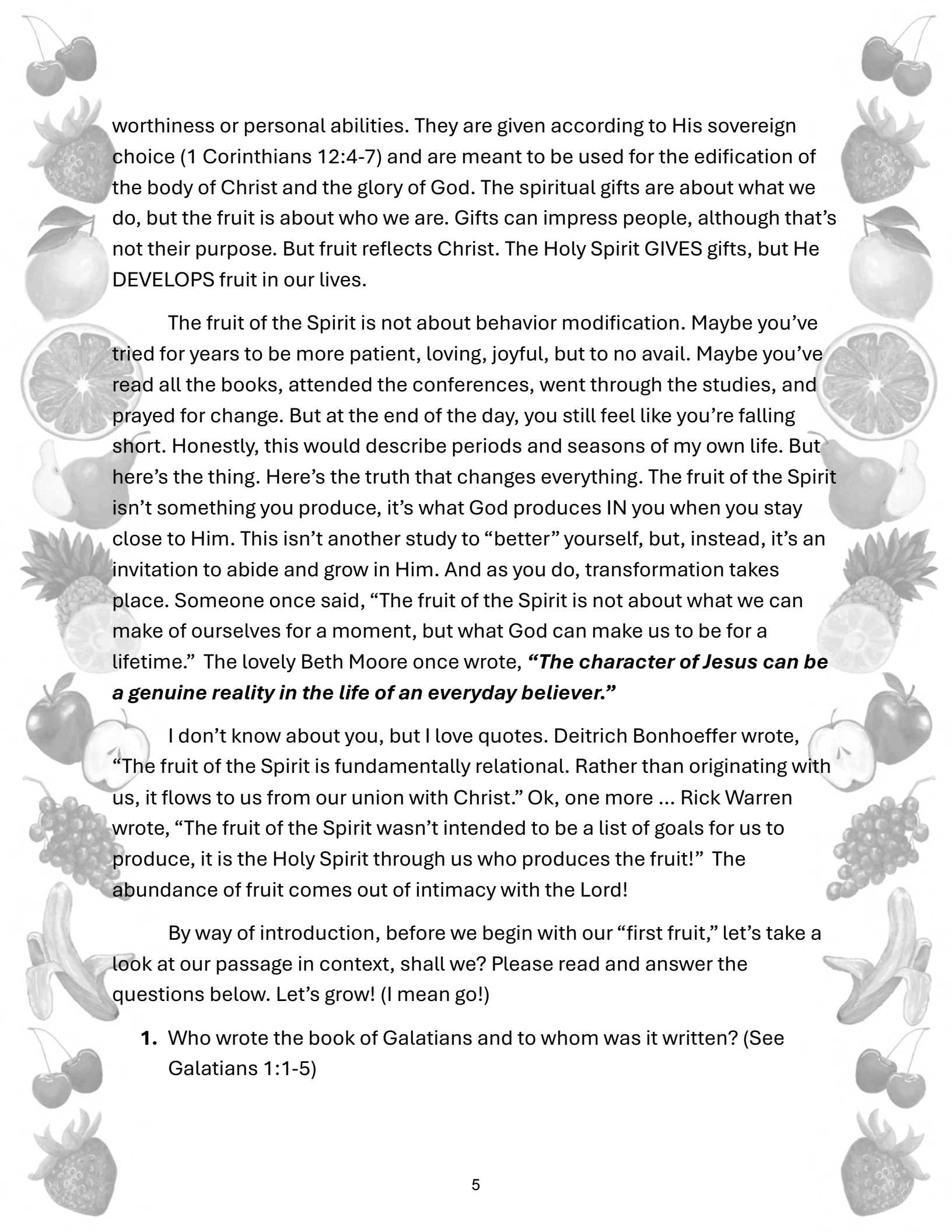
"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Galatians 5:22-23

Welcome to our 10-Week study on the Fruit of the Spirit! I'm so excited to study this topic together. Although the phrase "Fruit of the Spirit" comes from Galatians 5, the idea of fruit produced by the Spirit flows throughout the New Testament. Although the Fruit of the Spirit is singular in the Greek, each of the characteristics listed come from the same source. Every believer should bear the entire fruit of the Spirit, not trying to practice them in piecemeal fashion, but yielding ourselves totally to the Holy Spirit, so we grow them one at a time, focusing on one each week, praying that the Holy Spirit would help us grow spiritually in that area. Kind of like a *fruit challenge*!

Each week we will use the same format. In section one, our particular fruit of the week will be defined, examining key Scriptures. In the next section, we will look at how Christ embodied that fruit, looking at various examples from His life. We will then look at some other Bible characters and how their lives were either full of fruit or lacking, and the result of both. In section 4, we will discuss how that fruit is manifested when our lives are challenged through adversity or pressure. In our fifth and final section, we will take the time to reflect and apply what we've learned. We will be asked questions about what we learned, what spoke to our hearts, and how we can live it out in our everyday lives. A *Fruit Reflection Section* will be included for you to process your thoughts and experiences.

Before we begin, it's important to look at our passage in context, and understand the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives. There is a big difference between the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit. The gifts are supernatural abilities the Holy Spirit gives to believers as He wills, to accomplish His purposes. They are given by grace and are not based on our



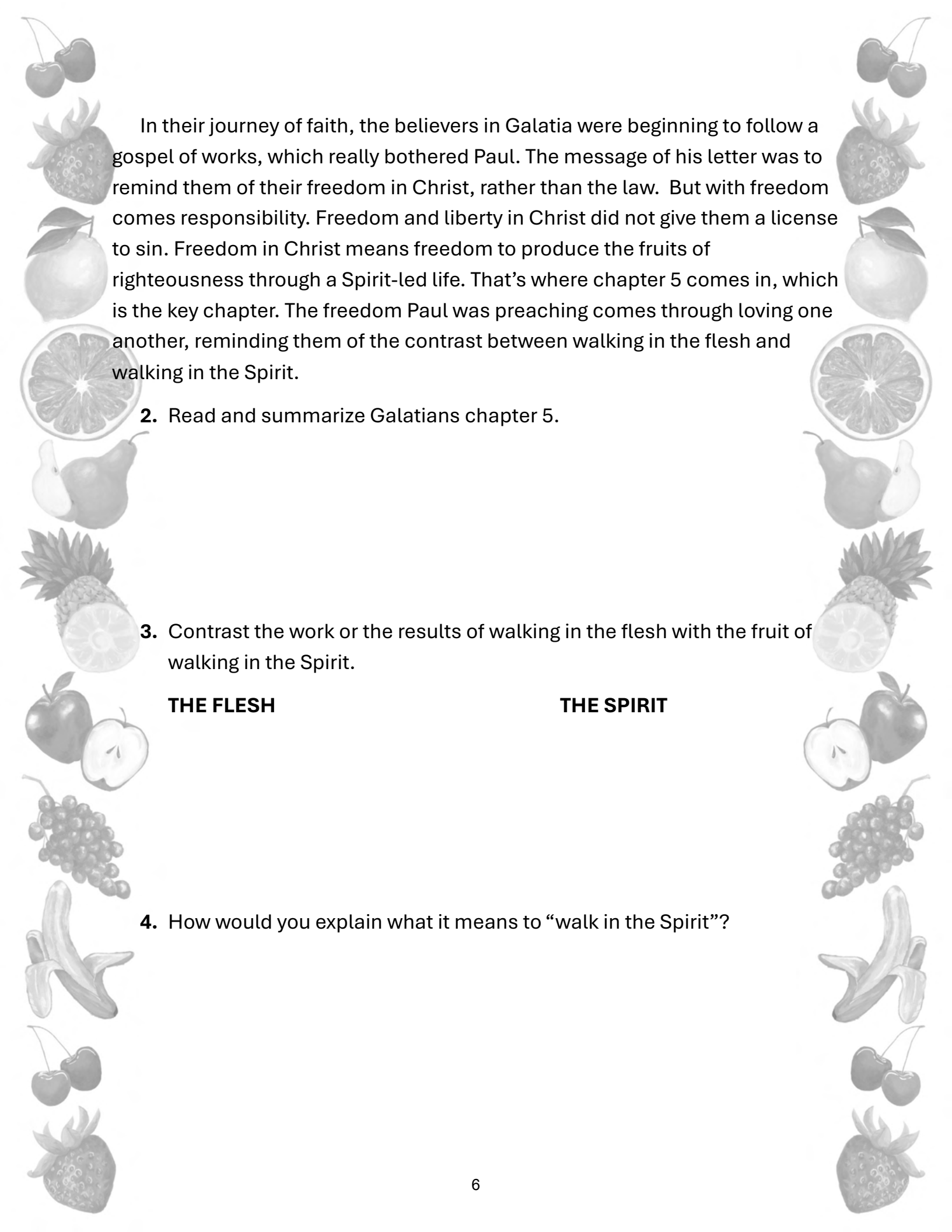
worthiness or personal abilities. They are given according to His sovereign choice (1 Corinthians 12:4-7) and are meant to be used for the edification of the body of Christ and the glory of God. The spiritual gifts are about what we do, but the fruit is about who we are. Gifts can impress people, although that's not their purpose. But fruit reflects Christ. The Holy Spirit GIVES gifts, but He DEVELOPS fruit in our lives.

The fruit of the Spirit is not about behavior modification. Maybe you've tried for years to be more patient, loving, joyful, but to no avail. Maybe you've read all the books, attended the conferences, went through the studies, and prayed for change. But at the end of the day, you still feel like you're falling short. Honestly, this would describe periods and seasons of my own life. But here's the thing. Here's the truth that changes everything. The fruit of the Spirit isn't something you produce, it's what God produces IN you when you stay close to Him. This isn't another study to "better" yourself, but, instead, it's an invitation to abide and grow in Him. And as you do, transformation takes place. Someone once said, "The fruit of the Spirit is not about what we can make of ourselves for a moment, but what God can make us to be for a lifetime." The lovely Beth Moore once wrote, ***"The character of Jesus can be a genuine reality in the life of an everyday believer."***

I don't know about you, but I love quotes. Deitrich Bonhoeffer wrote, "The fruit of the Spirit is fundamentally relational. Rather than originating with us, it flows to us from our union with Christ." Ok, one more ... Rick Warren wrote, "The fruit of the Spirit wasn't intended to be a list of goals for us to produce, it is the Holy Spirit through us who produces the fruit!" The abundance of fruit comes out of intimacy with the Lord!

By way of introduction, before we begin with our "first fruit," let's take a look at our passage in context, shall we? Please read and answer the questions below. Let's grow! (I mean go!)

1. Who wrote the book of Galatians and to whom was it written? (See Galatians 1:1-5)



In their journey of faith, the believers in Galatia were beginning to follow a gospel of works, which really bothered Paul. The message of his letter was to remind them of their freedom in Christ, rather than the law. But with freedom comes responsibility. Freedom and liberty in Christ did not give them a license to sin. Freedom in Christ means freedom to produce the fruits of righteousness through a Spirit-led life. That's where chapter 5 comes in, which is the key chapter. The freedom Paul was preaching comes through loving one another, reminding them of the contrast between walking in the flesh and walking in the Spirit.

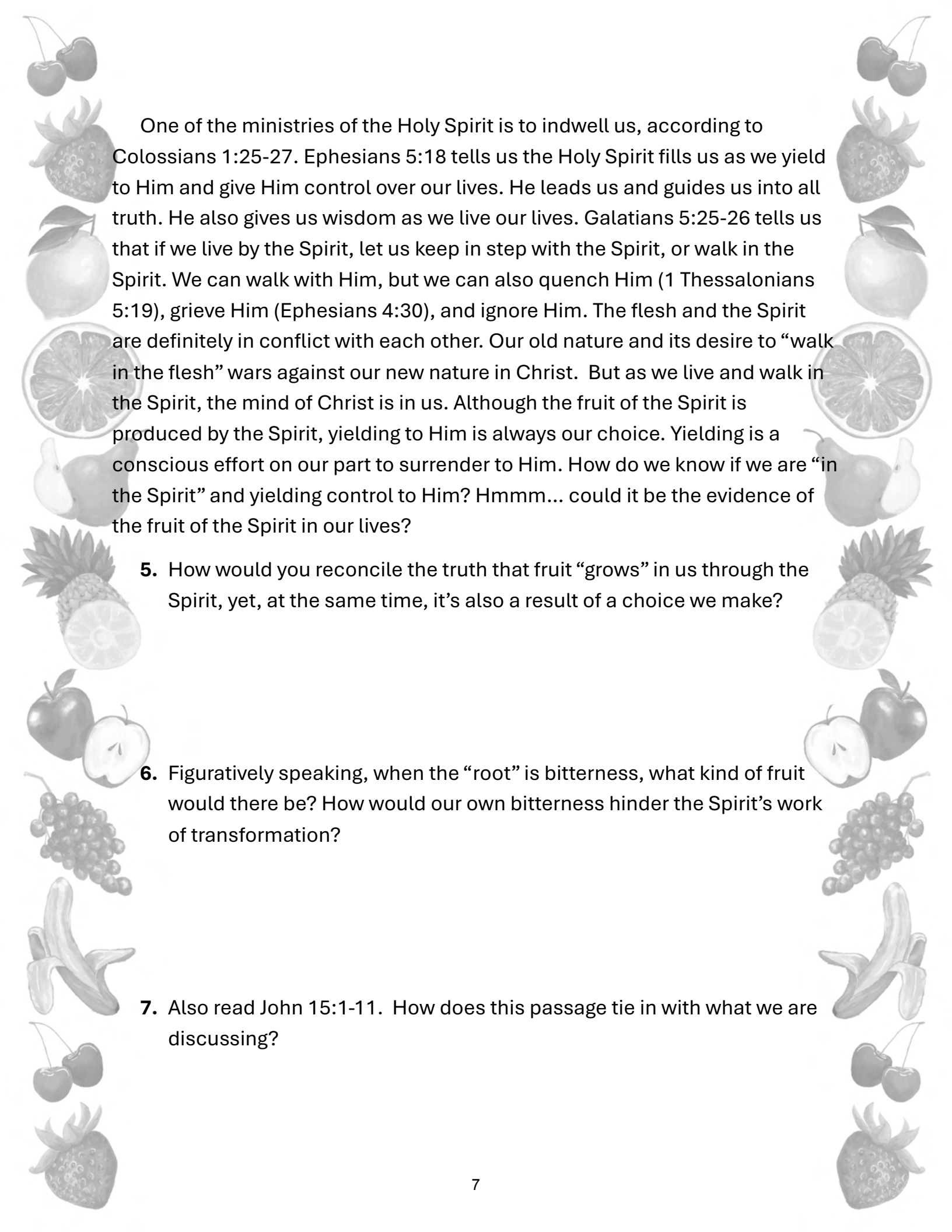
2. Read and summarize Galatians chapter 5.

3. Contrast the work or the results of walking in the flesh with the fruit of walking in the Spirit.

THE FLESH

THE SPIRIT

4. How would you explain what it means to “walk in the Spirit”?



One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to indwell us, according to Colossians 1:25-27. Ephesians 5:18 tells us the Holy Spirit fills us as we yield to Him and give Him control over our lives. He leads us and guides us into all truth. He also gives us wisdom as we live our lives. Galatians 5:25-26 tells us that if we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit, or walk in the Spirit. We can walk with Him, but we can also quench Him (1 Thessalonians 5:19), grieve Him (Ephesians 4:30), and ignore Him. The flesh and the Spirit are definitely in conflict with each other. Our old nature and its desire to “walk in the flesh” wars against our new nature in Christ. But as we live and walk in the Spirit, the mind of Christ is in us. Although the fruit of the Spirit is produced by the Spirit, yielding to Him is always our choice. Yielding is a conscious effort on our part to surrender to Him. How do we know if we are “in the Spirit” and yielding control to Him? Hmmm... could it be the evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives?

5. How would you reconcile the truth that fruit “grows” in us through the Spirit, yet, at the same time, it’s also a result of a choice we make?

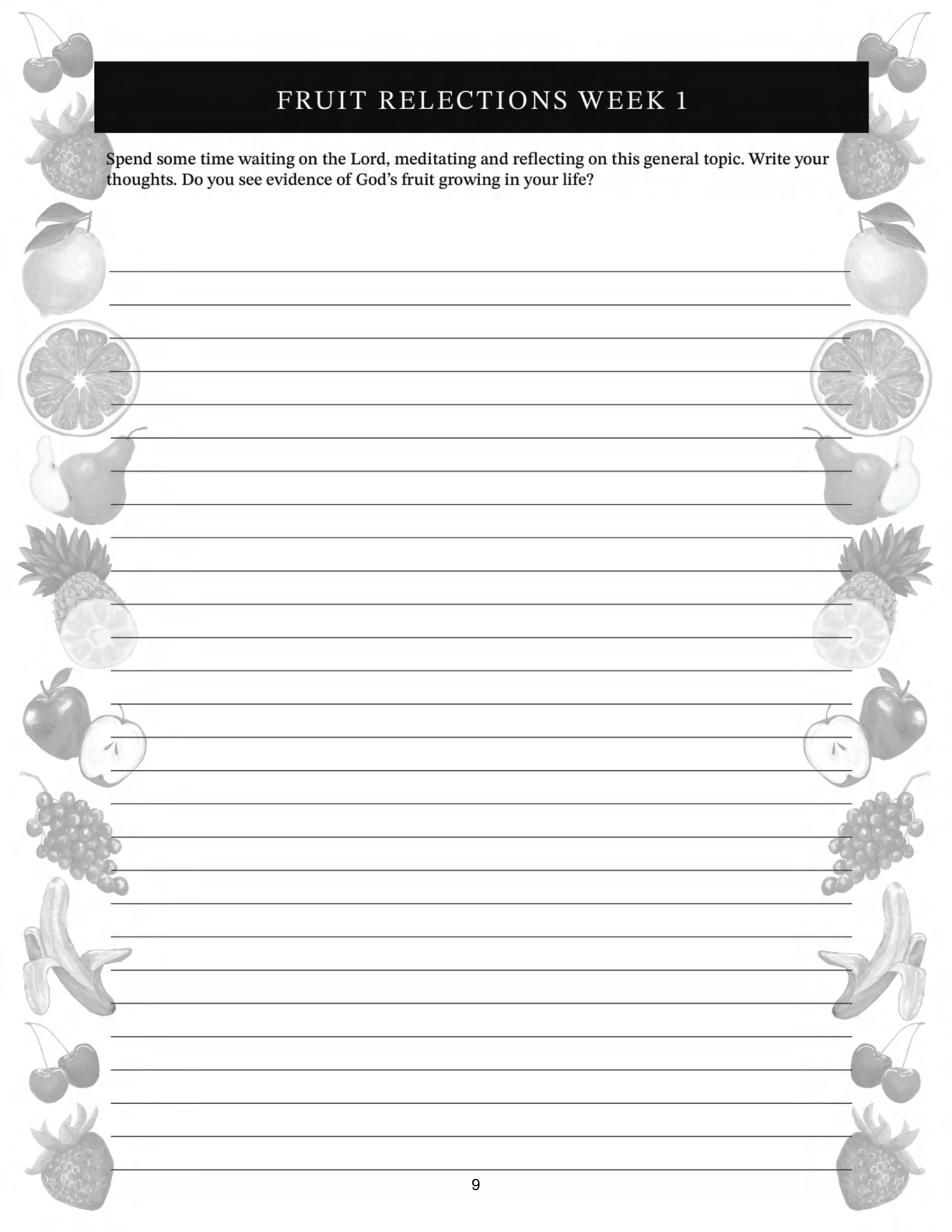
6. Figuratively speaking, when the “root” is bitterness, what kind of fruit would there be? How would our own bitterness hinder the Spirit’s work of transformation?

