

Week 12 Day 3 | *Fruit of the Spirit: Faithfulness*

Noticed how the farther you get from the pain of a moment, the more likely you are to repeat whatever caused it? Ever been sitting in a dentist chair getting a needle shoved in your gums so that a cavity can be fixed? You probably think to yourself, “I’m going to brush, floss, and mouth-wash daily for the rest of my life!” Later that night, sure enough, you do all three. You even do it the next night, and maybe the night after. However, later that week or the next, things shift a little. It’s late one night. You’re tired and you’ve done pretty well up until now. Surely missing one night of flossing won’t hurt you, so you just gargle and brush. Then, you skip the floss and the gargle the next night. Settling for a quick brush, you say you’ll start fresh on Monday. Before you know it, flossing and gargling are once again the exception, not the rule—at least until your next cavity.

Pain can be a good teacher, but it can also have a short memory. This is especially true with fitness. You can work your tail off getting in shape for the summer. You suffer through one pitiful workout after another, braving a thousand salads and drinking more water than you thought possible. The process can be miserable and you swear to yourself you’ll never let yourself get out of shape again. It’s just too hard getting back to where you once were or where you want to be.

You stick with it, though, and what do you know? June comes around and you’ve gotten some results—great results, in fact. You feel fantastic, perhaps even celebratory. Maybe you deserve a week off from working out, a few nights out to enjoy some treat meals, or both! One week turns into a week and a half. A one-time celebration becomes a weekly event. You may not totally fall off the wagon, but you’re not exactly riding shotgun all the time either. By the time autumn rolls around, your previous fitness high is on a downward trend. Come winter, you’re back to where you were.

The good news is that your life doesn’t have to be characterized in this way. I’m not talking about only using the self-discipline the Holy Spirit works in us. We already talked about that. I’m talking about loyalty. I’m talking about consistency. I’m talking about faithfulness. Mind you, we aren’t relying on our faithfulness. It’s not up to us to merely gut it out. That’s why it’s called a fruit “of the Spirit.” It’s the Holy Spirit who will be faithful for us, to us, in us, and through us.

Ultimately, honoring God with our bodies is not only about avoiding pain. It’s also about embracing power. God sent His Holy Spirit to work in your life. The Lord wants to draw you close to Him. To get you more reliant on Him. To make you more like Him.

Why is it important to be like Him? Because He is faithful!

“For the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.”—Psalm 33:4 (NIV)

The more we are like the Lord by obeying the Holy Spirit working in our lives, the more faithful we become.

Fortunately for us, God’s faithfulness does not depend on us:

“If we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”—2 Timothy 2:13 (NIV)

He remains faithful even when we do not. This is not a license to botch it on purpose, but rather a testament to His character . . . the same character the Holy Spirit is shaping in you.

You are a little more than a week away from being finished with this 13-week journey. In order to keep your fitness going, you’ll want to hold fast to the fruit of faithfulness of the Holy Spirit by following Him in simple obedience. Submit daily to His leading and He will grow the fruit of faithfulness in your life.

Make no mistake; you can be faithful in this because He is faithful in you. He is faithful not so you can show off in a bathing suit. He is faithful in you so that you might shine a light on His name, that He would be glorified:

“Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.”—Psalm 115:1 (NIV)

The Holy Spirit’s faithfulness does not ebb and flow. If your ability to remain faithful starts slipping, then it’s likely you are working out of your own strength. You can be consistent in your fitness by relying on the faithful prompting He provides and following in obedience.

Faithfulness brings better fitness results and more importantly, more glory to the Father.

Prayer

Father, thank You for promising to be faithful to us and in us by the working of the Holy Spirit. Will You forgive me when I rely on my own strength? Please help me be more reliant on Your power in me to stay the course every day. Amen.

Meditation

I can be faithful by relying on Your faithfulness in me.

Daily Spiritual Exercise

Today you will focus on the fruit of faithfulness. Remember, these are not “fruits of ourselves.” These are the outcomes of the Holy Spirit working in and through our lives.

As you are focusing on the fruit of faithfulness, pray for wisdom. You may need help in discerning whether you’re working out of your efforts or allowing the Holy Spirit to work.

Also, be sure to be teachable. Sometimes we are being taught a lesson we don’t want to learn. If we are truly open to the Lord working in our lives however, we need to humbly receive all that He wants to teach us.