

SPIRITUAL GROWTH REVIEW

The Fruit of the Spirit Is...



THE SECRETS OF BEING FRUITFUL

Memory Verse for this week: *You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the Rock eternal.* Isaiah 26:3-4

1. How was your week? Did you find yourself growing in the fruit of the Spirit? How have you seen God at work in you as you grow in love and joy? *Take time to listen to one another and take note of people's joys and challenges. Be sure to write down prayer requests.*
2. Take a look at the memory verse above. What is a good definition of peace? Does it mean that we aren't busy or stressed? Does it mean that everything in our life is going the way that we want it to? *The Greek word for peace connotes the bringing together of two separate parts into harmony. Biblically this refers to aligning our hearts with the will of God. Peace is an inner wellbeing when our heart is in agreement with God's will.*
3. Think of someone you know that you view as a peaceful person. What is it about their countenance that leads you to believe that they have peace in their hearts? *Peaceful people are not worried or hurried. They are okay when things are not okay. They turn to God in times of needs and trust that He is good and that He is in control. They bring calmness to us just because they are present. It is a blessing to be around people like this!*
4. What does it mean to "Let go and let God"? Do we sit back and let God take care of our problems? *This is a common phrase that we use when talking about peace from God. Letting go doesn't mean being complacent or doing nothing. Letting go means submitting to God's plan and letting go of trying to be in control of the outcome. We do what we can to bring about balance and stability in our lives and leave the results up to God.*
5. **1 Peter 5:7** says, "Cast your cares on him because he cares for you." How do we sometimes cast our cares, only to reel them back in? Why do we do this? *We like to be in control. Sometimes the situations in our life will require us to submit them to God's care and ideally we should trust Him but sometimes we fear that God may not take care of our needs the way that we would want Him to. When we retain control of our lives, we are limiting what God wants to do in us and through us. His plan is best!*
6. Let's revisit **2 Corinthians 12:6-10**. Does peace mean trusting that God is going to fix our problems? What are we really finding peace in? *God doesn't always fix our problems; in fact, sometimes He allows us to be stretched so that we grow in trust and patience. We find peace in the reality that He is in control and that He is good. He will never leave us or forsake us and He will always be waiting for us to come to Him for strength.*
7. Consider Jesus' words in **Luke 22:42**. Peace with the Father comes when we are able to say, "Yet not as I will, but your will be done." How do we bring ourselves to deny or give up our natural desire to be in control to allow the will of God to govern our lives? *We need to recognize that God's grace is sufficient for us (2 Cor. 12:9), and that our own efforts are insufficient. We are not in control of our lives, no matter how hard we try. Ultimately, God is in control. If we resist His will, then we will not have peace.*

8. Is peace essentially declaring that everything is okay in our lives even when there is chaos? *Peace in our lives means that we declare that God is in control and that we trust Him with the outcome of the trials in our lives. Just because we have peace does not mean that everything is okay, but that everything will be okay! God will be faithful to carry us safely home into His arms (Rom. 8:38-39).*
9. Look at **John 14:26-27**. Jesus gives peace to us. Is peace something that can be shared or given away? Can we be ambassadors of God's peace? If so, how? *Peace is something that is enjoyed internally, and though it cannot be transmitted from one person to another, we can certainly foster an environment of peace that can help others to embrace it. Being an ambassador of peace means that we need to have peace ourselves and that we lead people to God as the source of their peace. True peace is something that the world cannot offer.*
10. Read **Colossians 3:15**. What does it mean that we have been "called to peace"? Is this an internal peace or something different? *In this context, we are not only to embrace God's peace individually, but we are to foster an environment of peace throughout the Church. We are one body, called to function together in unity as a testimony to the world of God's love lived out in practice. When we are faithful to follow the model God gave to us, the Church is a beautiful reflection of the love of God to us.*
11. Look at **Romans 12:18**. How can there be peace in the church when people are all different, not to mention that we're sinful? *Maintaining peace is not easy. Because people are selfish and sinful (even within the Church), we must practice grace and patience with others, and be willing to forgive when necessary. We are living out our lives as Christ would want us to live, setting an example for others to follow.*
12. Consider **John 16:33**. Is it possible to have peace when our world is falling apart? Is this a realistic goal or are there seasons where peace is just not a possibility? *We may not see or experience world peace in our lifetime, but we can have true peace in our heart. It is attainable and available to us if we embrace it the way that God intended for us. He offers us His peace; it is up to us to choose to embrace it.*
13. Read **Philippians 4:4-7**. What would you tell someone who is anxious or stressed about how to take their next step towards peace? What should they do? *The first step is to acknowledge God as the source of our peace. We get right with God through Christ and God promises to pour out His blessings in our lives. This doesn't mean that we won't experience trials, but He gives us strength to persevere and gives purpose to our struggles. God is good and He can be trusted. Because this is true, we can have peace no matter what life may bring.*
14. What is one area that you struggle to trust God fully? Can you see how it robs you of peace? *Pray for one another that God would help you to trust Him and to receive His peace.*

For this week: When do you find it hardest to have peace? What is at the root of this problem? Take a few minutes to cast your cares upon Him. Then, take a deep breath, let go, and thank God for offering you His peace! With peace comes freedom for our heart.