7. Also read John 15:1-11. How does this passage tie in with what we are discussing?



8. Spend a little time asking the Holy Spirit to search your heart for anything that may be hindering the work of the Spirit. Read over the works of the flesh again and ask Him to show you if you are “practicing” any of them. And then, ask the Spirit to prepare your heart for the weeks ahead. I can’t wait to see how the Lord will use our time in Galatians 5 to produce fruit that glorifies Him!

So ... are you ready to stop striving? Are you ready to abide? Are you ready to choose to stay close to Him, yield to His Spirit, and be led by Him? A fruitful life is a beautiful life; it’s beauty from the inside out. And of course, I must end with two more quotes. Adrian Rogers wrote, “God prefers fruits of the Spirit over religious nuts.” (Get it??) And on a more serious note, “A Christian should resemble a fruit tree with real fruit, not a Christmas tree with decorations tied on it.”



FRUIT RELECTIONS WEEK 1

Spend some time waiting on the Lord, meditating and reflecting on this general topic. Write your thoughts. Do you see evidence of God's fruit growing in your life?



WEEK TWO

LOVE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is **LOVE**, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23



WEEK 2: LOVE

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

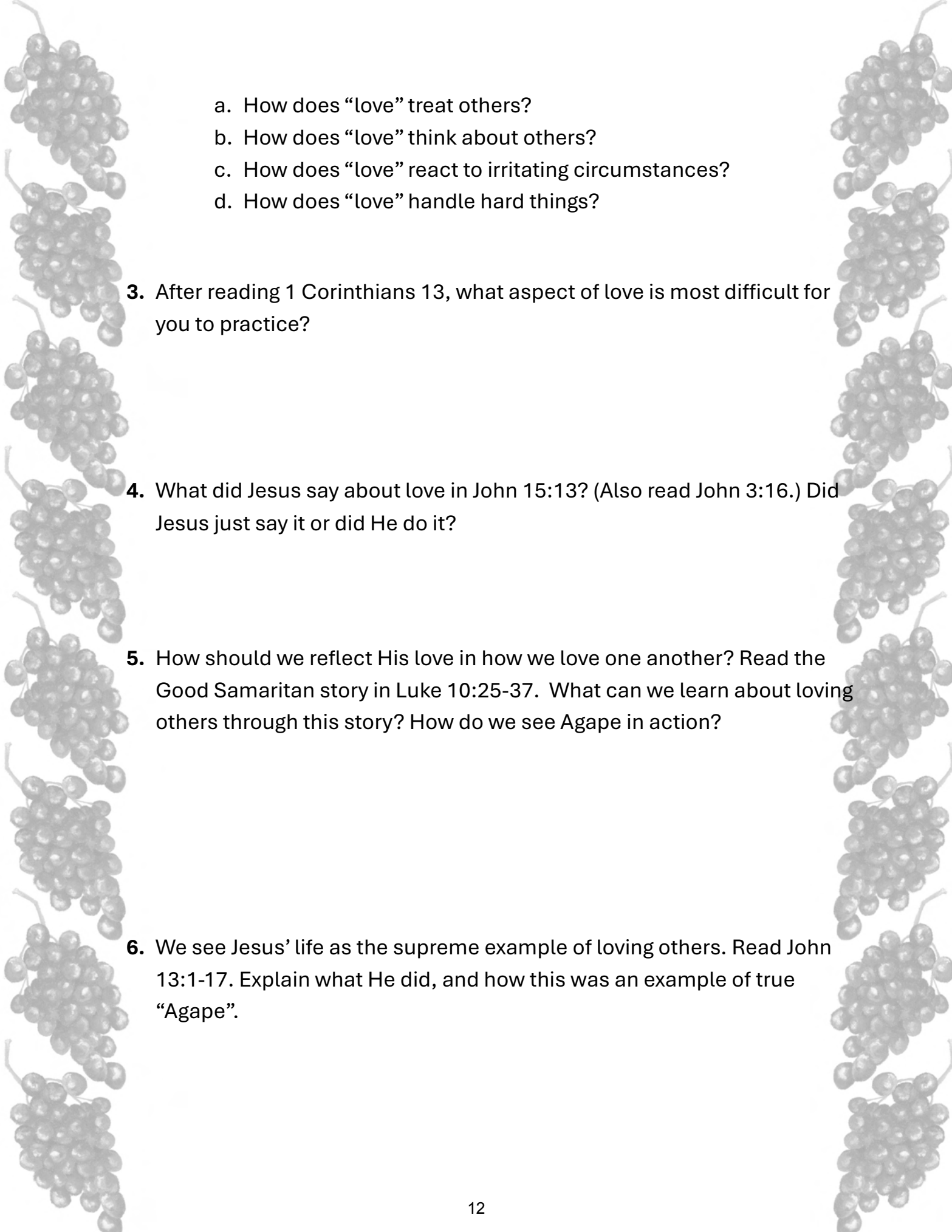
Galatians 5:22-23

Welcome to Love Week! Are you ready to jump in? Make sure you begin with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and lead you into all truth. Remember that the fruit of the Spirit is exactly that ... of the Spirit. I recently read this definition: "The fruit of the Spirit is the supernatural outcome of being filled with the Spirit, and the living proof that the Spirit of God dwells in us." Don't you love that?

1. First of all, please read Galatians 5:22-26 again. What "fruit" comes first?

Notice that the fruit of the Spirit is singular. Most believe that this text speaks of one kind of fruit with nine different qualities. The word love in Galatians 5 is defined "Agape" in Greek, meaning divine and unconditional. It means good will, benevolence, esteem, prefer. It is the same word used in John 3:16, referring to how God loved the world. That's the kind of love He desires us to walk in and show others. It's a divine love that is like no other. The word love is mentioned as many as 508 times in Scripture. Agape is divine love, originating in the heart of God. Agape is the love of God expressed through us to others. We are not capable of showing this love in and of ourselves, which is why we need the Holy Spirit to produce it in us.

2. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8. How does Paul describe love? (Whenever Paul uses the word love or charity, depending on your translation, he is referring to Agape love.) Answer the following questions:

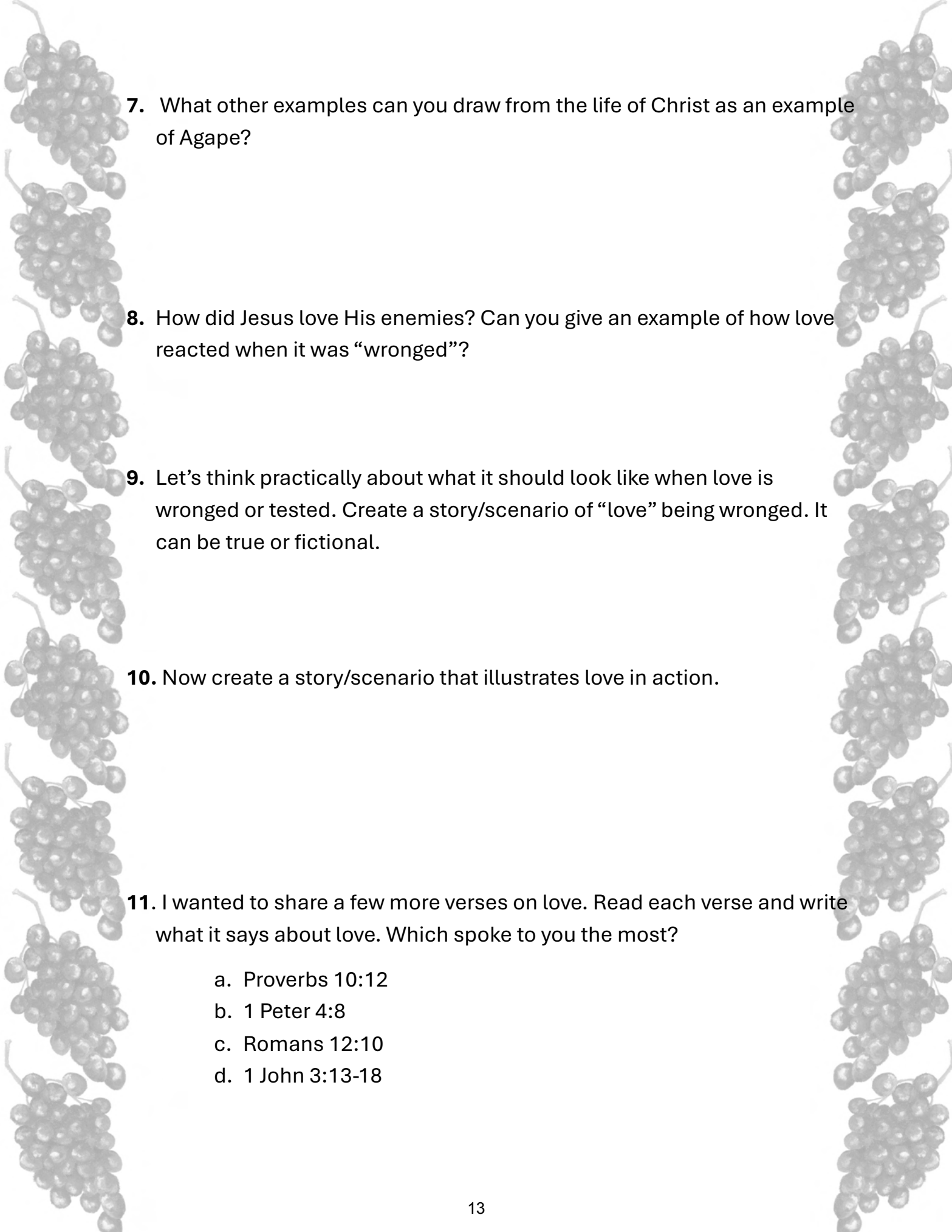
- 
- a. How does “love” treat others?
 - b. How does “love” think about others?
 - c. How does “love” react to irritating circumstances?
 - d. How does “love” handle hard things?

3. After reading 1 Corinthians 13, what aspect of love is most difficult for you to practice?

4. What did Jesus say about love in John 15:13? (Also read John 3:16.) Did Jesus just say it or did He do it?

5. How should we reflect His love in how we love one another? Read the Good Samaritan story in Luke 10:25-37. What can we learn about loving others through this story? How do we see Agape in action?

6. We see Jesus’ life as the supreme example of loving others. Read John 13:1-17. Explain what He did, and how this was an example of true “Agape”.

- 
- A decorative border consisting of several clusters of dark grapes hanging from thin stems, arranged vertically along the left and right edges of the page.
- 7.** What other examples can you draw from the life of Christ as an example of Agape?
 - 8.** How did Jesus love His enemies? Can you give an example of how love reacted when it was “wronged”?
 - 9.** Let’s think practically about what it should look like when love is wronged or tested. Create a story/scenario of “love” being wronged. It can be true or fictional.
 - 10.** Now create a story/scenario that illustrates love in action.
 - 11.** I wanted to share a few more verses on love. Read each verse and write what it says about love. Which spoke to you the most?
 - a. Proverbs 10:12
 - b. 1 Peter 4:8
 - c. Romans 12:10
 - d. 1 John 3:13-18



In our final section, we will be reflecting on what we discussed, as well as the application. Take your time as you make your way through these questions. Give the Holy Spirit time and opportunity to examine your heart.

12. What did you learn about love through this study?

13. A short definition of love is “an unconditional affection for others.”
Who do I find most difficult to love? Why?

14. How do I see this play out in my home? Does Agape love flow from me towards my family? Why can it be so hard sometimes to show love at home?

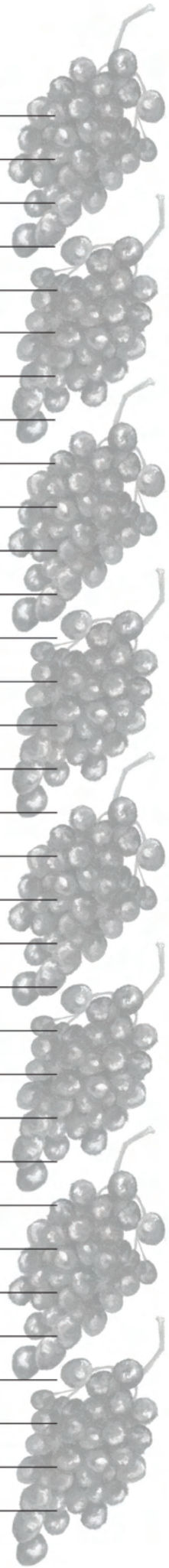
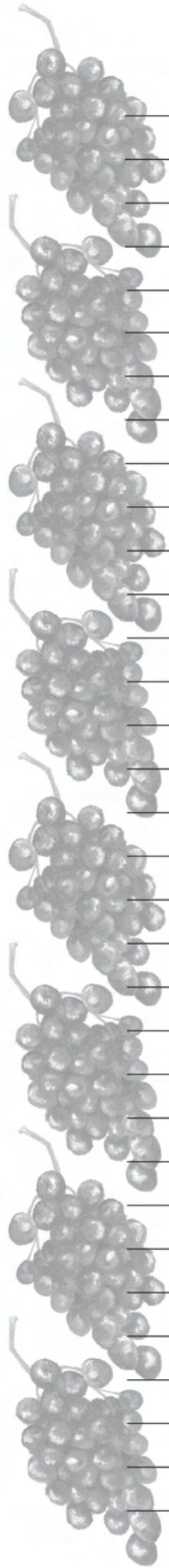
15. Do I see this fruit growing in my life? In what ways?

16. What are some practical ways I can tend and water this fruit in my life to make room for more growth?

FRUIT RELECTIONS WEEK 2

Spend some time reflecting on the fruit of Agape Love. Please feel free to journal your thoughts! Spend time in prayer, asking Him to help you love others as He does. Jesus demonstrated ultimate love by laying down His life for us, loving His enemies, forgiving sinners (that's us!), and healing the sick. His love was unselfish, sacrificial, and unconditional. Lord, help us become more like You!

[illegible]



A series of horizontal lines spanning the width of the page, providing a space for writing or drawing.



WEEK THREE

JOY

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **JOY**, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23



WEEK 3: JOY

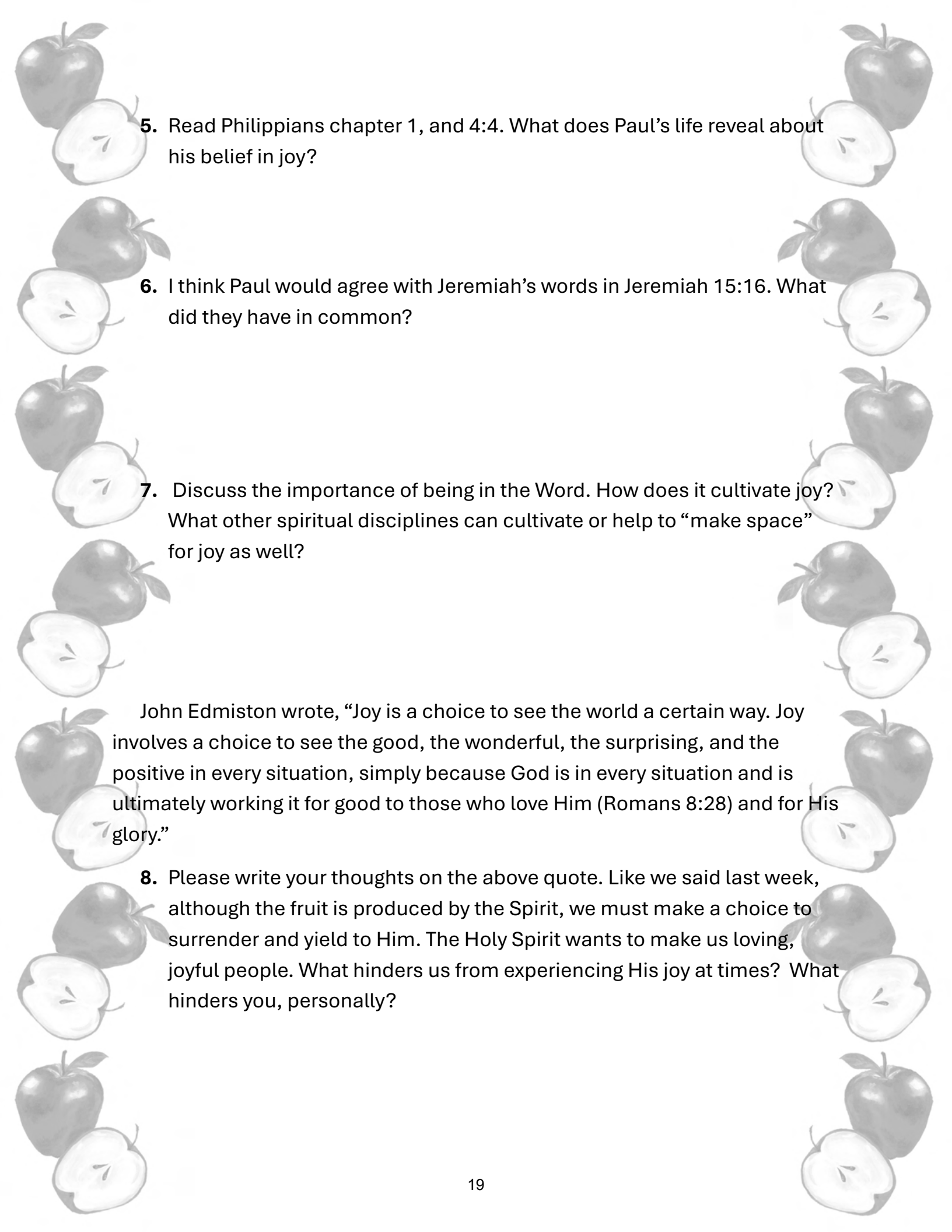
"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Galatians 5:22-23

Today we will be looking at our second character quality of the fruit of world needs to see believers who are filled with the joy of the Lord. Joy can set the tone of the Christian life. The Holy Spirit wants to make us loving, joyful people. When we are filled with joy, it changes how we interpret life and circumstances. Henry Drummand said, "No one can get joy by merely asking for it. It is one of the ripest fruits of the Christian life, and, like all fruits, must be grown!"

