

GROWING IN GRACE WITH THE

Fruit of the Spirit

- FAMILY BIBLE STUDY -

DEVOTIONS
& CONVERSATION
STARTERS FOR
FAMILIES

by Amy Tol



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Intro

WELCOME

Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. Self-Control.

These words embody the beautiful hopes and desires we have for our kids, don't they? The list above—found in Galatians 5:22-23—offers an amazing guidepost for us as parents: These are the qualities *God himself* tells us he wants to cultivate in our children!

But it's no easy task to raise kids with this depth of character!

Evening news headlines and everyday interactions constantly remind us how much our culture lacks people of character. Traits like love, patience, and kindness seem to be in short supply. Instant gratification and success at any cost overshadow self-control and goodness. Many people live with little joy or peace in their hearts. It's a little overwhelming to raise strong kids when this is the world we live in.

Thankfully, we don't have to do this alone. God has given parents two amazing resources to help us shepherd our children's hearts: The Bible and the Holy Spirit. My heart's desire in writing this study was to offer you a tool that would bring these things together. A way to connect your whole family to both God's Word and God's Spirit—together.

I'm praying you'll see a great harvest in your home as bit by bit, day by day, the Spirit grows these character traits in your hearts, and helps your family become a light for a world that desperately needs it: May God bless you as you study his Spirit together!

OVERVIEW

The study guide is broken into three-day chunks. Days 1-3 open with an introduction to the Holy Spirit and the "FRUIT" method of Bible study. Then, for each fruit of the Spirit, you'll spend one day studying a Bible story, and two days studying Bible verses that further unpack the meaning of each trait. (*These verses are all included on the printable Scripture Cards.)

Days 1-3: Introduction to the Holy Spirit
Days 4-6: Love
Days 7-9: Joy
Days 10-12: Peace
Days 13-15: Patience

Days 16-18: Kindness
Days 19-21: Goodness
Days 22-24: Faithfulness
Days 25-27: Gentleness
Days 28-30: Self-Control

Additional Resources:

- **8x10 prints:** There are two different prints that display the fruits of the Spirit. (One with definitions, one without.) An easy way to display the traits for memorization.
- **Scripture Cards:** These cards contain the Bible verses you'll be studying for each fruit.
- **Definition Cards:** These cards contain definitions for each fruit of the Spirit.
- **Printable Bunting:** A fun way to display the fruits of the Spirit in your home and further reinforce these character traits.

Intro

"FRUIT" BIBLE STUDY METHOD

As you study the fruits of the Spirit, you'll be using a simple acronym, FRUIT. My hope is that this method of Bible study will help you teach your kids how to go beyond simply *reading* the Bible—but to move toward *understanding* and *applying* it as well.

Your family will learn the acronym together on Day 3 of the study, but here's a quick "sneak peek" at what each letter stands for:

F - FILL: It's important to start any Bible time by asking the Holy Spirit to *fill* us with understanding.

R - READ: Of course, we need to *read* the passage!

U - UNDERSTAND: The questions in this section are geared toward helping you notice and *understand* what the passage is saying. It's okay if your answers here are brief and to the point.

I - INVESTIGATE: These questions encourage more personal reflection, so you and your kids can "*investigate*" how your own lives line up with what the passage is teaching.

T - TRY: This section offers a little wrap-up of the day's study, along with a simple suggestion for something to *try* that will help you *apply* the Scripture to your life.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

There's no "right way" to use this study: The main goal is simply to spur good conversations with your family about godly character—centered on what the Bible has to say about it. So be flexible with the material: If you don't get to every single question or every single verse, that's okay: It's more important to have real connections and conversations than to simply "get thru" the material!

Here are a few simple suggestions for how you can make the most of this study:

- Use for family devotions at suppertime.
- Go through the study with an older child, one on one, at bedtime.
- Use as a special once-a-week family study that you combine with an extended time of prayer requests and praises from each family member.
- Pass out the Scripture cards for each day to various family members so different people can take turns reading a verse.
- Use the Scripture cards and/or Definition cards as lunchbox notes. Or hide them around the house as reminders of what you're learning.
- Keep the Definition Cards handy so you can begin each study session with a quick review of the character trait you are studying.
- When kids need discipline, have them copy Bible verses from the Scripture Cards that correspond to the trait they were failing to demonstrate when they misbehaved.

