

Parent Guide

THEO™

Teaching Children God's Word

God's Desire Volume 5

LESSON 14 - Fruit of the Spirit

In the opening scenes of this lesson we see some very bad behavior being displayed by Luther. Soon Belfry is caught up in some bad behavior as well. The Bible calls such behavior the “works of the flesh,” and lists immorality, impurity, and outbursts of anger, to name a few. From birth we humans possess a sin nature, a powerful nature that will dominate our thoughts, words and actions, and that makes us do things we shouldn’t. However, that power is broken when we place our faith in Jesus. In that moment we are born again of the Spirit, and no longer have to be dominated by the works of the flesh. We now have the power to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). As we walk in the Spirit, He grows spiritual fruit in us, so that every day we will become more and more like Jesus.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Galatians 5:19-21 (works of the flesh)
Galatians 5:22-23 (Fruit of the Spirit)
Romans 6:4; also 8:13-15 (walk in newness of life)
Matthew 7:16-20 (bad fruit, good fruit)
Ephesians 5:8-10 (fruit of the light)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do Luther and Belfry demonstrate bad behavior in the opening sequence? Why do we have a sin nature? (hint: we inherited it from Adam)
2. What do you think the Bible means when it refers to “the works (or acts) of the flesh?” (hint: anger, selfishness, pride, etc.)
3. How many fruits of the Spirit are there? Can you name every one of them? In the Bible, the word “fruit” is singular, and yet there are nine of them. Why do you suppose that is? (hint: like a single gem with many facets, fruit represents the complete character of Christ)
4. What does it mean to walk in the Spirit? Walking in the Spirit is simply trusting God for everything in our lives—trusting God in the big things, as well as in the small things (Proverbs 3:5-6). Talk also about how the Spirit is different than the flesh.
5. Does the fruit of the Spirit grow in us quickly, or does it take time? When the fruit of the Spirit grows in us, who do we look like?

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Spend a little time drawing and coloring various fruits on separate sheets of paper with crayons—a banana, an apple, an orange, pear, etc., until you have nine different fruits. Each of these fruits represents a particular fruit of the Spirit. The banana might represent kindness, or the apple mercy (decide for yourselves). Now write “kindness” or “love” or “joy” beneath the particular fruit it is to represent. Then place the drawings on the floor or table and have each family member choose one that he or she has the most difficulty with (perhaps it is patience, or mercy). For example, if someone selects kindness, then they must ask God to help them to demonstrate kindness in practical ways. Each day pick a new fruit, until you have worked on each of the nine. Remember, we must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to grow the fruit in you.

FINAL THOUGHT

God desires to grow the fruit of the Spirit in each of us. Not just one or two, but all nine! Jesus didn’t possess just love or peace or mercy, He possessed all nine fruit in perfect completeness and unity. When we walk in the Spirit we will obey God’s Word, and the Holy Spirit will grow His fruit in us. It is not something we can do in our flesh.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we know that we cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit by our own effort. When we try we fail. Please help us to walk in the Spirit every day, so that the Holy Spirit may grow His fruit in us.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

NIGHTLY DEVOTIONS

This lesson’s devotionals will include various passages from the Bible. Read the passage each night and follow the devotional questions.

Day 1

Read Galatians 5:22-23. Repeat these two verses several times, until you can repeat them without looking. Don’t worry if you flub up, we’ll be doing it all week!

Day 2

Begin your devotion by reciting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23). Talk about the fruit that you are having the most difficulty with. Perhaps it is showing kindness to someone. Place the drawing (or drawings) of the fruit that you are struggling with on your refrigerator, as a daily reminder to work on it, and trust the Spirit to grow in you.

Day 3

Read Galatians 5:16-17. How are we to walk (or live) in the Spirit? Walking takes effort on our part (God doesn't just carry us around). Walking in the Spirit means to keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus, obeying His Word, and trusting in His Spirit to grow the fruit of the Spirit in us.

Day 4

Read Ephesians 5:6-9. Here the Bible says that the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth. How does light produce fruit (think of how things grow in nature). What does it mean when it says that believers are children of light? How do we walk in the light?