Joy comes from the Greek word "Chara" and means delight, gladness, or an inner delight. It is a deep gladness and contentment in God, regardless of circumstances.

1. Read Psalm 16:11, John 15:11, and Romans 15:13. Where is joy found?
2. What does James 1:2-4 and 1 Peter 4:12-13 tell us about joy?
3. Read Hebrews 12:1-4. How did Jesus demonstrate perfect joy? What do we learn from His amazing example?
4. As Jesus endured the cross, would you say He was "happy"? How does our joy, that comes from the Holy Spirit, transcend our circumstances? Can you explain the difference between happiness and joy?



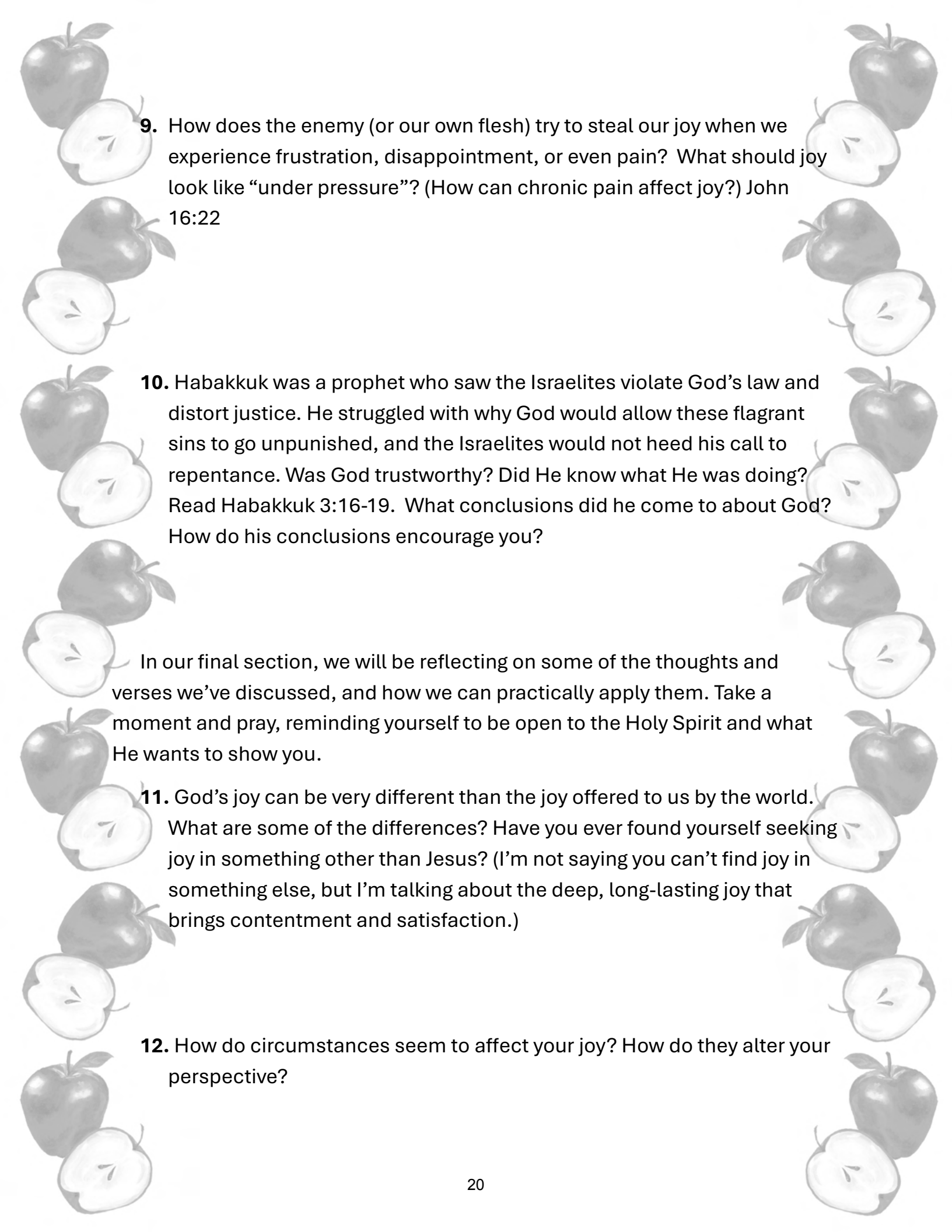
5. Read Philippians chapter 1, and 4:4. What does Paul's life reveal about his belief in joy?

6. I think Paul would agree with Jeremiah's words in Jeremiah 15:16. What did they have in common?

7. Discuss the importance of being in the Word. How does it cultivate joy? What other spiritual disciplines can cultivate or help to "make space" for joy as well?

John Edmiston wrote, "Joy is a choice to see the world a certain way. Joy involves a choice to see the good, the wonderful, the surprising, and the positive in every situation, simply because God is in every situation and is ultimately working it for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28) and for His glory."

8. Please write your thoughts on the above quote. Like we said last week, although the fruit is produced by the Spirit, we must make a choice to surrender and yield to Him. The Holy Spirit wants to make us loving, joyful people. What hinders us from experiencing His joy at times? What hinders you, personally?



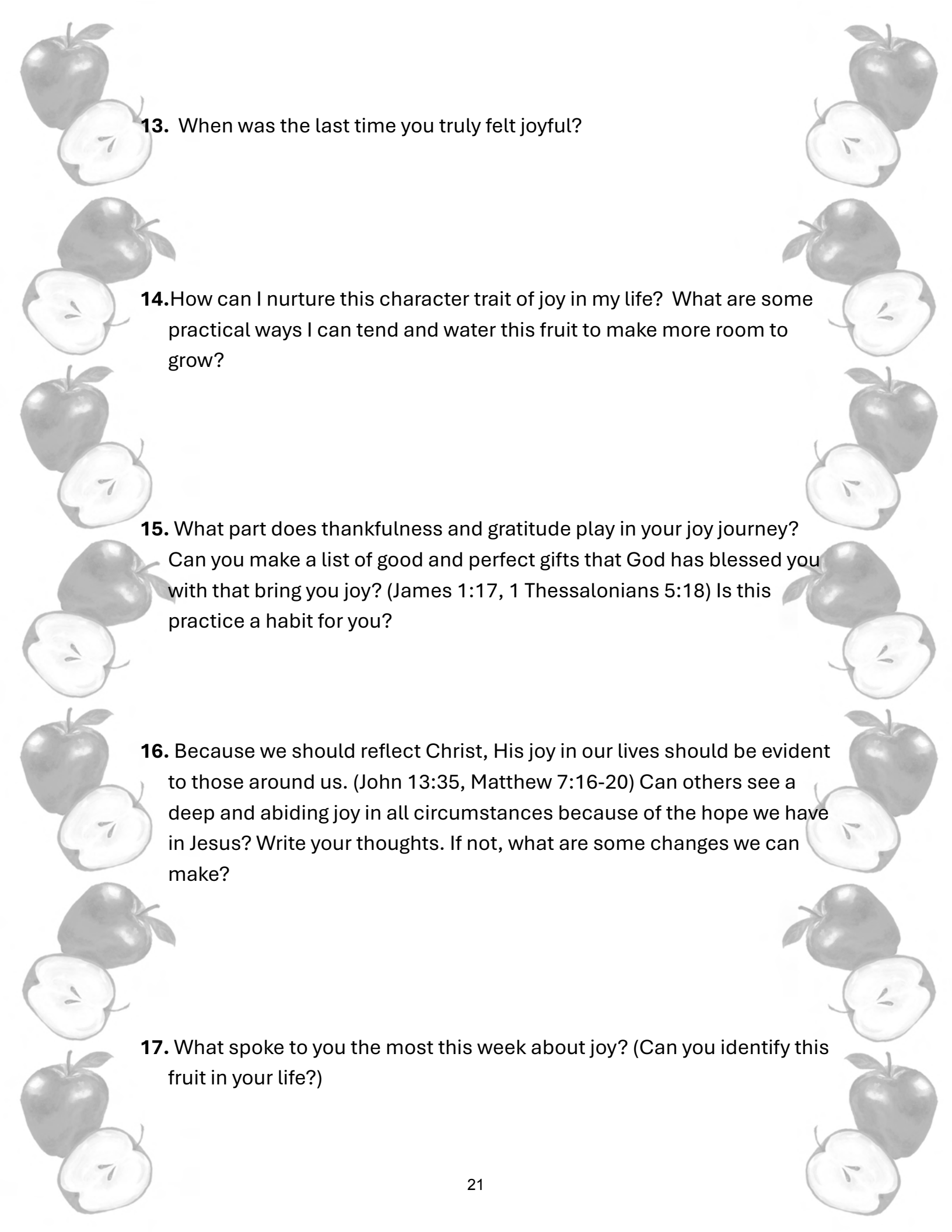
9. How does the enemy (or our own flesh) try to steal our joy when we experience frustration, disappointment, or even pain? What should joy look like “under pressure”? (How can chronic pain affect joy?) John 16:22

10. Habakkuk was a prophet who saw the Israelites violate God’s law and distort justice. He struggled with why God would allow these flagrant sins to go unpunished, and the Israelites would not heed his call to repentance. Was God trustworthy? Did He know what He was doing? Read Habakkuk 3:16-19. What conclusions did he come to about God? How do his conclusions encourage you?

In our final section, we will be reflecting on some of the thoughts and verses we’ve discussed, and how we can practically apply them. Take a moment and pray, reminding yourself to be open to the Holy Spirit and what He wants to show you.

11. God’s joy can be very different than the joy offered to us by the world. What are some of the differences? Have you ever found yourself seeking joy in something other than Jesus? (I’m not saying you can’t find joy in something else, but I’m talking about the deep, long-lasting joy that brings contentment and satisfaction.)

12. How do circumstances seem to affect your joy? How do they alter your perspective?



13. When was the last time you truly felt joyful?

14. How can I nurture this character trait of joy in my life? What are some practical ways I can tend and water this fruit to make more room to grow?

15. What part does thankfulness and gratitude play in your joy journey?

Can you make a list of good and perfect gifts that God has blessed you with that bring you joy? (James 1:17, 1 Thessalonians 5:18) Is this practice a habit for you?

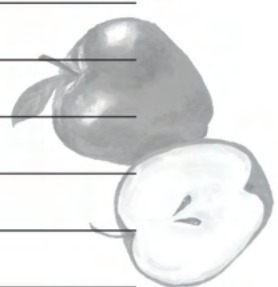
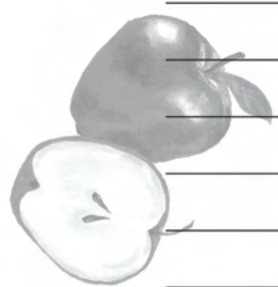
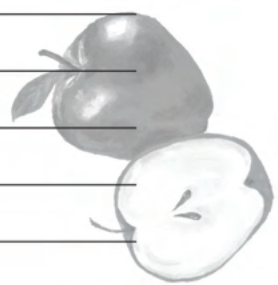
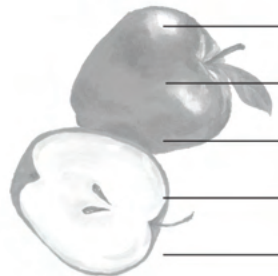
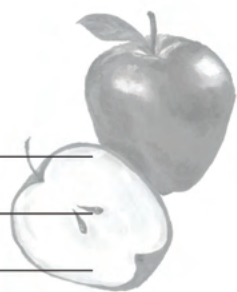
16. Because we should reflect Christ, His joy in our lives should be evident to those around us. (John 13:35, Matthew 7:16-20) Can others see a deep and abiding joy in all circumstances because of the hope we have in Jesus? Write your thoughts. If not, what are some changes we can make?

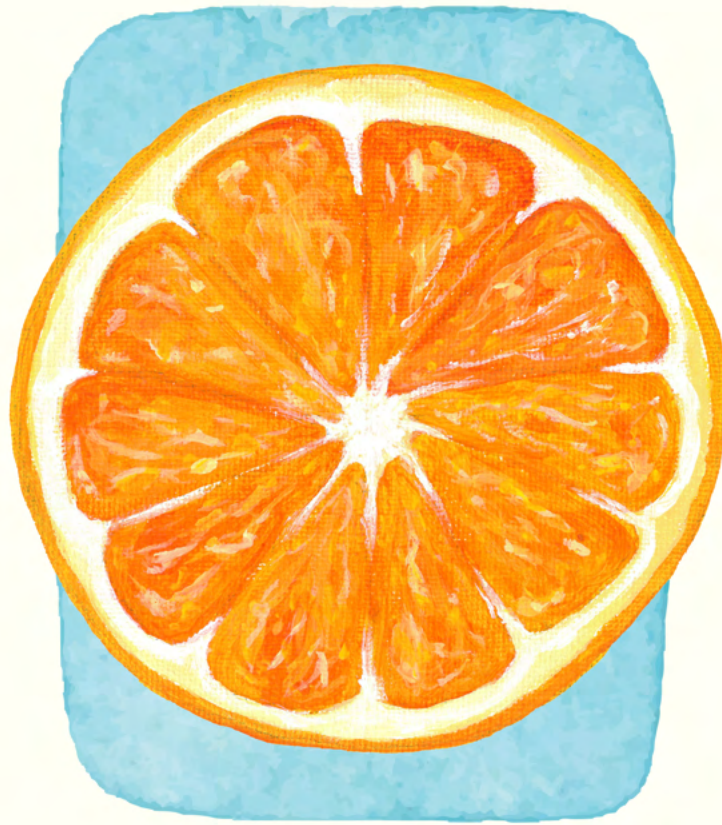
17. What spoke to you the most this week about joy? (Can you identify this fruit in your life?)

FRUIT RELECTIONS WEEK 3

Spend some time reflecting on what we've discussed and what the Spirit has shown you. Please feel free to journal your thoughts, questions, and even prayers. (No one will read this!) Be honest, open, and vulnerable with Him. He loves you, no matter what you say!

[illegible]





WEEK FOUR

PEACE

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **PEACE**, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23



WEEK 4: PEACE

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Galatians 5:22-23

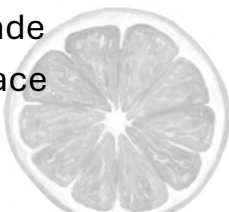
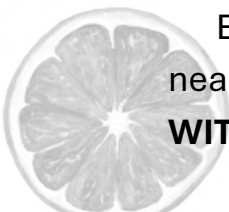
It's ironic that today is the day I'm attempting to write about this particular attribute of the Holy Spirit ... peace. Because, honestly, my soul is in a very unpeaceful state. It has been a rough week, and I find myself struggling to find it, and rest in it. I almost asked if you've ever felt like that, but, I'm sure the answer is yes, if you are human. Ever since the Garden of Eden, the enemy of our souls has been a fruit thief. He wanted to steal the relationship of peace that Adam and Eve had with God, and he used a fruit to do it! He also wants us to forfeit our tranquility, our security, and our ability to rest in the Lord, and live in a state of fear, panic, and anxiety. As has been said before, these attributes are produced in us by the Holy Spirit. As we abide in Jesus and yield to the Spirit, He will produce what we cannot. Let's jump in to learn about this beautiful and complex fruit, shall we?

In Galatians 5:22, the word peace comes from the Greek word Eirene (i-ray-nay) which means quietness or rest. This word is used over 92 times in the Bible. It signifies tranquility, security, and reconciliation with God and others. It's a deep, God-given harmony that flows from a right relationship with Him and manifests itself in an inner calmness. This peace is rooted in God's presence. It's not just the absence of conflict, but a state of inner rest and confidence in God and His promises, bringing inner peace as well as relational peace. Sorry, long definition, but that's the complexity of it, because it is both harmony with God and with others, which is internal and external.

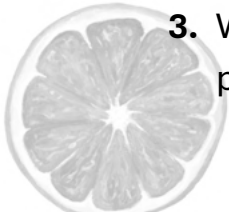
1. What does Isaiah 9:3-6 say about Jesus in relation to peace?
2. Read Isaiah 26:3-4. What do these verses say about peace? Where can we find it?



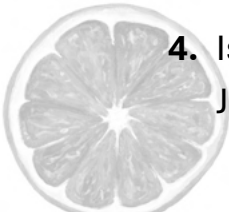
We need to remember that there is both peace **WITH** God and the peace **OF** God. Peace with God comes through a relationship with Christ. Paul tells us in Colossians 1:19-21 that Jesus reconciled all things to Himself through the blood He shed on the cross. Because of this redemptive work on the cross, we now can have “peace with God” through faith in Christ.



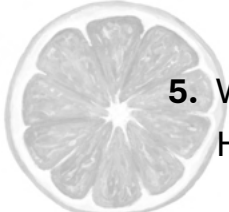
Ephesians 2:11-22 reminds us we were once “far off” but have been made near by the blood of Christ, for He Himself is our peace. We must have peace **WITH** God, before we can have the peace **OF** God!



3. What does Jesus say about peace in John 14:27? How do you think His peace is different than the peace the world offers?

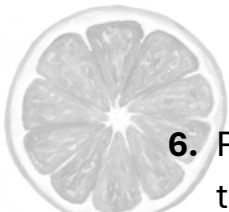


4. Is peace only attainable when things are “going smoothly”? What does Jesus say about that in John 16:33? What does that tell us about peace?



5. What do the following verses tell us about peace? Where do we find it? How is it manifested?

- a. Philippians 4:6-7
- b. 2 Thessalonians 3:16
- c. Romans 12:18
- d. Hebrews 12:14
- e. 1 Peter 3:11
- f. Matthew 5:9



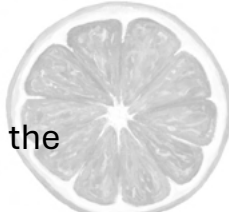
6. Proverbs 14:30 says, “A heart of peace gives life to the body.” What do you think that means?



7. How did Jesus model peace in Mark 4:35-41? How can His example bring us comfort during difficult times in our own lives? What's your biggest "take away" from this story?