A WORD ABOUT THE DEFINITIONS

Language changes over time, which can present a special challenge when studying the words of the Bible! As I developed this study, I wanted to stay as close to the original intent of the words used in Galatians 5:22-23 as possible. So I turned to several sources for information about the original Greek words Paul used in his writing.*

In developing the definitions I used in this study, I aimed for clear, simple language that would be easy for kids to understand. I hope they will serve your family well. I selected Bible passages that will help you further unpack the layers of meaning in each word.

Below I offer a very brief paraphrase of the sources I consulted in regards to each definition. **If you are a parent or older child, I encourage you to read through these additional insights as you study each fruit of the Spirit.** I think they will add to your understanding as you learn about each of the characteristics.

Love - *a concern for others; seeking good for all people, no matter what*

- To serve a person for their intrinsic value, not what they can do for you (Keller)
- To have "affectionate regard, goodwill and benevolence" toward others (Hill)
- Love for God will show itself through good deeds and good will toward others (Parsons)
- Unconditional love that isn't based on emotion, seeking the welfare of others (Ressler)

Joy - *cheerfulness based on God's goodness, not our circumstances*

- Delight in God's salvation and the beauty of who he is (Keller)
- Rejoicing and gladness given by the Holy Spirit (Hill)
- A word related to "grace"—thankfulness for God's forgiveness (Parsons)
- Can be found even in unhappy circumstances (Ressler)

Peace - *contentment with God that brings harmony with others*

- Resting in God's wisdom and sovereignty more than your own (Keller)
- Wholeness, soundness . . . the absence of confusion (Hill)
- Having peace with God and others, and also receiving peace from God (Parsons)
- Living with contentment in a world that always wants "more" (Ressler)

Patience - *ability to endure suffering, resisting anger when others offend us*

- Ability to deal with suffering joyfully (Keller)
- Self-restraint toward other people, refraining from taking vengeance (Hill)
- To not be easily offended by others, to suffer wrongdoing without taking vengeance (Parsons)
- Long-suffering, being willing to wait (Ressler)

Definitions

Kindness - *a tender heart; a desire to share generously with others*

- Kindness that comes from deep inner security, and not an effort to promote oneself. The opposite of envy. (Keller)
- A word often occurring with “philanthropy”; a quality that softens harshness (Hill)
- Results from tenderheartedness and compassion, associated with generosity. (Parsons)
- Compassion. Caring for others. Being willing to be inconvenienced. (Ressler)

Goodness - *determination to speak truth and do what is right, even when no one is looking*

- Integrity and honesty. Being the same in all situations. (Keller)
- Actual good deeds (versus good we simply “think” about doing) (Hill)
- Acts of kindness that are good in the eyes of God. Doing good out of love, not just a sense of duty (Parsons)
- Having the courage to do the right thing, even when it is hard (Ressler)

Faithfulness - *loyalty to God and others, keeping your promises*

- Loyalty, being reliable and committed to your principles (Keller)
- Faith, a growing trust that God is who he says he is, and will do what he says he’ll do (Hill)
- To be reliable, trust-worthy, dependable, “to be a safe source of counsel and strength for others” (Parsons)
- Someone who is true to their promises. Having “stick-to-it-ness” (Ressler)

Gentleness - *a humble attitude, willingness to listen to the wisdom of others*

- Self-forgetfulness, the opposite of being superior (Keller)
- Meekness. Not uncontrolled anger, but “holy anger,” or controlled anger about things contrary to God’s ways (Hill)
- Humility, considering others worthy of honor. Being teachable, or open-minded toward others (Parsons)
- To be ready to listen. To seek wisdom more than seeking to be heard (Ressler)

Self-Control - *the strength to do God’s will, even when you want to do something else*

- “Ability to choose the important thing over the urgent” (Keller)
- Temperance to not give in to indulgence or excess (Hill)
- Having inner strength, being able to master your desires and passions (Parsons)
- Being surrendered to God (Ressler)

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WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Day 1

Welcome to your first day studying the Fruits of the Spirit! We've got a lot of adventures ahead as we discover the many different ways we can grow stronger in our faith. Let's start by reading the Bible passage this study has been based on: Galatians 5:22-23.

