**Understanding The Importance and Purpose of Walking in The Fruit of the Spirit Handout #3**

**When you choose Jesus, you make the fruit of the spirit your natural, yet supernatural way of living.**

1. **When you find out what God's Word says and obey it, the fruit of the spirit will supernaturally become the natural way of life for you**. **a.** If you never get in the Word of God, you won’t know how to get God’s fruit. **b**. It all starts with love. All the fruit comes out of love—joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control (Galatians 5:22, NLT). **c**. It is so powerful to live from a place of love. **d**. You’ll live a healthier life when you walk in love. **e.** Strife and unforgiveness have no place where love rules. **f.** If you don’t have love in your life, you’re not going to be able to operate in the rest of the fruit. **G**. Love takes you away from hate, anxiety and turmoil. Everything works by love (1 Corinthians 13, AMPC). **7** Love bears up under anything and everything that comes, is ever ready to believe the best of every person, its hopes are fadeless under all circumstances, and it endures everything [without weakening]. **8** Love never fails [never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end]… (AMP) **H**. Remembering that love never fails will keep you out of trouble. Strife always fails. **i.** Forgive whether you want to or not—it’s a matter of your choice. Choose the love of God over every other option. **J**. You can’t walk in God’s love without understanding how much God loves you. Time in God’s presence will reveal His love for you. **K**. Love will mature you to put away “childish thinking” (1 Corinthians 13:11). **L.** The flesh produces works—toil and hardship. But time with God produces an outflow of love.
2. **We can choose the fruit as a choice of the flesh, or we can practice yielding to His Spirit in us, as we grow in our new life in connection to Him**. **a**. When you are born again, your whole nature changes. **B.** Pigs get in the mud, and they like it. **C**. Sheep get in the mud, but they want out—we are now changed to be God’s sheep. **D**. My old way of life was crucified with God. My new life is found in the presence of Christ Jesus (Galatians 2:20). **E**. Jesus, through His faith and sacrifice, was able to fill me up with Himself. **F**. His love was dispensed from His life into mine. **G**. When you choose to follow Jesus, you abandon your old life and its cravings (Galatians 5:16, NLT). **H**. Be led by the Holy Spirit cravings— you will want to walk in love, and you’ll crave peace with other people. **i.** The Holy Spirit is the only One who can defeat the cravings of the flesh; **j**. He helps you soar above them. **K**. The fruit of the spirit are the outflow of God’s life in you. **L.** The fruit of the spirit are hindered by selfish and ignorance. **M.** You have to deal with the results of whatever outflow you yield to—the spirit or the flesh. **N**. These fruits are forces within you, and they are powerful. **O**. Ignorance of God’s fruit living in you will keep you from walking in the fruit of the spirit
3. **Understanding The Fruit of Joy (1 Thessalonians 1:6) a**. Paul’s words to the Thessalonians in First Thessalonians 1:6. He told them, “And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost.” **B.** In most of Paul’s writings, he associates “joy” with times of affliction. The word “affliction” used in this verse is the Greek word thlipsis. This word is so strong that it leaves no room for misunderstanding regarding the intensity of the afflictions the Thessalonians faced. **C.** Paul uses this word to alert us to moments when he or others went through grueling, crushing situations that would have been unbearable, intolerable, and impossible to survive if it had not been for the help of the Holy Spirit. **d.** One of the ways the Holy Spirit helps in these situations is to give us supernatural “joy.” **E**. However, it’s important to understand that this divine joy isn’t on the same low level of mere happiness. **F.** Happiness is based on circumstantial pleasure, merriment, hilarity, excitement, or something that causes one to feel hopeful or to be in high spirits. **G**. These fleeting emotions of happiness, although very pleasurable at the moment, usually go just as quickly as they came. **H**. All it takes is one piece of bad news, a sour look from a fellow employee, a harsh word from a spouse, or an electric bill that is larger than what was anticipated — and that emotion of happiness can disappear right before a person’s eyes! **i**. But joy is unaffected by outward circumstances. In fact, it usually thrives best when times are tough! It is God’s supernatural response to the devil’s attacks! **J**. “joy” isn’t a human-based happiness that comes and goes. Rather, true “joy” is divine in origin, a fruit of the Spirit that is manifested particularly in hard times. **K**. Someone may feel happiness, merriment, hilarity, excitement, or “high spirits,” but all of these are fleeting emotions. **L**. On the other hand, “joy” is a Spirit-given expression that flourishes best when times are strenuous, daunting, and tough! **M**. In the example given in First Thessalonians 1:6, the Thessalonians were under great stress due to persecution; yet in the midst of it all, they continued to experience great joy. **N**. In fact, the