8. Can you give another example that shows how Jesus truly embodied the fruit of peace as He walked on this earth?



9. When I think of another Bible character whose life manifested the fruit of peace, I think of David. He was a warrior, yet the Psalms offer a peek into his soul. He knew where to run to find peace, and it wasn't in the absence of conflict or obstacles, but in the reassuring presence of God. What character do you think of, and why?



10. How can/does the lack of peace manifest itself in our lives? (i.e., sleepless nights, etc.)



11. Now let's turn a little "inward," shall we? What types of things tend to "challenge" or rob you of peace?





12. Do you typically turn to God when you're anxious? Why or why not?
Why is worry such a waste of time?



13. How do you typically handle uncertainty?



14. Do your fears, anxieties, or worries drive you towards God or away from Him? What things are you tempted to turn towards to find peace, rather than God? What are some practical (and spiritual) ways to help you stay focused and rooted in Him during those times?



"Peace is a fruit of the Spirit, not a byproduct of accumulated wealth."



15. What do you think the difference is between feeling peaceful, and being peace-filled? Also, what's the difference between a peacemaker and a peace-keeper?

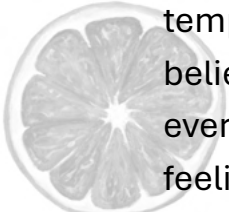


16. Are you a peacemaker? Is there a situation in your life right now that God may be asking you to be one? What would that look like?





We know that man cannot ultimately create peace in his own soul. Maybe temporarily, but not the lasting peace of God that is produced by the Spirit. I believe the struggle for peace is constant because it is so crucial in our everyday walk with God. I recently read about the **Three P's** to practice when feeling stressed or anxious.



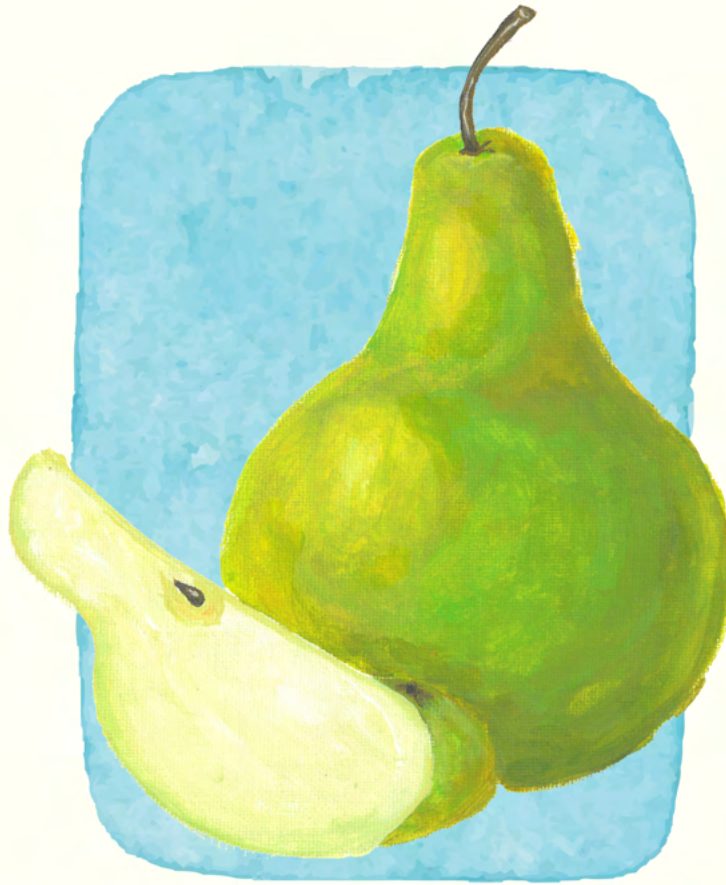
- 
- 
1. **Pause:** Stop, quiet your mind, and focus on the Father. Psalm 46:10
 2. **Pray:** Isaiah 26:3 reminds us that we will have perfect peace when our minds are set on Him. Spend time pouring your heart out to Him in prayer.
 3. **Pursue peace with others:** Ask Him to help you live peaceably with others, work on giving soft answers (Prov. 15:1), loving your neighbor, etc.
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

FRUIT RELECTIONS WEEK 4

"I am at peace in my soul because I have Jesus, and because I have Jesus, I can have His peace provided in every moment."

Spend some time reflecting on the fruit of peace in relation to your own life. What spoke to you the most this week? How can you live it out? Journal your thoughts, observations, or prayers. Slow down, take a breath, and be still before Him. Enjoy an honest talk with God.

This image shows a full page of handwriting practice paper. It features ten sets of horizontal lines, each consisting of three parallel lines (top, middle, and bottom) to guide letter height. The paper is decorated with circular illustrations of citrus fruit slices, likely lemons or limes, positioned at the top-left, top-right, bottom-left, and bottom-right corners. The central area between the lines is white, providing space for writing practice.



WEEK FIVE

LONGSUFFERING

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, **LONGSUFFERING**, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23



WEEK 5: LONGSUFFERING

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Galatians 5:22-23

Welcome ladies! I'm excited for the opportunity to study another remarkable fruit of the Spirit together. This week we will be looking at long-suffering, which is sometimes translated as patience in some versions of the Bible. Like the other attributes in Galatians, we don't "learn" this fruit once and never have to use it again. It seems like almost everything in life requires patience in some way or another. We struggle to have patience with others, "long" before suffering. Can't it be "short"?

The word longsuffering comes from the Greek word *makrothumia* and carries the idea of remaining in a state of emotional quietness in the face of unfavorable circumstances, or the ability to endure provocation or delay without retaliating. It's closely related to the Greek word *hypomone* which translates patience, meaning to "bear up courageously (under suffering)". These 2 words are closely related and together can mean endurance in the midst of difficult circumstances as well as the attitude or frame of mind we have during difficult times. Some commentators define it more simply: Longsuffering is a form of extreme patience, typically enduring ongoing hardships or provocation without complaint, while patience refers to the ability to wait calmly or endure problems without becoming annoyed or anxious. So ... how do we wait without frustration? Or how can our tempers become long tempered instead of short?

1. What do these verses say about the longsuffering and patience of God?
 - a. Romans 2:4
 - b. 2 Peter 3:9,15
 - c. 1 Peter 3:20



2. What do these verses tell us about patience?

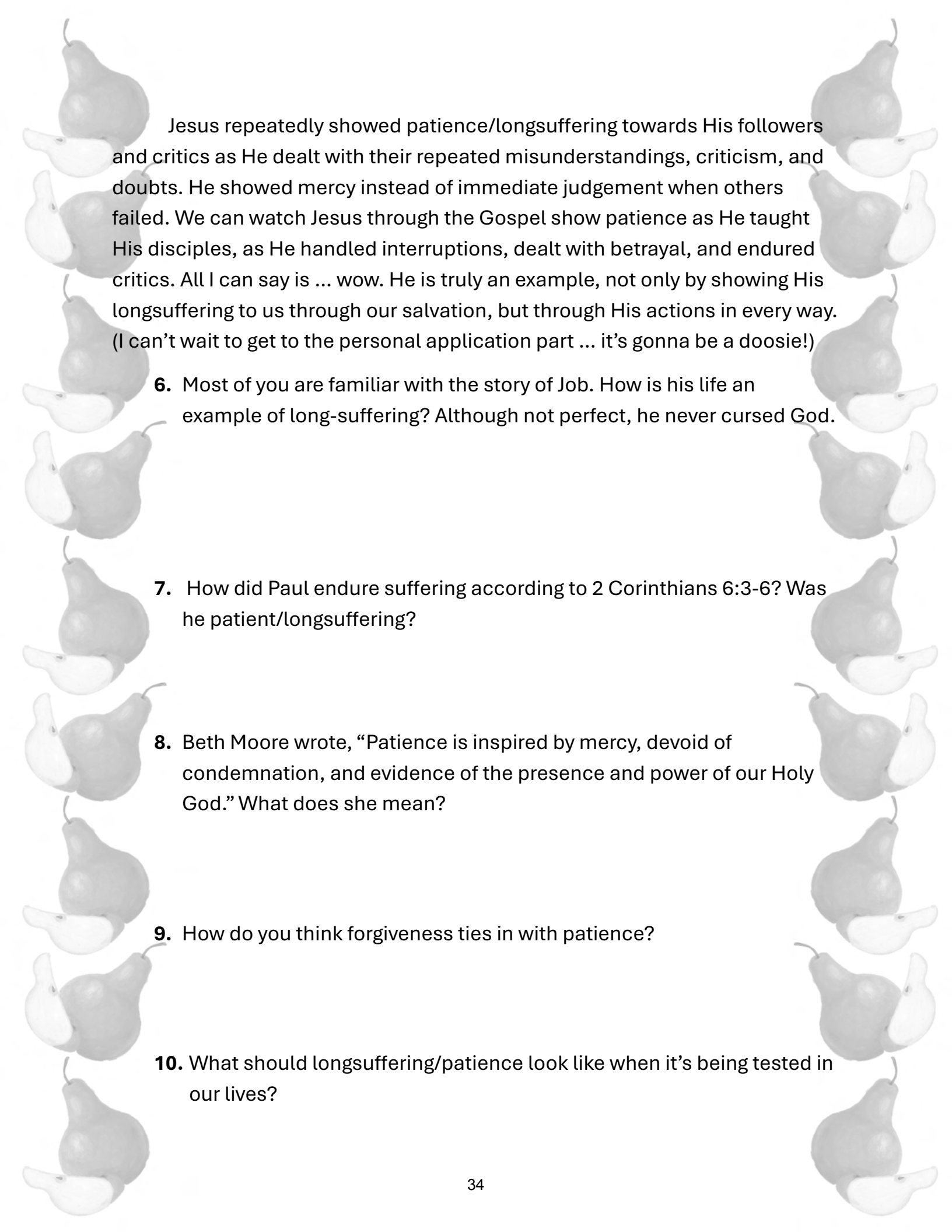
- a. Ephesians 4:2
- b. Colossians 3:12-15
- c. 1 Thessalonians 5:14
- d. James 5:7-9

3. How has God ultimately shown patience towards us? And how does He continue to do it every day?

4. What's the difference between being patient "with" God and patience towards others? Which is more difficult for you?

5. How did Jesus model patience in the following stories?

- a. **The story:** Peter's denial in John 18:16, 25-27. How can we see the result of His patience in John 21?
- b. **The story:** When Thomas refused to believe Jesus had risen in John 20:19-25. How did Jesus show His patience with Thomas in John 20:26-29?
- c. **The story:** Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:1-26. His patience towards her was shown in the same story. How?



Jesus repeatedly showed patience/longsuffering towards His followers and critics as He dealt with their repeated misunderstandings, criticism, and doubts. He showed mercy instead of immediate judgement when others failed. We can watch Jesus through the Gospel show patience as He taught His disciples, as He handled interruptions, dealt with betrayal, and endured critics. All I can say is ... wow. He is truly an example, not only by showing His longsuffering to us through our salvation, but through His actions in every way. (I can't wait to get to the personal application part ... it's gonna be a doosie!)

- 6.** Most of you are familiar with the story of Job. How is his life an example of long-suffering? Although not perfect, he never cursed God.
- 7.** How did Paul endure suffering according to 2 Corinthians 6:3-6? Was he patient/longsuffering?
- 8.** Beth Moore wrote, "Patience is inspired by mercy, devoid of condemnation, and evidence of the presence and power of our Holy God." What does she mean?
- 9.** How do you think forgiveness ties in with patience?
- 10.** What should longsuffering/patience look like when it's being tested in our lives?



11. Longsuffering and patience are not “passive resignations” but active trust in God’s timing and purposes. What does that mean?

12. Let’s get personal. And honest. How well do you tolerate the irritating faults of others? How does giving them space to repent and room to grow reflect the character of Christ?

13. What “tries” your patience the most? When is it the hardest for you to show patience?

14. I read this question and I really liked it. How can a lack of patience lead to a multitude of other sins? (For instance, hurtful words, evil thoughts, etc.) Can you name some others?

15. How well do you “wait” on the Lord? How patient are you? How can waiting build our character, steadfastness, and refine us more into His image?



16. Can you think of a time recently that God showed patience and longsuffering towards you? Like question #5 above, what is your “story” and how were you shown patience?

17. Last question. How can being patient and longsuffering towards someone transform the relationship? (Did someone in your life come to mind?)

The image shows a worksheet titled "FRUIT RELECTIONS WEEK 5". The title is centered at the top in white capital letters on a black rectangular background. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text discussing the concept of patience, its production by the Spirit, and how it can be practiced in relationships with others. Following the text are approximately 28 horizontal lines for writing. The entire page is framed by a decorative border consisting of various fruits, including whole pears, sliced pears showing their cores, and lemons.

FRUIT RELECTIONS WEEK 5

Patience is hard and it must be produced by the Spirit. Spend time searching your heart on this topic. How do you feel when people are impatient with you? How have you hurt someone by being short with them? Jesus was patient with His slow learning disciples. Can we be patient with our kids? Spouses? Co-workers? How can you be more intentional about exercising patience? Write your thoughts and prayers. Have a good, honest conversation with God. Be vulnerable and allow Him to speak. And listen!

37

[illegible]



WEEK SIX

KINDNESS

“But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, joy, peace, longsuffering, **KINDNESS**, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23

Fruit OF THE
Spirit

• GENTLENESS • SELF-CONTROL • LOVE • JOY • PEACE • LONGSUFFERING • KINDNESS • GOODNESS • FAITHFULNESS

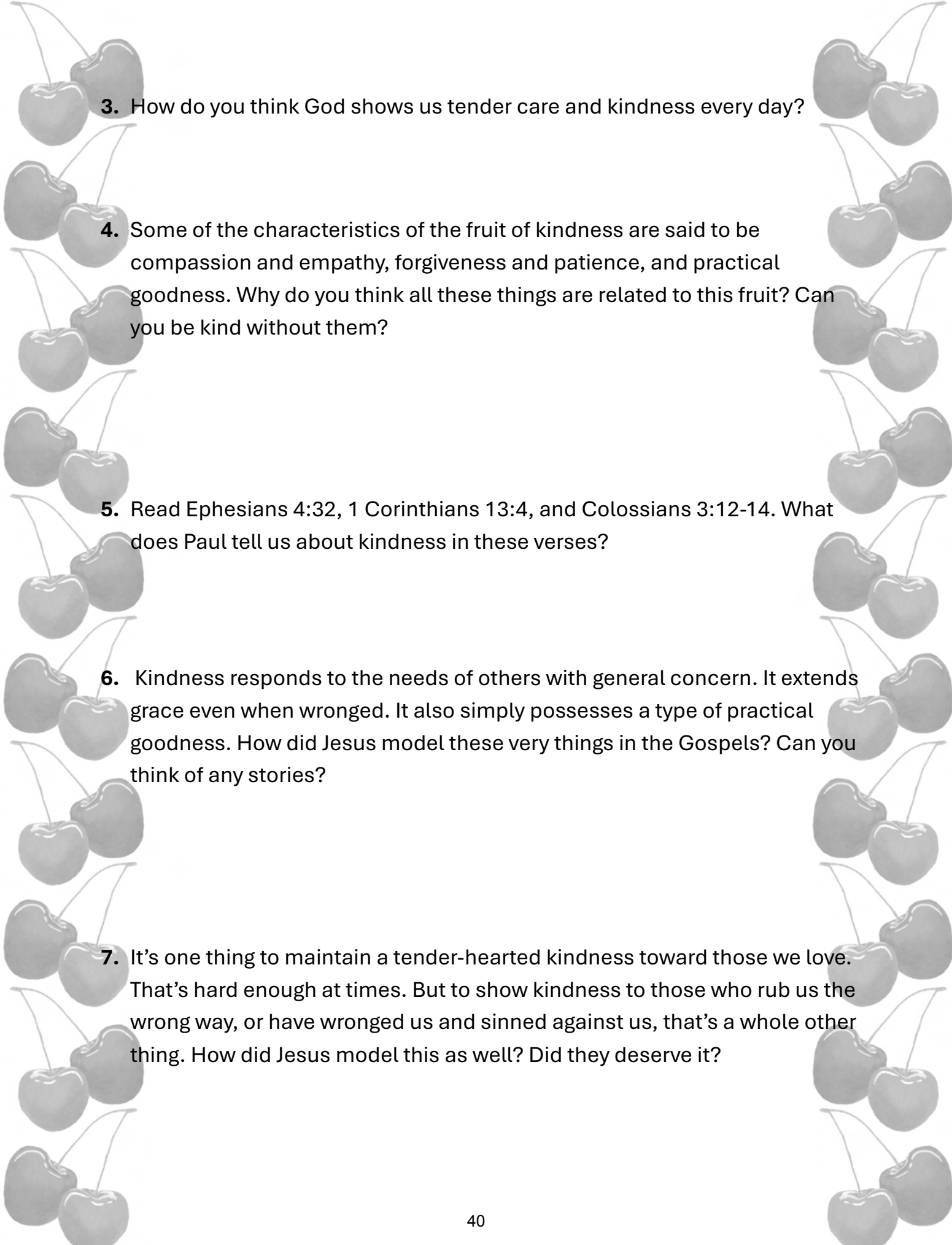
WEEK 6: KINDNESS

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

Galatians 5:22-23

Today we will be looking at kindness. I love this one. The word kind in Galatians 5 comes from the Greek word *Chrestotes*, meaning goodness, gentleness, or moral uprightness. It's active goodness and benevolence rooted in God's character, expressed through intentional, compassionate actions toward others. It's not just being polite or agreeable. It's a reflection of God's own character. It's kindness of heart and kindness of act. It's much more than the popular trend of “random acts of kindness.” Those acts are good, don't get me wrong. But it's more than that. It's having the spirit of kindness, or the disposition of tenderheartedness. That comes from the Holy Spirit. We can all do random acts of kindness when we feel like it, or when it's convenient. We can even do them with the wrong motive, like to make ourselves feel good. It's more than social courtesy. It's selfless, intentional, and transformative. Kindness is basically the bridge between inward spiritual qualities and outward actions. This enables His love to flow through us to impact the world! Kindness is a noun-- it's something a person possesses.

1. How did God show us kindness according to Titus 3:1-8, Romans 2:4, and Romans 5:8. Did we deserve it?
2. From the Titus passage, because of His kindness, what does verse 8 tell us we should be careful to do?