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

Those two verses have a lot jam-packed into them! Don't panic: We're going to take things one fruit at a time. But before we get to that, we have ask an important question: Who is this Spirit? The Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5 is the **Holy Spirit**, or the Spirit of God. And today, we're going to learn about that Spirit by looking at a few Bible verses together. Take turns reading through each characteristic below:

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD.

*"For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom."
(2 Corinthians 3:17)*

*Have you heard the word "Trinity" before? This is the word we use to describe all three parts of God together: God the Father, God the Son (or Jesus), and God the **Holy Spirit**.

2. THE HOLY SPIRIT HELPS US LEARN ABOUT GOD AND LIVE GOOD LIVES.

"The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and make you remember all that I have told you." (John 14:26)

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A GIFT TO EVERYONE WHO BELIEVES IN JESUS.

Peter said to them, "Each one of you must turn away from your sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38)

4. THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVES US THE ABILITY TO SHARE GOD'S LOVE WITH OTHERS.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Isn't the Holy Spirit wonderful? Some people think that God just sits in heaven and gets mad at people for sinning all the time. But that's not true at all. God is actually right here with us, every single day! Of course, we can't see the Spirit, or touch it with our hands. It's a little mysterious how God lives and works in us, but the Spirit is just as real as the people sitting in the room right now.

Pretty cool, isn't it? Now that you've learned about the Holy Spirit, try answering this question: ***If someone asked you to describe the Holy Spirit, what would you say?***

End today with a simple prayer, thanking God for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

WHAT IS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?

Day 2

Imagine that someone sold you a grapevine and you planted it in your yard. You'd probably expect to be eating grapes soon, right? But what if that vine grew a huge watermelon instead? You might not mind, if you like watermelon. But you'd be upset with the guy who sold you the vine, wouldn't you?

Grapevines grow grapes. Watermelon vines grow watermelons. And we can tell someone sold us the wrong plant by the kind of fruit it produces!

People are just like vines. Our actions and choices are like fruit. They show what kind of person we really are. A person who loves Jesus has "fruit" that looks like Jesus. They are loving and kind and willing to help others. But a person who doesn't love God bears different "fruit": They might have fruits like anger or selfishness.

Galatians 5:22-23 tells us exactly what the fruit of God's people should look like: It's love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

That's a lot of fruit, isn't it? Maybe you feel a little discouraged looking at that list because you don't have all that fruit right now. But remember this: You aren't a full-grown vine yet! None of us are going to have perfectly ripe fruit until we get to heaven. But if we have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we *will* see growth in these areas. Bit by bit. Step by step.

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE VINE.

Jesus talked about the fruit of the Spirit too. Read what he said in John 15:1-5 and then discuss these questions:

1. Based on these verses, who does the work of growing the fruit?
2. What is your part of the growing process?

Did you catch that? It's not **your** job to make the fruit! **God** will cause the fruit to grow in you.

Isn't that a relief? On our own, we can't make any fruit at all. God knows we deal with sin and make mistakes. He knows that we need help living good lives. That's exactly why he gave us the Holy Spirit! He will cause all that beautiful fruit to grow!

OUR JOB

When it comes to growing in the fruit of the Spirit, we have one job: to remain in the vine. That means living in a way that helps us stay connected to God. And we're going to talk more about that tomorrow!

As you end today, identify one fruit of the Spirit that you already see growing in the members of your family. Thank God for these ways the Spirit is already helping you to grow!

HOW DO WE STAY IN THE VINE?

Day 3

Have you ever left a bunch of bananas on the counter for a long time? Have you noticed what happens to them? As the days go by, the beautiful yellow color starts turning brown. And the nice, firm banana peel turns mushy and soft. Eventually, they start smelling pretty gross!

That's what happens to a plant that gets disconnected from the main vine: It will eventually start to rot and need to be thrown out. When a branch gets snapped away from the vine, it stops growing.

We're a lot like those plants--with God as our vine. If we don't stay connected to God, we start to decay, just like that smelly bunch of bananas! But when we stay close to God, we see growth. The fruits of the Spirit start ripening on our branches. And we start to bless the people around us with our fruit too!