Greek strongly implies that their supernatural joy was due to the Holy Spirit working inside them. Paul even called it the “joy of the Holy Ghost.” **O**. Another translation of First Thessalonians 1:6 could be the following: “You threw your arms open wide and gladly welcomed the Word into your lives with great enthusiasm. And you did it even in the midst of mind-boggling sufferings — a level of stress and intensity that would be suffocating and crushing for most people. But while you were going through all these hardships and hassles, you were simultaneously experiencing the supreme ecstasy and joy of the Holy Spirit.” **p**. The best that the lost world has to offer is a temporary happiness. But when the seed of God has been placed inside your human spirit, that divine seed produces a “joy” that isn’t based on outward events or circumstances. **Q**. In fact, when times get very challenging, the supernatural life of God rises up inside you to defy that devilish pressure! This supernatural “joy” will sustain you in even the hardest of times! **R**. Joy also plays a part in hearing direction from God. If we are not joyful, our access to Him may be hindered. **S**. Joy allows us to withdraw the directions from God that get us where we need to be in life. **t.** Paul was saying this in Romans 8:38-39 ” And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God’s love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[a] neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God’s love. **39** No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NLT) **U**. Imagine Paul was preaching this during a challenging time in his life.
4. **Sources of Joy** (John 15:10-11): If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. commandments: a reference for the Word of God **a**. Obedience to God's Word is the first source of joy Proverbs 13:15: Good understanding giveth favor: but the way of transgressors is hard. **b**. Transgressors does not necessarily only refer to sinners ;Transgressors can also refer to Christians who transgress the promises of God. **C.** When we say yes to the promises of God, great joy results **d**. Psalm 19:8: The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart… **e**. Psalm 5:11: But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. **F**. When Mary said yes to the promise of God in Luke 1:38, great joy arose within her as expressed in Luke 1:46-55 **45** Blessed is she who [a]believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.” **46** And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord, (NKJ) **g**.. *Maintaining fellowship with God is another source of joy* **h.** I John 1:3-4: That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. **i.** Fellowshipping with other Christians produces joy ; Fellowshipping with God the Father produces joy ; Fellowshipping with the Lord Jesus Christ produces joy; **j**. Sin separates us from fellowship with God and joy is lost **k**. Psalm 51:8 & 12: Make me hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. 12.Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. **l.** *Worship produces joy* **m**. Psalm 20:5: We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfill all thy petitions. **N**. Isaiah 12:3: Therefore, with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. **O**. Psalm 16:11: Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. **P**. We should be spending time every day in the presence of God through worship. **Q.** We do not have to wait until we are with the Lord physically to have joy. We can have fullness of joy on earth by entering into His presence daily **r.** In His presence is fullness of joy;( Psalm 16:11) Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. So where There is Discontentment, There is No Joy **s**. The Bible says that the joy of the Lord is our strength. When we are operating in joy, the Holy Spirit becomes our strength and we can mount up with wings as eagles, run and not be weary, walk and not faint. **T**. Often when people hop from church to church, they have actually lost their joy and are looking for a church to bring them joy. **U**. People may hop from department to department within a local church volunteering. They may begin in the choir. When that doesn’t bring joy, they go to ushering. Ushering doesn’t bring joy so they try working in the nursery. Changing diapers doesn’t do it, so they volunteer in the youth department. Soon, they have run the entire gamut of the church and still haven’t found joy, so they think that they will find joy at another local church. **V**. They become church hoppers and after a few years they stop attending church altogether and backslide all because they replaced doing good works in the church for the Word of God.  **w**. **It is the Word of God that brings joy into our lives. x.** Some Christians also mistakenly believe that if they had a different job they would have joy. They may hop from job to job looking for joy. Or they may think that another person will bring them joy. **Y**. Single people think, “If I could just get married, I’d be happy.” Married people think, “If I were just single again, I’d be happy.” We judge our happiness according to circumstances. *Another person is not going to bring joy.*  **Z**. **Our relationship with the Lord brings true joy, and that relationship can only be maintained by staying in His Word**.