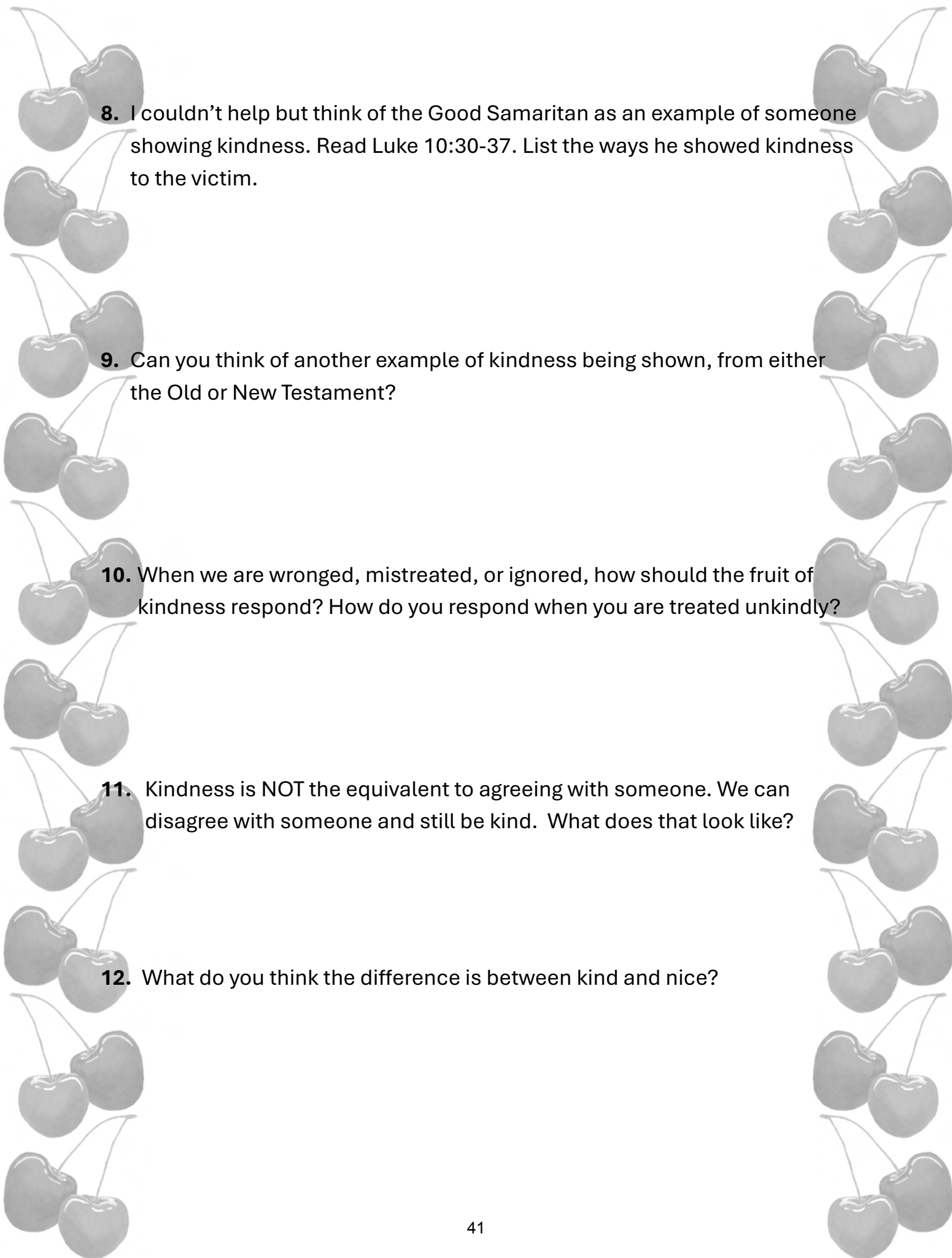
3. How do you think God shows us tender care and kindness every day?

4. Some of the characteristics of the fruit of kindness are said to be compassion and empathy, forgiveness and patience, and practical goodness. Why do you think all these things are related to this fruit? Can you be kind without them?

5. Read Ephesians 4:32, 1 Corinthians 13:4, and Colossians 3:12-14. What does Paul tell us about kindness in these verses?

6. Kindness responds to the needs of others with general concern. It extends grace even when wronged. It also simply possesses a type of practical goodness. How did Jesus model these very things in the Gospels? Can you think of any stories?

7. It's one thing to maintain a tender-hearted kindness toward those we love. That's hard enough at times. But to show kindness to those who rub us the wrong way, or have wronged us and sinned against us, that's a whole other thing. How did Jesus model this as well? Did they deserve it?



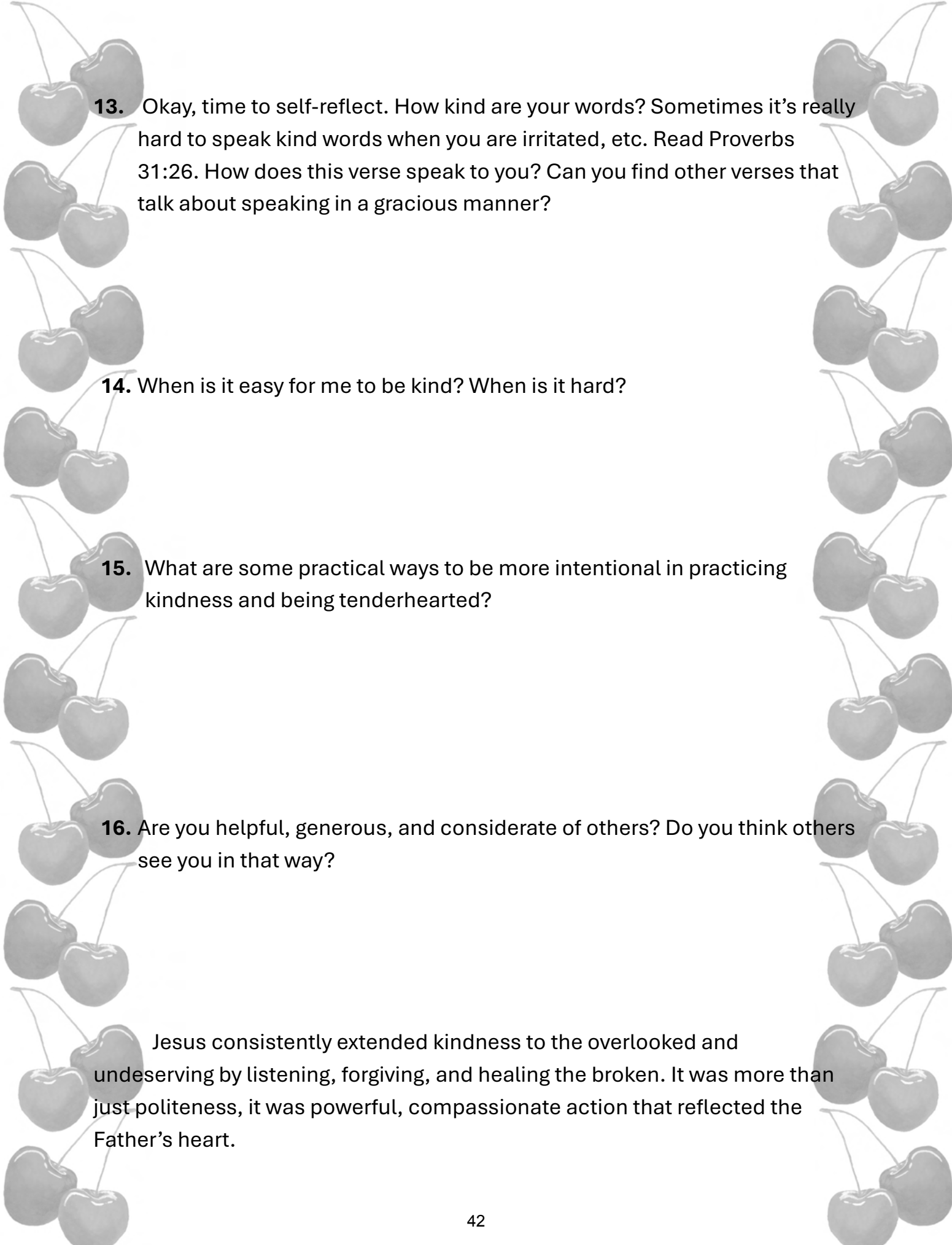
8. I couldn't help but think of the Good Samaritan as an example of someone showing kindness. Read Luke 10:30-37. List the ways he showed kindness to the victim.

9. Can you think of another example of kindness being shown, from either the Old or New Testament?

10. When we are wronged, mistreated, or ignored, how should the fruit of kindness respond? How do you respond when you are treated unkindly?

11. Kindness is NOT the equivalent to agreeing with someone. We can disagree with someone and still be kind. What does that look like?

12. What do you think the difference is between kind and nice?



13. Okay, time to self-reflect. How kind are your words? Sometimes it's really hard to speak kind words when you are irritated, etc. Read Proverbs 31:26. How does this verse speak to you? Can you find other verses that talk about speaking in a gracious manner?

14. When is it easy for me to be kind? When is it hard?

15. What are some practical ways to be more intentional in practicing kindness and being tenderhearted?

16. Are you helpful, generous, and considerate of others? Do you think others see you in that way?

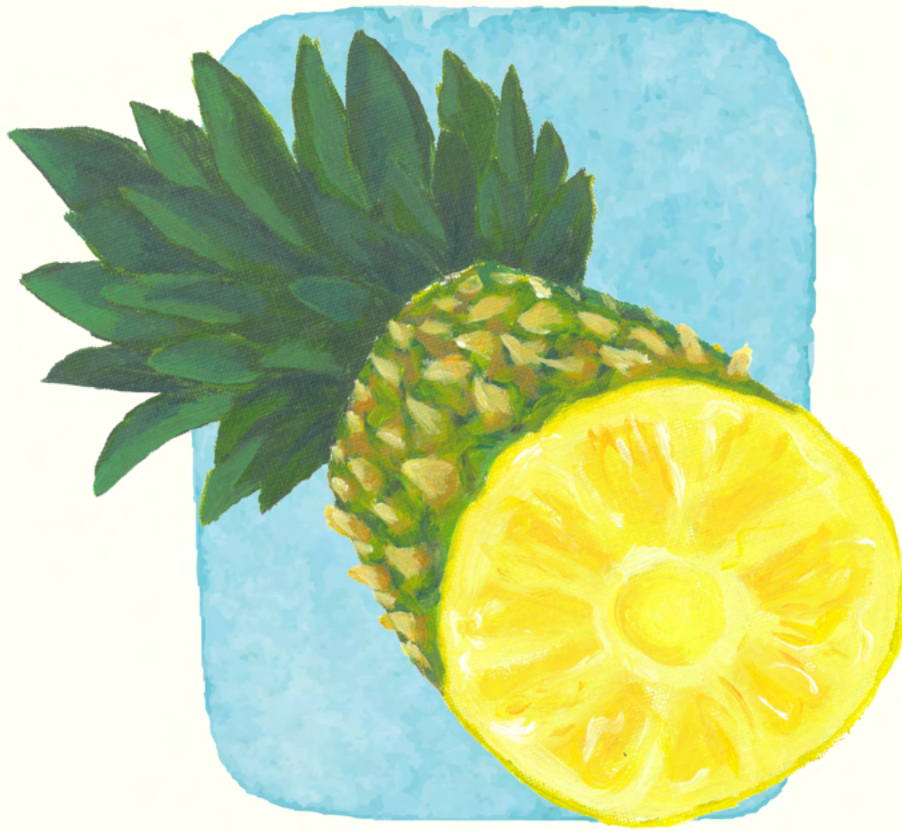
Jesus consistently extended kindness to the overlooked and undeserving by listening, forgiving, and healing the broken. It was more than just politeness, it was powerful, compassionate action that reflected the Father's heart.



17. Am I kind when it's inconvenient? Is convenience one of the first factors you consider? What other factors may hinder or limit your kind actions toward others?

The image shows a worksheet titled "FRUIT RELECTIONS WEEK 6". The title is centered at the top in white capital letters on a black rectangular background. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text: "Spend some time in prayer, asking God to use you to reflect His kindness to others this week. Each fruit of the Spirit is to be a reflection of Christ. Pray that others will come to see the character of God as they see it in us. Write your prayers, thoughts, and dreams, if you'd like. Can you imagine a world where everyone is kind to one another, with no strings attached or hidden agendas? That is one of my dreams". The rest of the page is filled with horizontal lines for writing. A decorative border of cherries with stems frames the entire page.

[illegible]



WEEK SEVEN

GOODNESS

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, **GOODNESS**, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23



Fruit OF THE Spirit

WEEK 7: GOODNESS

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

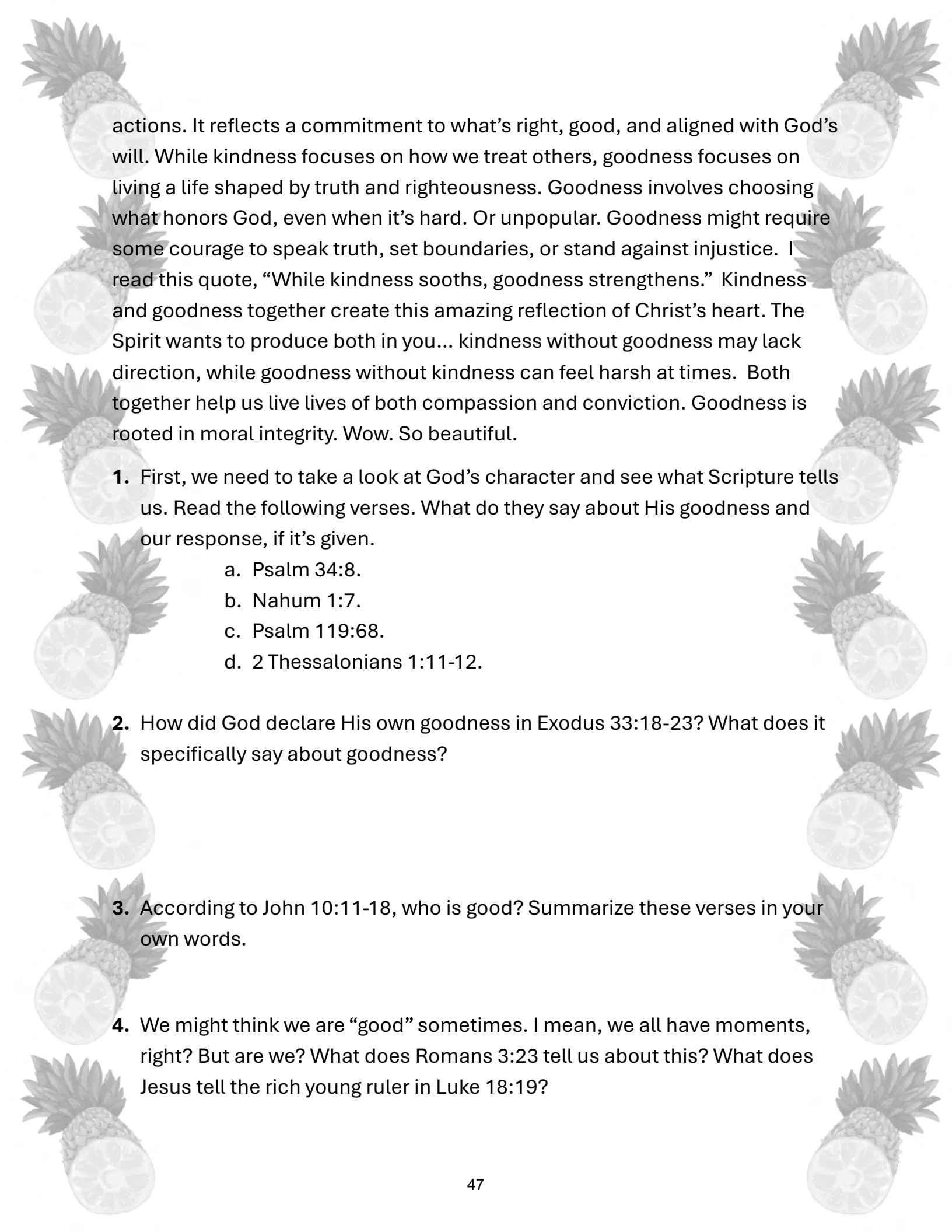
Galatians 5:22-23

I'm excited to look at another one of the fruit of the Spirit, which are the transforms us, our character changes, and our lives can begin to reflect God's character rather than the works of darkness. Whenever I read the list, I'm reminded that He is the one that can produce this character change, I cannot do it on my own. I read a quote this morning from someone, no idea who, but it was a good reminder ... “Our lives are meant to be fruitful. And fruitfulness comes out of brokenness.” That gave me a lot of hope! Our lives are broken and messy, but it's God IN us that gives us identity, purpose, and power.

Goodness. Such a good word. It comes from the Greek word *agathosune* (ag-ath-o-soo'-nay) and means: Uprightness of heart and life, moral excellence, emphasizing actions that are intrinsically good and beneficial to others, rather than merely virtuous for appearance's sake. Virtue and holiness in action. It's a moral characteristic of a Spirit-filled person. Intrinsic goodness and virtue.