Day 5

Read Philippians 2:12-13. We know that salvation is a free gift; however, the apostle Paul says to work out your salvation with awe and reverence. What does this mean? Discuss how this is similar to walking in the Spirit.

Day 6

Read Galatians 5:22-23, then recite the fruit of the Spirit. Though there are nine fruits, they are really a single unity that reveals the perfect character of Jesus Christ. Discuss what this means. Everyone born by the Spirit possesses all nine; however, some may be more developed than others.

LESSON 15 - Salvation

Luther and Belfry are chased by two terrifying menaces in the opening sequence of this lesson: Scratch the cat, and a monstrous pike. They manage to escape Scratch, but are no match for the tenacious pike that is sure to devour them. Recognizing their peril, they cry out for Theo to save them, which he does, snatching them out of the pike's snapping jaws just in time. Every one of us faces a peril even greater than the ones the mice faced—eternal death. What makes matters worse is that we are all helpless to save ourselves. No one else can save us, either, except One. What we could not do, God did by sending His only Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. He did this because He loves us and wants us to live with Him for eternity.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Luke 15:8-10 (parable of the lost coin)
Luke 15:1-7 (parable of the lost sheep)
1 Peter 1:8-9 (salvation, the goal of faith)
Titus 2:11 (by grace we are saved)
Luke 2:29-30 (Simeon sees Jesus, the salvation of the Lord)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some examples of salvation, apart from the Bible? For example: Luther and Belfry were saved from Scratch and the pike.
2. Imagine being saved from a life-threatening peril. What would you think and feel after you were saved? How might you feel toward the person that saved you?
3. What does the Bible mean when it talks about salvation?
4. Why do we need salvation? Can we save ourselves by being good? Why not? (hint: we are born sinful and we all fall short of the glory of God)
5. Why is Jesus Christ the only one who can save us?

FAMILY ACTIVITY

In Jesus' parable of the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10) He tells of a woman who has lost a valuable coin. She searches everywhere in her home until she finds it. This parable illustrates salvation, with the coin representing a lost sinner. God rejoices greatly every time someone puts his or her faith in Him. Take turns playing "Lost and Found." Elect one person to be "lost." This person is to hide a coin (representing his or her life). It is best for the "lost sinner" to go into another room and hide it, while everyone else has his or her eyes closed. Once the coin has been hidden, everyone must come in and look for it. Once the coin is found, everyone should hug the lost sinner, rejoice, and say, "The one who was lost has been found!" Now have someone else hide the coin and continue the game. Remind everyone that God and all the angels in heaven rejoice when a sinner repents and calls Jesus their Lord.

FINAL THOUGHT

Jesus came to earth to seek and to save those who are lost (Luke 19:10). Every lost sinner (all of us) who, by faith, trusts in Jesus as their Lord and Savior will be saved.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for saving me from spiritual death and giving me eternal life. You paid a tremendous price for my salvation. Help me every day to be grateful to you because of it.

In Jesus' name, amen.

NIGHTLY DEVOTIONS

This lesson's devotionals include various passages from the Bible.

Day 1

Read Romans 3:23 (see also 3:10-18) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Because we are all sinners we deserve God's judgment. Who is the one person that never sinned and yet took God's judgment upon Himself for us?

Day 2

Read Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." This verse describes that because of sin everyone is dead spiritually and will die physically. But because of God's free Gift we can be born again and have eternal life. Thank God tonight for this wonderful Gift.

Day 3

Read Romans 5:8: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Would you want to die for someone that hated you? Discuss how amazing it is that Jesus would do this?

Day 4

Read Romans 10:9: “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” Perhaps there is someone you know who has not done this. It would be wonderful for that person to come to Jesus. Pray for them tonight.

Day 5

Read Romans 5:1: “Therefore, since we have been justified (we are saved) through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Discuss what this peace means. (Hint: we not only have a positional peace with God, but an inner peace, knowing that God loves us, and will never condemn us).

Day 6

Read Romans 8:1 (see also 8:38-39): “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” To fully grasp what this means read Romans 8:38-39 and see how marvelous is God’s love and protection for His children.