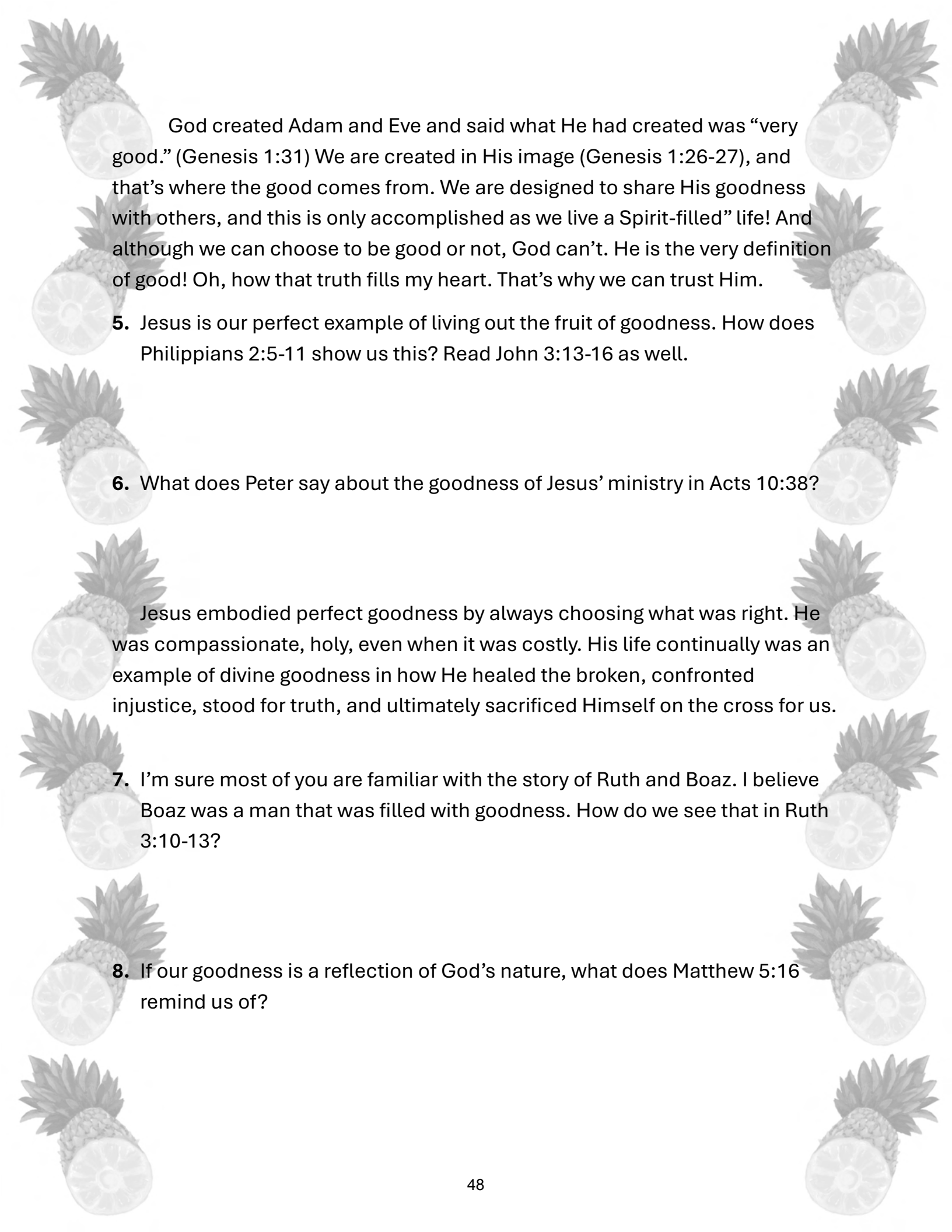
So, if you're like me, you wonder what the difference is between goodness and kindness. As I looked more into it, it was fascinating. The two are closely tied together, but with some key differences. I read a lot about it, and I'll try to put all the “smart” people's words into my own, so bear with me! They really go hand in hand because they are both qualities and actions. Most believe that goodness is kindness on steroids, or to another level. It's deeper, I think. They both are fruit and reflect the character of Christ, and often used interchangeably, yet they both play a unique part in how we live out our faith.

Kindness is rooted in compassion, empathy, etc. It's how we treat others with care, patience, and understanding. It can show up in small or huge ways; a note, a listening ear, a kind word, etc. Goodness goes deeper than outward



actions. It reflects a commitment to what's right, good, and aligned with God's will. While kindness focuses on how we treat others, goodness focuses on living a life shaped by truth and righteousness. Goodness involves choosing what honors God, even when it's hard. Or unpopular. Goodness might require some courage to speak truth, set boundaries, or stand against injustice. I read this quote, "While kindness soothes, goodness strengthens." Kindness and goodness together create this amazing reflection of Christ's heart. The Spirit wants to produce both in you... kindness without goodness may lack direction, while goodness without kindness can feel harsh at times. Both together help us live lives of both compassion and conviction. Goodness is rooted in moral integrity. Wow. So beautiful.

1. First, we need to take a look at God's character and see what Scripture tells us. Read the following verses. What do they say about His goodness and our response, if it's given.
 - a. Psalm 34:8.
 - b. Nahum 1:7.
 - c. Psalm 119:68.
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12.
2. How did God declare His own goodness in Exodus 33:18-23? What does it specifically say about goodness?
3. According to John 10:11-18, who is good? Summarize these verses in your own words.
4. We might think we are "good" sometimes. I mean, we all have moments, right? But are we? What does Romans 3:23 tell us about this? What does Jesus tell the rich young ruler in Luke 18:19?



God created Adam and Eve and said what He had created was “very good.” (Genesis 1:31) We are created in His image (Genesis 1:26-27), and that’s where the good comes from. We are designed to share His goodness with others, and this is only accomplished as we live a Spirit-filled” life! And although we can choose to be good or not, God can’t. He is the very definition of good! Oh, how that truth fills my heart. That’s why we can trust Him.

5. Jesus is our perfect example of living out the fruit of goodness. How does Philippians 2:5-11 show us this? Read John 3:13-16 as well.

6. What does Peter say about the goodness of Jesus’ ministry in Acts 10:38?

Jesus embodied perfect goodness by always choosing what was right. He was compassionate, holy, even when it was costly. His life continually was an example of divine goodness in how He healed the broken, confronted injustice, stood for truth, and ultimately sacrificed Himself on the cross for us.

7. I’m sure most of you are familiar with the story of Ruth and Boaz. I believe Boaz was a man that was filled with goodness. How do we see that in Ruth 3:10-13?

8. If our goodness is a reflection of God’s nature, what does Matthew 5:16 remind us of?



9. What does Paul remind us of in Ephesians 5:8-12? Also read Galatians 6:10.



10. Should we be good when no one is watching? Why?



11. How do we tell if our goodness is genuine or just a performance for attention or approval?



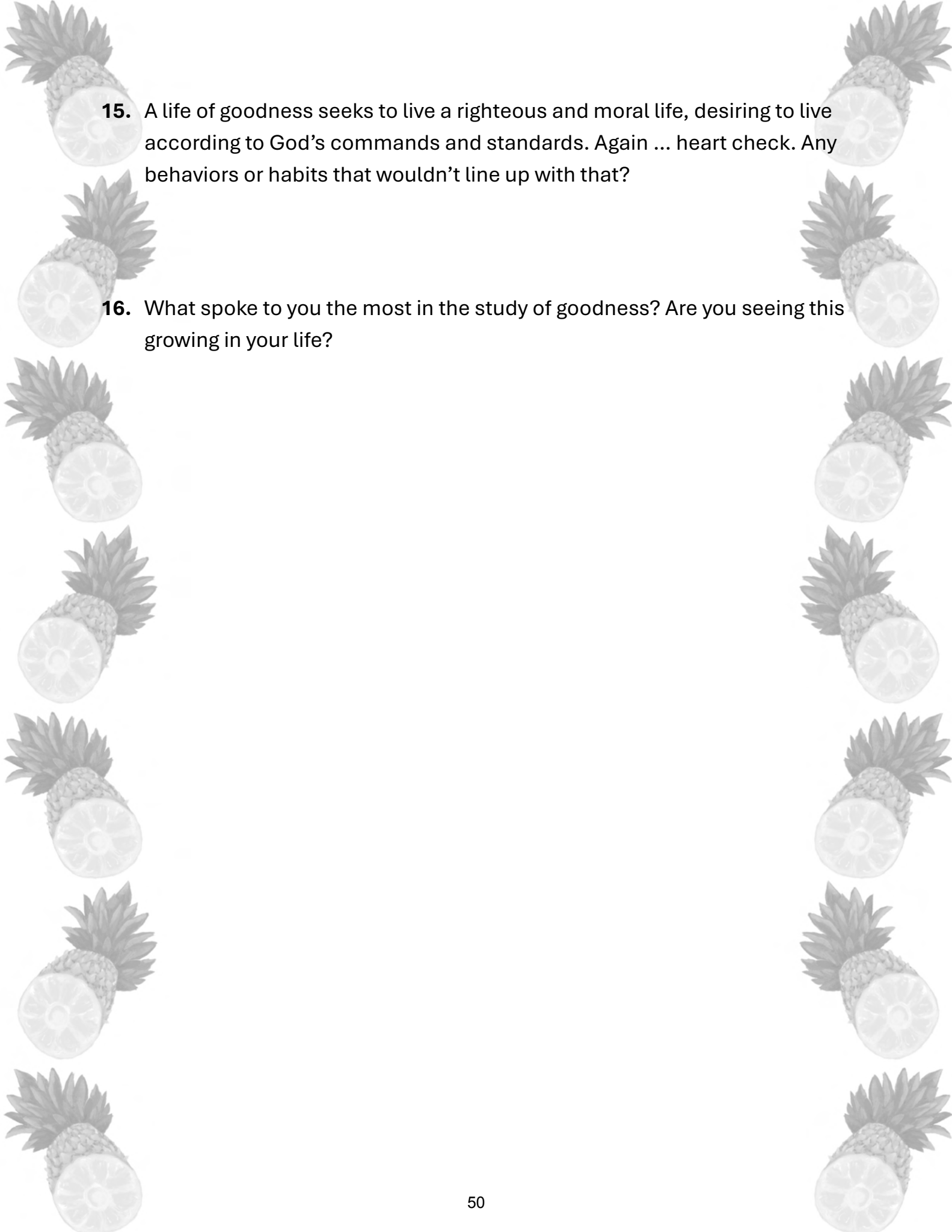
12. Time to reflect ladies. Daniel had a reputation of goodness among those who were unbelievers (Daniel 6). How would others in this world describe you? How about your family? Do you think you're a Daniel?



13. In Psalm 15, David talks about integrity, which stems from the fruit of goodness. After reading the short Psalm, take some time to think about it. A good person is the same on the inside and outside. No pretense, no pretending to be something they aren't. Ask the Spirit to search your heart on this one. Are you a woman of integrity?



14. A life filled with goodness is generous and kind. Read Psalm 112:5. Are you?



15. A life of goodness seeks to live a righteous and moral life, desiring to live according to God's commands and standards. Again ... heart check. Any behaviors or habits that wouldn't line up with that?

16. What spoke to you the most in the study of goodness? Are you seeing this growing in your life?

FRUIT RELECTIONS WEEK 7

Lord, help us to live a life that reflects Your character. We need Your help. Continue to transform us into Your image and grow the fruit of the Spirit in our lives!

Write your thoughts or prayers to Him. If you have been challenged, write your action plan. If you've been convicted, confess and repent. If you are encouraged, bless His Name! Take time to sit before the **ONLY** One who is totally, 100% good. He is trustworthy, He is always right.

[illegible]



WEEK EIGHT

FAITHFULNESS

“But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, **FAITHFULNESS**, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23



Fruit OF THE Spirit

WEEK 8: FAITHFULNESS

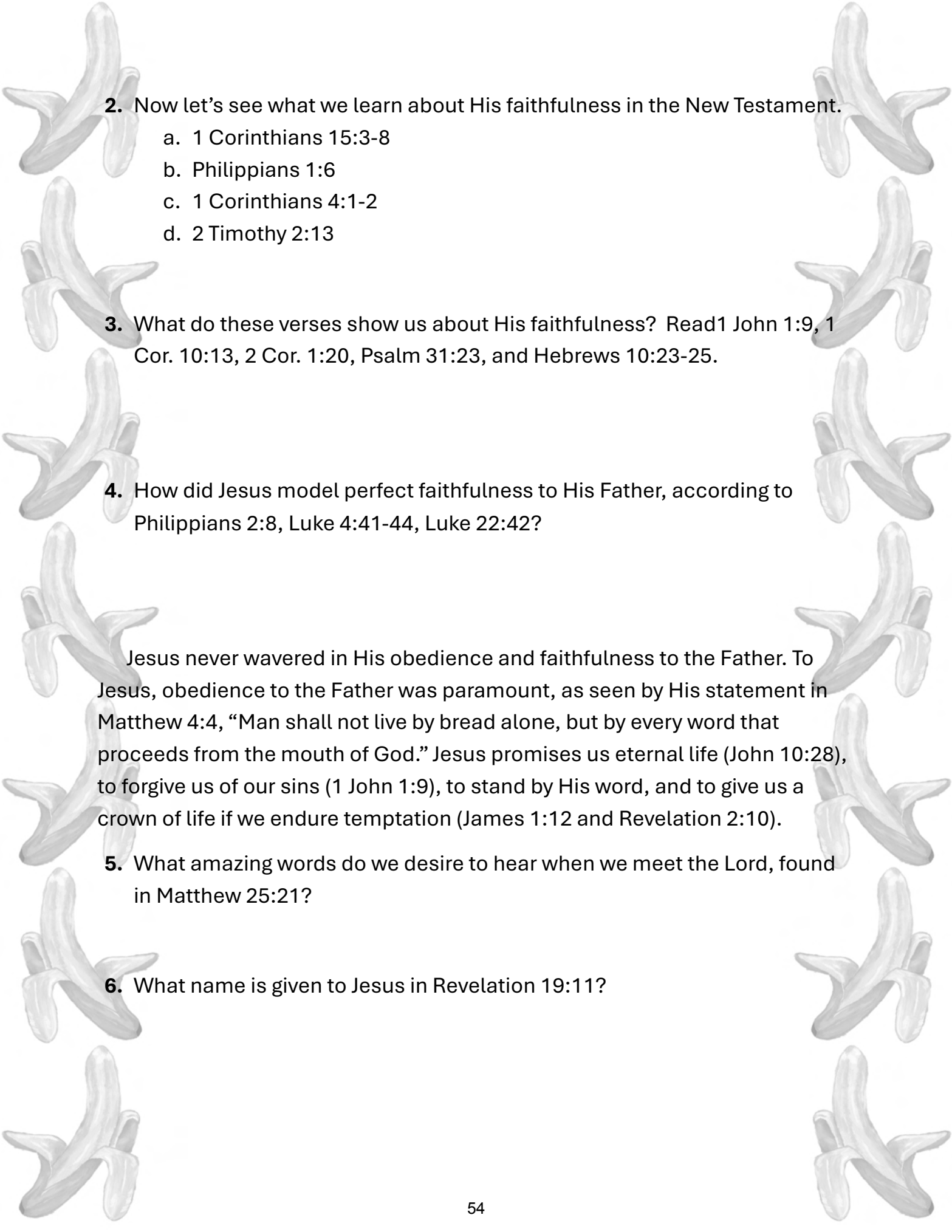
“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23

Happy week 8 everyone! I almost can't contain myself. I LOVE this fruit of the Spirit because I LOVE this attribute of God. His faithfulness means everything to me. Without that, what is this all about? If we can't trust Him and His Word, there's no point. But we can! And should! And the fruit of outworking of the Holy Spirit, rooted in the nature of God Himself, who is always faithful, and calls His followers to walk in the very same steadfastness. Let's do this!

Faithfulness in Galatians 5 comes from the Greek word *pistis*, meaning a firm belief, fidelity, or commitment. It means a steadfast, Spirit-empowered loyalty and reliability of a believer, a reflection of God's own unchanging character. It's transformation from within, and empowerment to persevere in day-to-day life while facing challenges. Let's first look at how Scripture emphasizes His faithfulness.

1. Read the following verses and briefly share what they reveal about God's faithfulness in the Old Testament.
 - a. Deut. 7:9
 - b. Deut. 32:4
 - c. Lamentations 3:22-25
 - d. Psalm 33:4-5
 - e. Numbers 23:19-20
 - f. Psalm 119:90
 - g. Isaiah 40:8

A decorative border of stylized, light green leaves surrounds the text on the page.

2. Now let's see what we learn about His faithfulness in the New Testament.

- a. 1 Corinthians 15:3-8
- b. Philippians 1:6
- c. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2
- d. 2 Timothy 2:13

3. What do these verses show us about His faithfulness? Read 1 John 1:9, 1 Cor. 10:13, 2 Cor. 1:20, Psalm 31:23, and Hebrews 10:23-25.

4. How did Jesus model perfect faithfulness to His Father, according to Philippians 2:8, Luke 4:41-44, Luke 22:42?

Jesus never wavered in His obedience and faithfulness to the Father. To Jesus, obedience to the Father was paramount, as seen by His statement in Matthew 4:4, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Jesus promises us eternal life (John 10:28), to forgive us of our sins (1 John 1:9), to stand by His word, and to give us a crown of life if we endure temptation (James 1:12 and Revelation 2:10).

5. What amazing words do we desire to hear when we meet the Lord, found in Matthew 25:21?

6. What name is given to Jesus in Revelation 19:11?

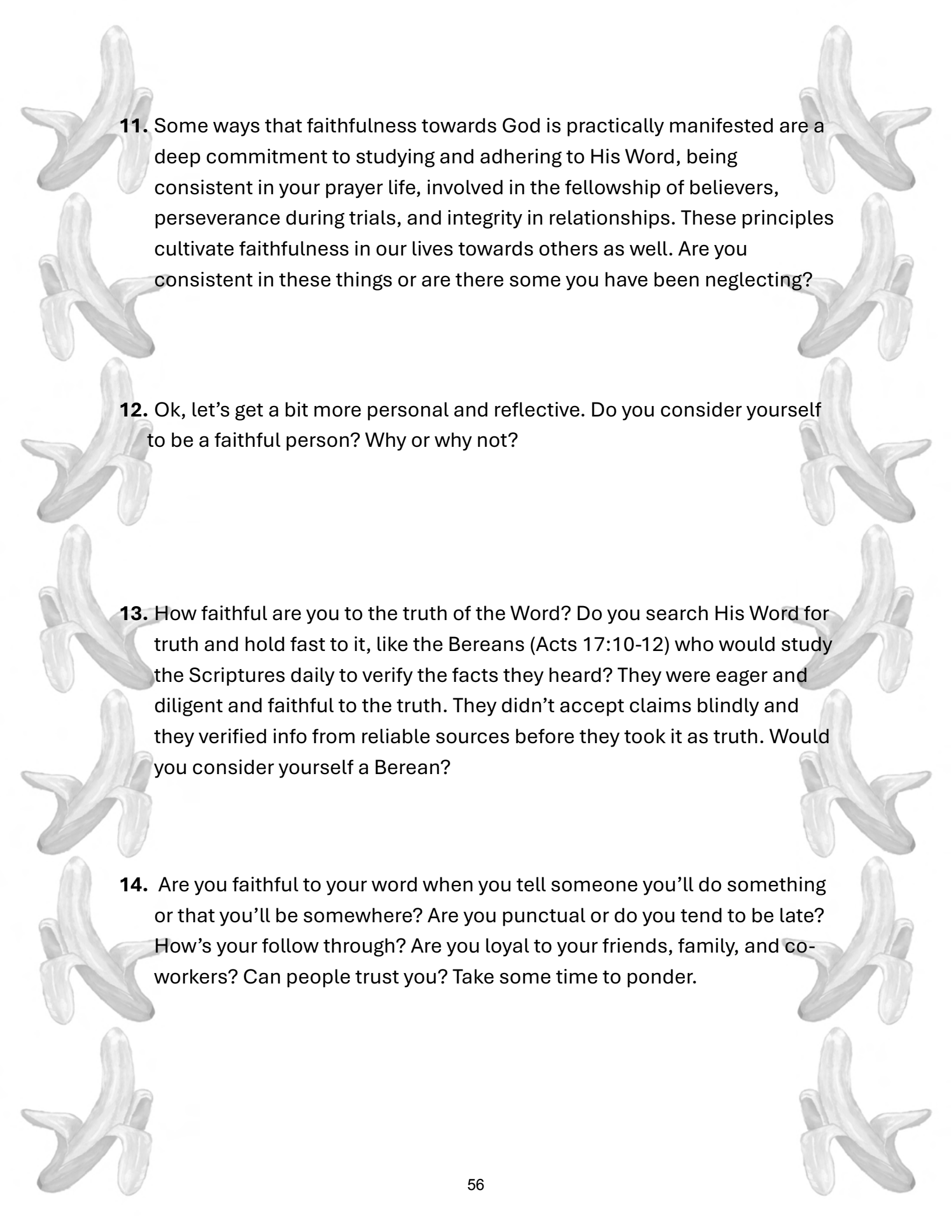
- 
- 7.** Hebrews 11 gives us a list of many faithful servants of God. Read the chapter and choose one character and summarize why they are seen as faithful servants.

I was curious if being “full of faith” was the same as the fruit of faithfulness. Many try to use that phrase interchangeably. I’m not an expert, but after studying, I don’t think so. Being “full of faith” refers to having a strong, active trust in God, often with great hope and expectation that His work will be effective in your life and others. Faithfulness speaks more of loyalty, dependability, and consistently following His Word. Of course, true faith should produce faithfulness, but faithfulness is not just about having faith, it’s about actively living that faith out in our daily choices, relationships, and lives. Hope that makes sense.

- 8.** Paul valued faithfulness in others. Look up the following verses and list the people who Paul refers to as being faithful: Colossians 1:7, 4:9, and 1 Corinthians 4:17.

- 9.** Can you think of someone in your life that you would call “faithful”? Why did you choose them?

- 10.** God stays true to His Word. He doesn’t change His mind. In Him there is no changing or shadow of turning (James 1:17). If He says it, He means it. If we are to reflect His character, how important, then, is it for us to keep our word to others? Share your thoughts. (Hint: Is it okay, as believers, to fail to follow through on a promise while using the excuse, “The Lord led me another way”? Sorry, sort of a pet peeve- happens a lot!)

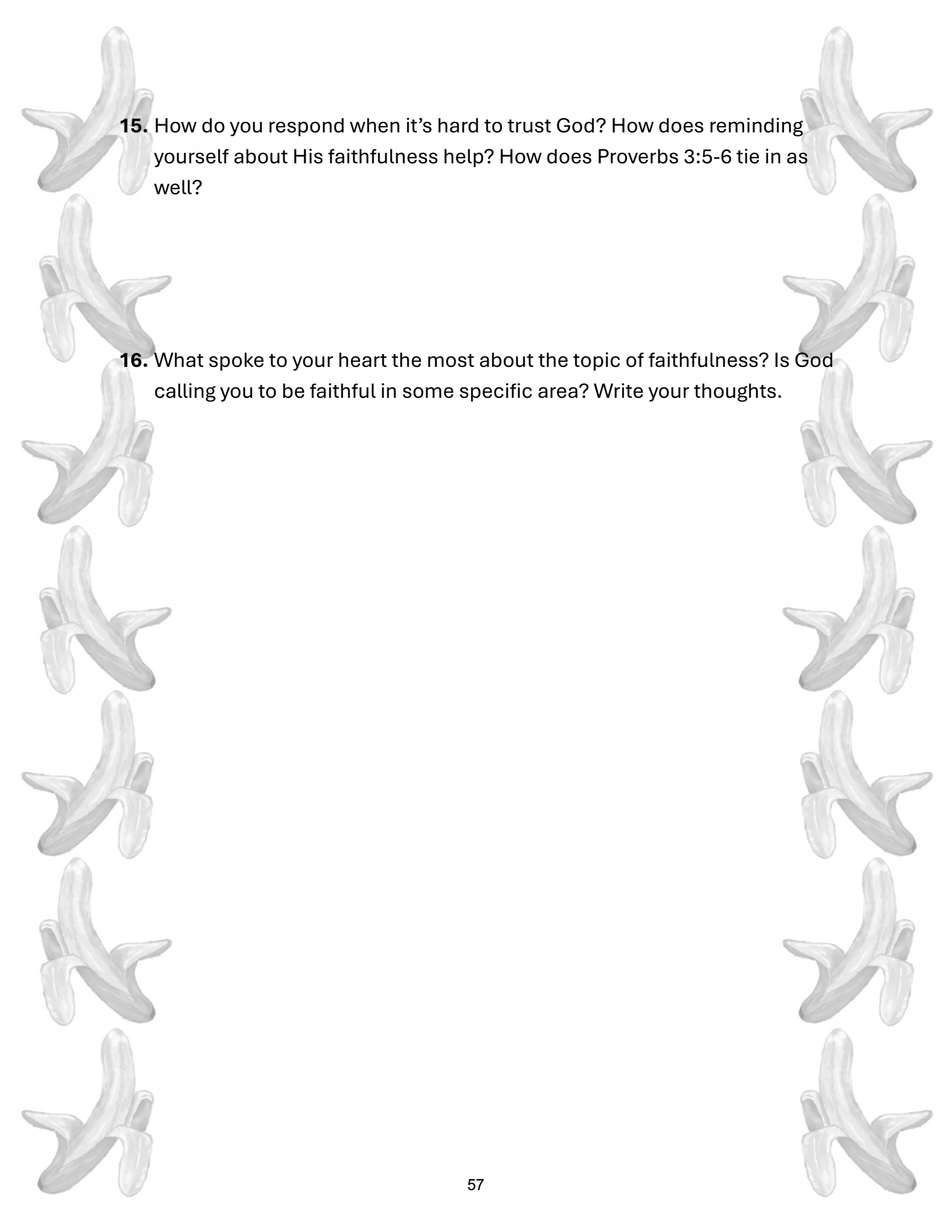


11. Some ways that faithfulness towards God is practically manifested are a deep commitment to studying and adhering to His Word, being consistent in your prayer life, involved in the fellowship of believers, perseverance during trials, and integrity in relationships. These principles cultivate faithfulness in our lives towards others as well. Are you consistent in these things or are there some you have been neglecting?

12. Ok, let's get a bit more personal and reflective. Do you consider yourself to be a faithful person? Why or why not?

13. How faithful are you to the truth of the Word? Do you search His Word for truth and hold fast to it, like the Bereans (Acts 17:10-12) who would study the Scriptures daily to verify the facts they heard? They were eager and diligent and faithful to the truth. They didn't accept claims blindly and they verified info from reliable sources before they took it as truth. Would you consider yourself a Berean?

14. Are you faithful to your word when you tell someone you'll do something or that you'll be somewhere? Are you punctual or do you tend to be late? How's your follow through? Are you loyal to your friends, family, and co-workers? Can people trust you? Take some time to ponder.



15. How do you respond when it's hard to trust God? How does reminding yourself about His faithfulness help? How does Proverbs 3:5-6 tie in as well?

16. What spoke to your heart the most about the topic of faithfulness? Is God calling you to be faithful in some specific area? Write your thoughts.

FRUIT RELECTIONS WEEK 8

It is essential to abide, or remain, in Him if we desire to bear fruit. Let's think about God's constant, unchanging, reliable, faithful nature. Meditate on who God is. See how the Holy Spirit speaks to you when you do. Also, let's be thankful that He remains faithful when we are faithless. That's so hopeful. Write your thoughts, prayers, or observations, as the Spirit leads.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The paper has four decorative corner tabs, one in each corner, which are shaped like stylized leaves or petals. These tabs are light gray with darker gray outlines and shading. The rest of the page is white with evenly spaced horizontal lines.



WEEK NINE

GENTLENESS

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
GENTLENESS, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23



WEEK 9: GENTLENESS

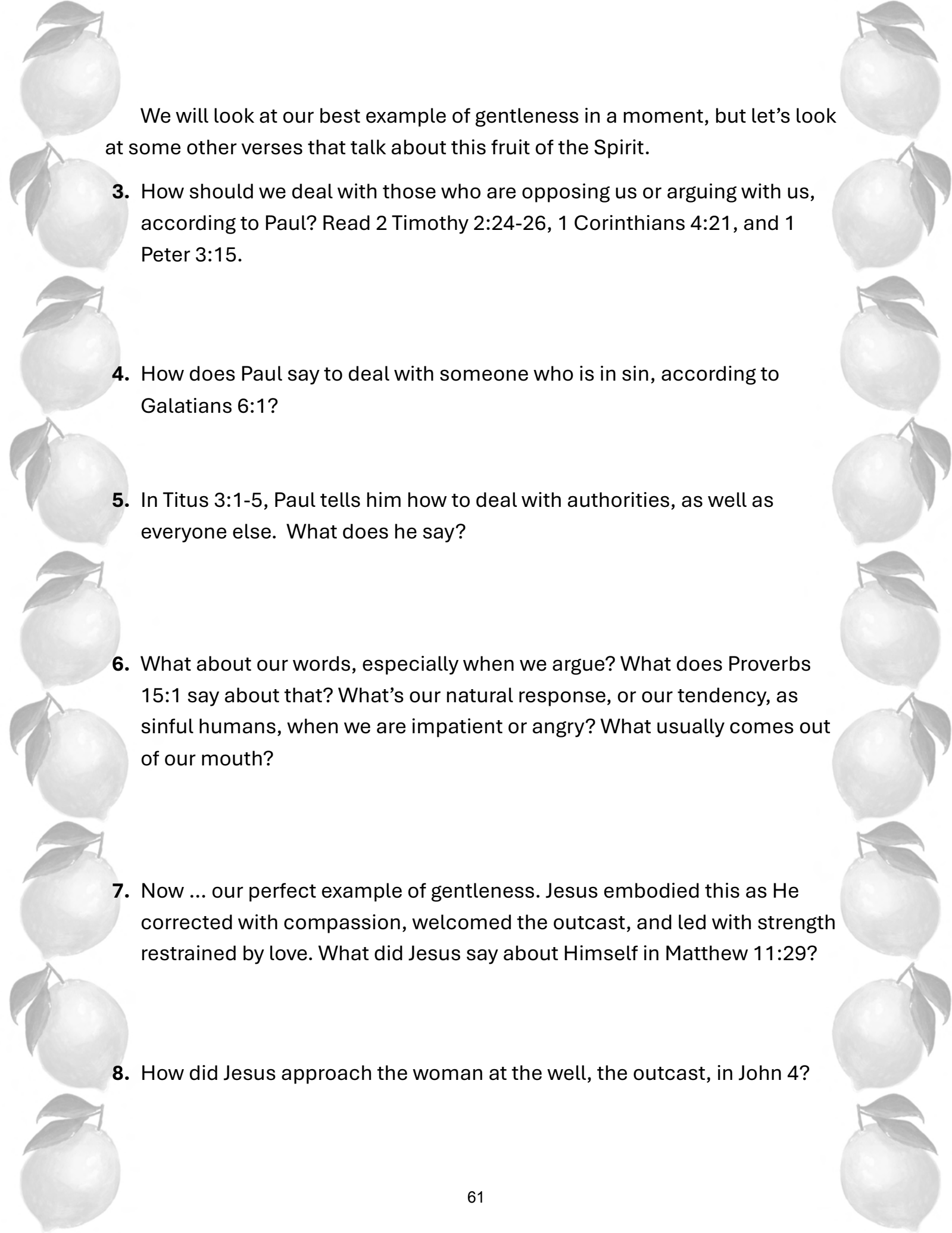
"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Galatians 5:22-23

Today we have the blessed opportunity to talk about the fruit of the Spirit called gentleness. What do you think of when you hear that? Weak? Polite? Soft? The words our culture sometimes uses to describe gentleness are so far from how the Bible defines it. I don't think there are many of us who are naturally "gentle" when we are wronged, or angry, or threatened. Sometimes our humor is anything but gentle. We speak with sarcasm, harshness, and even a bit disrespectful at times. Gentleness is just not natural for most of us. But that's just it. The fruit of the Spirit is produced **BY** the Spirit. It's a natural outworking of the Holy Spirit in our lives. And it is not weakness or timidity. It is strength.

The Greek word for gentleness is *Prautes* (prah-oo'-tace) and means humble, meek, and strength under control; mildness, gentle strength, and self-controlled power. It's characterized by controlled strength, humility, and compassionate restraint, reflecting Christ-like character in thought, word, and action. It protects and cares for others rather than asserting its own best interest. Scripture portrays it as an active choice to remain gracious and composed in diverse situations. Both the Old and New Testament emphasize gentleness as a vital and necessary component of a righteous life and expression of a true faith. It's not passive, it's an active expression of love and restraint, protection, and care for others.

1. What does David say about God's gentleness in Psalm 18:35-36?
2. How do you think God's absolute strength, sovereignty, and position as Almighty Creator, as well as being known as the God of all comfort, highlight His gentleness? How does He choose to use it? Discuss how He uses His power with gentleness, comfort and mercy. (That was a hint!)



We will look at our best example of gentleness in a moment, but let's look at some other verses that talk about this fruit of the Spirit.

3. How should we deal with those who are opposing us or arguing with us, according to Paul? Read 2 Timothy 2:24-26, 1 Corinthians 4:21, and 1 Peter 3:15.
4. How does Paul say to deal with someone who is in sin, according to Galatians 6:1?
5. In Titus 3:1-5, Paul tells him how to deal with authorities, as well as everyone else. What does he say?
6. What about our words, especially when we argue? What does Proverbs 15:1 say about that? What's our natural response, or our tendency, as sinful humans, when we are impatient or angry? What usually comes out of our mouth?
7. Now ... our perfect example of gentleness. Jesus embodied this as He corrected with compassion, welcomed the outcast, and led with strength restrained by love. What did Jesus say about Himself in Matthew 11:29?
8. How did Jesus approach the woman at the well, the outcast, in John 4?

- 
- 
- 9.** How did Jesus display power under control, even under the threat of being arrested? Read Luke 22:47-53.
- 10.** When I tried to think of another example of a gentle leader, I automatically thought of Moses. In fact, Numbers 12:3 tells us that he was the humblest (gentlest) man on the face of the earth. Remember that he wasn't perfect. He got mad at the Israelites for complaining and struck the rock and wasn't allowed to go into the Promised Land (Numbers 20), among other things. But he was humble, respected, and called faithful in Hebrews 3:2-5. His life manifested gentleness. Can you think of another Bible character that you would consider to be an example of gentleness?
- 11.** If the Bible sees gentleness as strength, contrast God's definition with how you think our world defines strength.
- 12.** How does gentleness become visible in how one responds to conflict resolution, correction, or even evangelism?
- 13.** Why is it so important to represent the Lord correctly, especially in gentleness? Why is reflecting Him in our character crucial for the world to see and experience?



14. Time to check in. What's brewing in your mind as you think of this topic?
When is it hardest for you to be gentle?

15. Gentleness is actually more of a **disposition** of humility, meekness, and self-controlled strength. How would you describe your natural disposition or tendency to respond if angry, threatened, or insulted?

16. Read Proverbs 16:32. How does this verse relate to what we are talking about? (It also ties in with our fruit we will talk about next week since they are so intertwined.) Are you slow to anger, or are you quick tempered?

17. Do you “live” with a posture of humility, before both God and man, or is that a struggle for you?

18. What spoke to you the most on the topic of gentleness? How can you grow in the areas where you are not gentle?



I came across some ways to “practice” being gentle ... if that’s a thing? I’m going to throw them out to you and see what you think. Although the fruit is produced **BY** the Spirit, we still need to yield to Him and be intentional to do our part. So, with that said, here you go. Let me know how you do!

1. Practice speaking softly and calmly.
2. Practice feeling compassion for others. (I would think this means to pray and ask God to help you look at others as He does.)
3. Practice putting yourself in someone else’s shoes.
4. Practice giving others the benefit of the doubt.

FRUIT RELECTIONS WEEK 9

Here are a few more things to ask yourself, and it stays between you and the Lord. These aren't for sharing, but simply for reflecting and self-examination. How do you usually act when you feel provoked? How do you handle criticism? Are your strength and words used to protect or harm? Take some time to pray and ask God to produce gentleness in your life, even when it's hard. Write your thoughts and prayers.

[illegible]



WEEK TEN

SELF-CONTROL

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, **SELF-CONTROL**. Against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23

A circular logo with the words 'Fruit OF THE Spirit' in the center. The words 'Fruit' and 'Spirit' are large and bold, with 'OF THE' in smaller text between them. Surrounding the central text is a ring of the twelve fruits of the Spirit: SELF-CONTROL, LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, and PATIENCE.