LESSON 16 - Love Thy Neighbor

Luther and Belfry catch a river rat named R.W. Wigglesworth stealing their food. Mice have no dealings with river rats. Rats are untrustworthy, they are thieves, and worst of all, they carry...fleas! But Theo tells the mice that they should love Wigglesworth because he is their neighbor. The mice are flabbergasted! “But he’s a rat!” Luther objects. Theo then tells them the parable of the Good Samaritan to make his point. We all have people in our lives who are not easy to love. Maybe it’s a relative, or a schoolmate. Perhaps it’s someone at work or someone who lives next door. Rather than shun these people, we are to pray for them. We are to reach out in love to them and we are to bless them, even if they curse us. This is not easy to do. But if we yield to the Holy Spirit’s power in us we can love everyone by grace.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

John 4:1-42 (Jesus and Samaritan woman)

Romans 12:18 (if it is possible, as far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men)

Luke 10:25-37 (Parable of the Good Samaritan)

Matthew 22:34-40 (love your neighbor as yourself)

Matthew 5:43-48 (love for enemies)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so hard to love those that are different from us?
2. Are there people in your life that are particularly hard to love? Discuss how you can pray for those people. How can you demonstrate God’s love to them this week?
3. Who is a neighbor? Is it the person who merely lives next door, or is it someone else? (hint: everyone we interact with is our neighbor!)
4. Do you know why the Jews of Jesus’ day did not like the Samaritans? Who were the Samaritans? (they were Jews who had intermarried with Gentiles during the seventy year Babylonian captivity of Israel. The Jews considered them impure and would not associate with them). It’s a big deal that Jesus tells a story that favors a Samaritan
5. Since we are made in the image of God, then isn’t all of mankind our neighbor? Discuss what this means.

FAMILY ACTIVITY

Find a container of some kind—a jar, bucket, cardboard box. Tape a piece of paper around it. Then write “Love Your Neighbor” on it, and decorate it with drawings of flowers, your family, or whatever (be creative). Now, using strips of paper, write down ideas that would demonstrate love in a practical way to your neighbor. Here are some ideas, but you will want to add ideas of your own. 1. Wave and smile at your neighbor whenever you see him or her. 2. Collect spare change and put it into the container (it’s amazing how much we find in our pockets). When you’ve collected a fair amount, give it to your church missionary fund, or a benevolence fund. 3. Mow your neighbor’s lawn or shovel snow from their walk (ask if you can do this first!). Each participant is to reach into the container and read a slip. Take turns reading until the container is empty. Then do what is written as a family over the coming weeks.

FINAL THOUGHT

Not one of us deserves God’s love, and yet He so loves us that he gave His only Son Jesus to save us. Because God loves us so much, we should love our neighbors as well, no matter who they are. This demonstrates that we are God’s children.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help me to love my neighbor, whoever it might be. If there is someone in my neighborhood, or school, or place of work that you want me to demonstrate your love to, please show me who that is and help me.

In Jesus’ name, amen.

NIGHTLY DEVOTIONS

This lesson’s devotionals include various passages from the Bible.

Day 1

Read Matthew 22:34-40. Jesus says that to love your neighbor as yourself is just like the “greatest commandment,” which is to love God with your whole life. Think about how loving your neighbor is the same as loving God.

Day 2

Read Matthew 5:43-48. Jesus says that when you love your enemy you are God’s children. Discuss why this is true.

Day 3

Read Romans 13:8-10. All of the commandments are summed up in one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” In what ways do we love ourselves? How can we love our neighbor this same way?

Day 4

Read John 3:16. This very popular verse shows how much God loves the whole world. How can you love your neighbor in China, or India, or any other country in the world? Discuss some practical ways to do this.

Day 5

Read Luke 10:25-37. In this famous parable of the Good Samaritan, what practical ways did the Samaritan demonstrate love to the wounded man?

Day 6

Take some time tonight to pray for your neighbors, both local and international. Pray that they would come to know Jesus and that they would know how much God loves them.