Fruit OF THE Spirit

WEEK 10: SELF-CONTROL

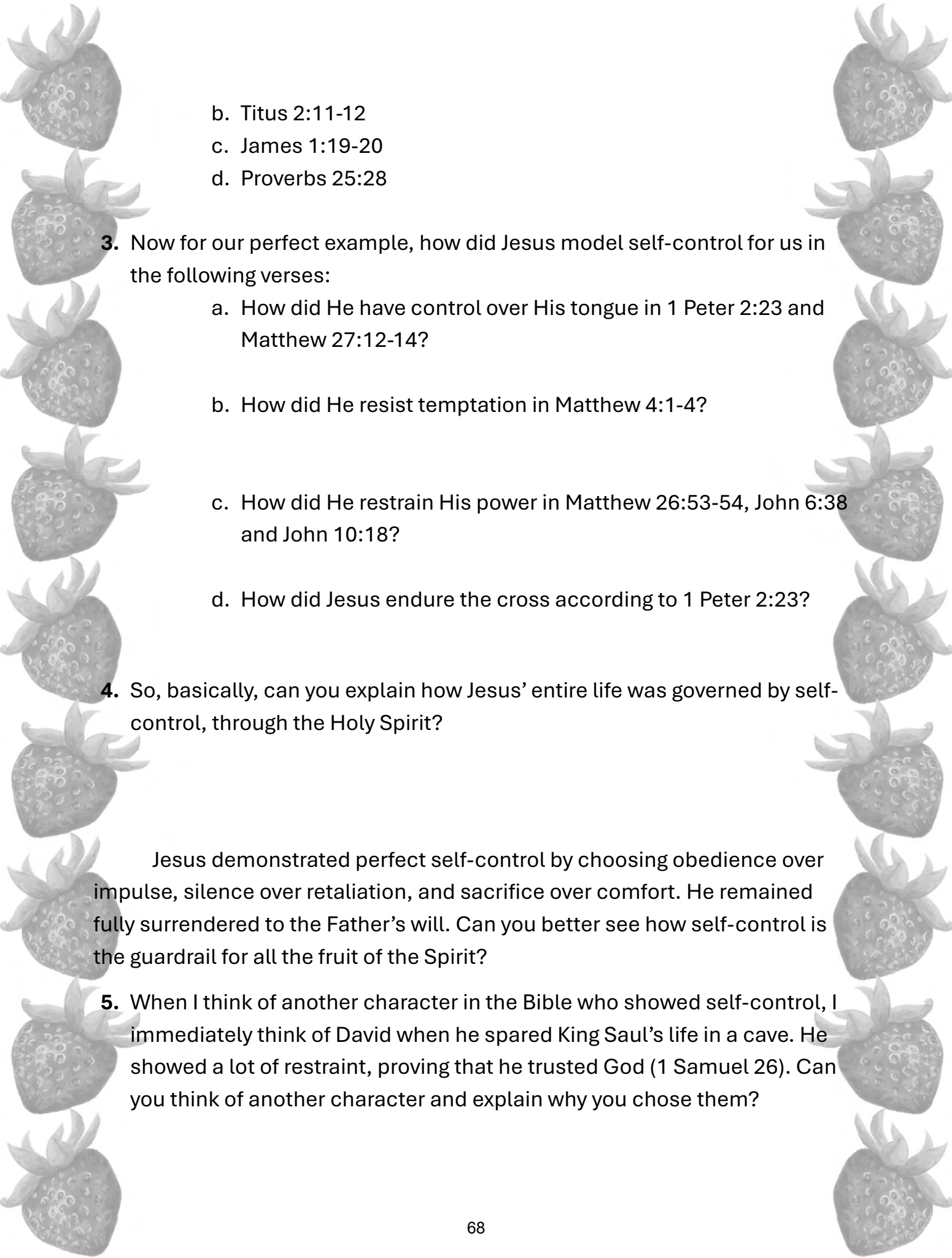
“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

Galatians 5:22-23

Well, we did it! We made it to week 10, which is self-control. Self-control manifests itself in our lives every single day, whether good or bad. It is connected to all the other fruit we have been studying. Self-control functions ineffective-- love may turn only sentimental, joy can become reckless, and patience can be fragile under pressure, etc. “It allows believers to resist sinful impulses, maintain moderation, and exercise discipline in thoughts, words, and actions.” It also ensures that our spiritual growth is consistent and fruitful. Like the walls of a city, it provides protection against vulnerability. It seems like we don’t even need a definition of the word since we all know it so well, but it deserves one!

Self-control comes from the Greek word *Egkrateia*, which means mastery over oneself. It’s a Spirit produced ability to master one’s impulses, desires, and actions, enabling believers to live in obedience to God. It’s also called temperance in some translations. (I personally like self-control.) It’s not produced by human effort alone but cultivated through His work in our lives (Philippians 2:13).

1. Drawing from the verses below, explain how God the Father exercises self-control. (It’s often related to being slow to anger, merciful, etc.) Read Isaiah 48:9, Psalm 78:38, Psalm 103:8-14, Nehemiah 9:17, and 2 Peter 3:9.
2. If we are supposed to reflect God’s character, then we really need the Spirit to produce it in us. Read the following verses and explain how they relate to self-control.
 - a. 2 Peter 1:5-9.

- 
- b. Titus 2:11-12
 - c. James 1:19-20
 - d. Proverbs 25:28

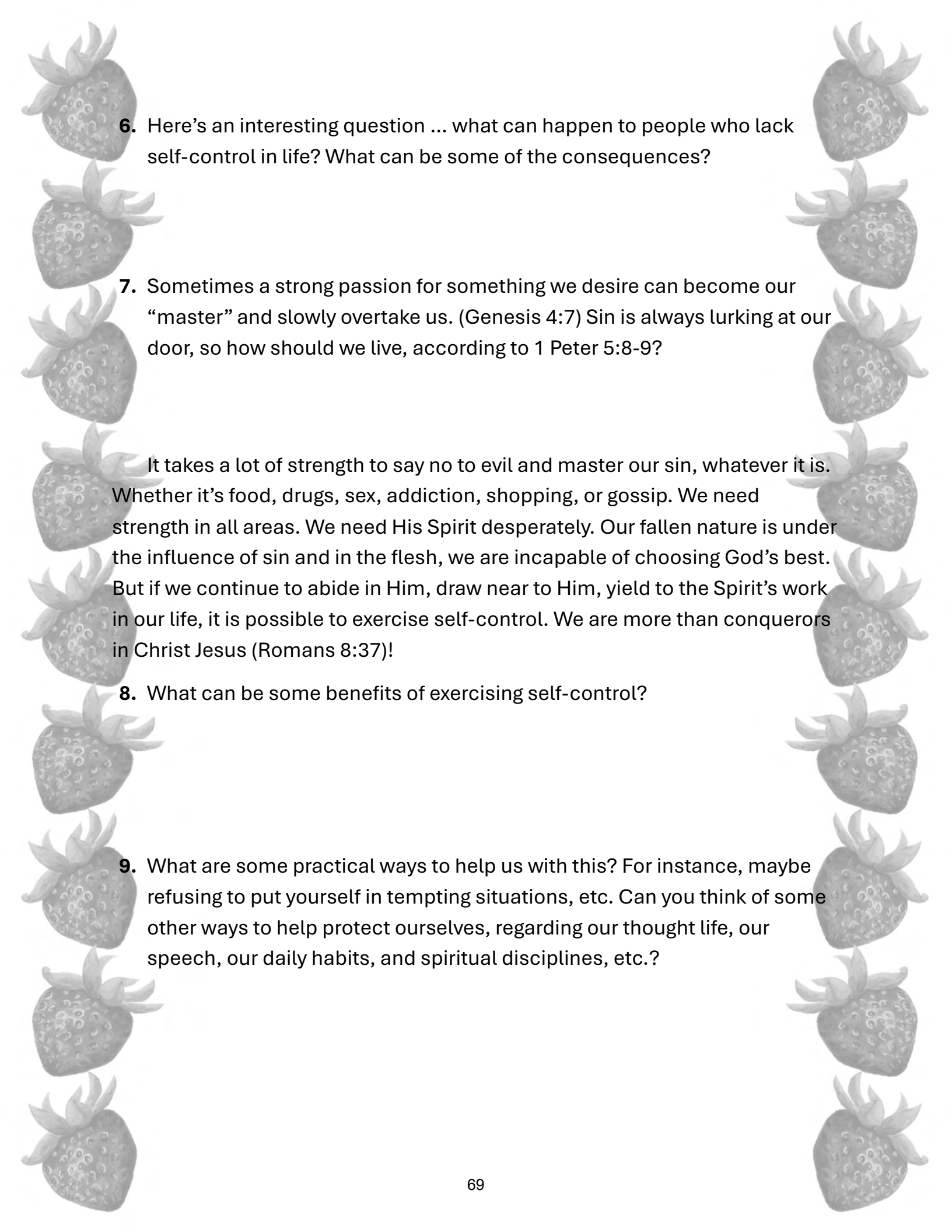
3. Now for our perfect example, how did Jesus model self-control for us in the following verses:

- a. How did He have control over His tongue in 1 Peter 2:23 and Matthew 27:12-14?
- b. How did He resist temptation in Matthew 4:1-4?
- c. How did He restrain His power in Matthew 26:53-54, John 6:38 and John 10:18?
- d. How did Jesus endure the cross according to 1 Peter 2:23?

4. So, basically, can you explain how Jesus' entire life was governed by self-control, through the Holy Spirit?

Jesus demonstrated perfect self-control by choosing obedience over impulse, silence over retaliation, and sacrifice over comfort. He remained fully surrendered to the Father's will. Can you better see how self-control is the guardrail for all the fruit of the Spirit?

5. When I think of another character in the Bible who showed self-control, I immediately think of David when he spared King Saul's life in a cave. He showed a lot of restraint, proving that he trusted God (1 Samuel 26). Can you think of another character and explain why you chose them?



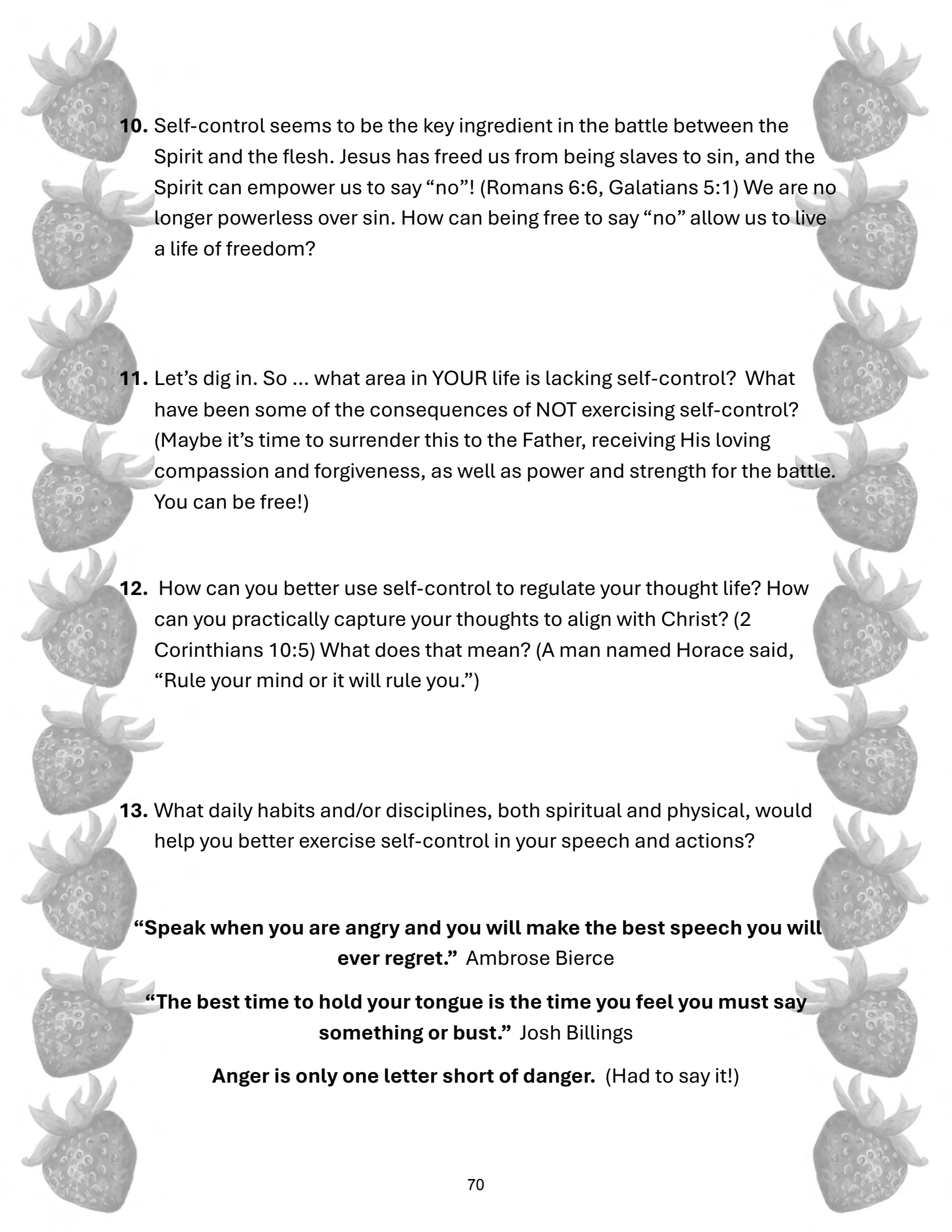
6. Here's an interesting question ... what can happen to people who lack self-control in life? What can be some of the consequences?

7. Sometimes a strong passion for something we desire can become our “master” and slowly overtake us. (Genesis 4:7) Sin is always lurking at our door, so how should we live, according to 1 Peter 5:8-9?

It takes a lot of strength to say no to evil and master our sin, whatever it is. Whether it's food, drugs, sex, addiction, shopping, or gossip. We need strength in all areas. We need His Spirit desperately. Our fallen nature is under the influence of sin and in the flesh, we are incapable of choosing God's best. But if we continue to abide in Him, draw near to Him, yield to the Spirit's work in our life, it is possible to exercise self-control. We are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:37)!

8. What can be some benefits of exercising self-control?

9. What are some practical ways to help us with this? For instance, maybe refusing to put yourself in tempting situations, etc. Can you think of some other ways to help protect ourselves, regarding our thought life, our speech, our daily habits, and spiritual disciplines, etc.?



10. Self-control seems to be the key ingredient in the battle between the Spirit and the flesh. Jesus has freed us from being slaves to sin, and the Spirit can empower us to say “no”! (Romans 6:6, Galatians 5:1) We are no longer powerless over sin. How can being free to say “no” allow us to live a life of freedom?

11. Let’s dig in. So ... what area in YOUR life is lacking self-control? What have been some of the consequences of NOT exercising self-control? (Maybe it’s time to surrender this to the Father, receiving His loving compassion and forgiveness, as well as power and strength for the battle. You can be free!)

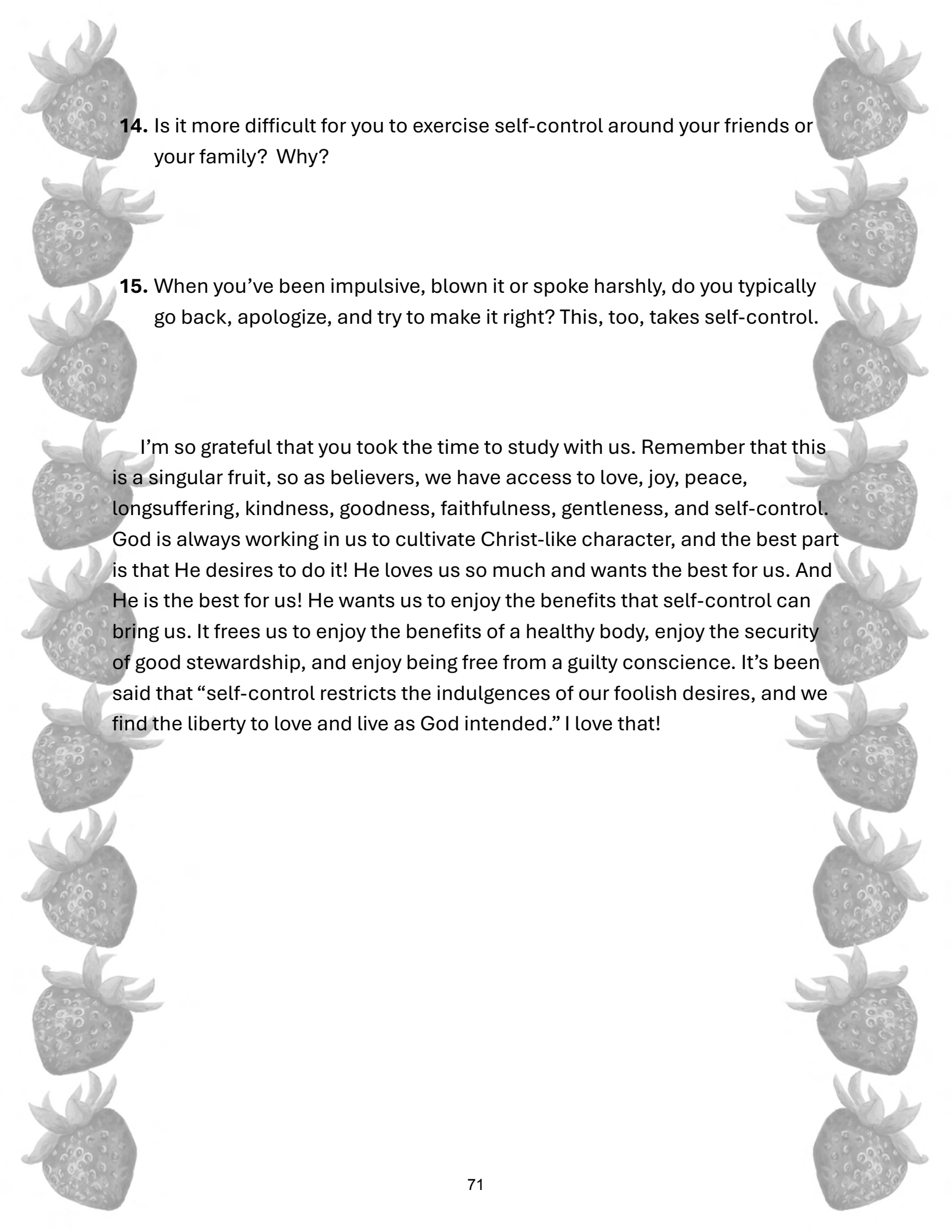
12. How can you better use self-control to regulate your thought life? How can you practically capture your thoughts to align with Christ? (2 Corinthians 10:5) What does that mean? (A man named Horace said, “Rule your mind or it will rule you.”)

13. What daily habits and/or disciplines, both spiritual and physical, would help you better exercise self-control in your speech and actions?

“Speak when you are angry and you will make the best speech you will ever regret.” Ambrose Bierce

“The best time to hold your tongue is the time you feel you must say something or bust.” Josh Billings

Anger is only one letter short of danger. (Had to say it!)



14. Is it more difficult for you to exercise self-control around your friends or your family? Why?

15. When you've been impulsive, blown it or spoke harshly, do you typically go back, apologize, and try to make it right? This, too, takes self-control.

I'm so grateful that you took the time to study with us. Remember that this is a singular fruit, so as believers, we have access to love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. God is always working in us to cultivate Christ-like character, and the best part is that He desires to do it! He loves us so much and wants the best for us. And He is the best for us! He wants us to enjoy the benefits that self-control can bring us. It frees us to enjoy the benefits of a healthy body, enjoy the security of good stewardship, and enjoy being free from a guilty conscience. It's been said that "self-control restricts the indulgences of our foolish desires, and we find the liberty to love and live as God intended." I love that!

FRUIT RELECTIONS WEEK 10

Take some time today and examine your heart and life, because they go together. What's in your heart plays out in your life. Do you see moments of God's fruit growing in you? In what way? Ponder the last 10 weeks. No hurry. Reflect on the fruit we studied and process your thoughts. Pray and ask Him to continue to cultivate the fruit of HIS Spirit in you. And remember to yield to that fantastic work He's doing, even if it's painful.

[illegible]



love



joy



peace



longsuffering



kindness



goodness



faithfulness



gentleness



self-control

FRUIT PAINTINGS BY GENESIS REEDER