One great way to stay connected to God is through Bible study. That's why we're going to read the Bible during every day of this study! And to help us get the most out of our Bible reading, we're going to use an acronym. It's the word "FRUIT" and here's what it stands for:

F **FILL:** Ask God to fill you with the Spirit while you study.
R **READ:** Read a passage from the Bible.
U **UNDERSTAND:** Seek to **understand** the lessons God is trying to teach.
I **INVESTIGATE:** Investigate your life to see if it lines up with God's teaching.
T **TRY:** Pick one practical idea to try putting God's word into action.

Let's give this acronym a quick try with one short Bible verse and see what we learn:

F Fill: Dear God, please give us your Spirit to guide us while we study.

R Read: 2 Timothy 3:16a: "All Scripture is God-breathed."

U Understand: This verse tells us that Scripture was breathed--or written--by God!

I Investigate: Does my attitude during Bible reading respect that God is speaking?

T Try: Next time the Bible is read, I'll avoid distractions by laying my hands over my heart.

See how that worked? We didn't just read the Bible. We also took time to understand it and investigate whether our lives line up with it. And we ended up with a concrete way to put it into action in our everyday lives!

In the days ahead, you'll see this "FRUIT" acronym a lot! Take a minute to review what each letter stands for and discuss: *What letters of the "FRUIT" acronym have you thought about when studying the Bible before? What letters are new to you?*

As you end today, consider a simple family ritual you can practice when you read the Bible in the days ahead. (Ex. Hands over heart, standing during Bible reading, clearing away distractions.) Pick a way to mark your Bible time as something special--because it is!

A STORY OF LOVE

Day 4

F

FILL

Ask the Spirit to fill your heart as you study the Bible today.

R

READ

Read the definition of love.
Read *The Good Samaritan* - Luke 10:26-37

U

UNDERSTAND

1. Imagine you are walking down a street in an unfamiliar city and you see a person who's been injured and robbed. How would you feel? What would you do?
2. Who shows love in this story? How do they show love?
3. Why do you think the priest and the Levite walked past the wounded man?
4. What did it cost the Good Samaritan to show love? (What did he have to give up?)
5. According to verse 33, why did the Good Samaritan decide to show love?

I

INVESTIGATE YOUR HEART

1. Can you think of a time when it cost you something in order to show love to someone else?
2. Can you think of someone who is sad or hurting who might need your love this week?

T

TRY

The Good Samaritan went out of his way to show love, even though it was inconvenient. Even though it cost him time and money. Even though the robbers might have tried to attack him too! But before he did any of that, he simply noticed that someone was hurting and felt pity for him.



Noticing others is always the first step toward showing love. We cannot spend all our time thinking only about ourselves and what we want. Instead, we have to notice what the people around us need too. And then we can follow up with actions that show them God's love.

As you finish today's study, ask God to help you look at the people around you the same way he does. Ask him to help you notice who needs some extra love.

THE FRUIT OF LOVE

Day 5

F

FILL

Ask the Spirit to fill your heart as you study the Bible today.

R

READ

Read the definition of love.

Read 1 John 4:7-8, 1 John 4:10-11, 1 John 3:17-18

U

UNDERSTAND

1. How do these verses describe love? Is it a feeling or an action? Or both?
2. What do these verses teach us about *why* we should love others?
3. Where does love come from?
4. What is the difference between loving with “words or tongue” and loving with “actions and in truth”? Which one does God ask us to do?

I

INVESTIGATE YOUR HEART

1. Do you think you are capable of loving the way Jesus did? Why or why not?
2. Do you tend to show love with words, or with actions, or both?

T

TRY

When we look at Jesus’ perfect example, it can be overwhelming to think about love. Jesus loved so much that he actually gave up his life for us. And he still loves us and wants the best for us, even when we mess up and sin. Even when we act mean or grumpy or unlovable.



We don’t always love like that, do we? Sometimes we’d like to keep everything for ourselves instead of working to help others. It’s a whole lot easier to just *say* you love someone than to actually put that love into action! And some people are just hard to love, aren’t they? There are times we don’t even *want* to love someone because they’ve been so mean to us!

Here’s some good news: We don’t have to come up with perfect love all on our own. Love comes from *God*! Go to the source of love and ask for help. **Try starting each morning this week with a short prayer asking God to fill you with his love.**

F

FILL

Ask the Spirit to fill your heart as you study the Bible today.

R

READ

Read the definition of love.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 1 Corinthians 13:13, John 13:35

U

UNDERSTAND

1. According to 1 Corinthians 13, what are some words to describe what love is?
2. What are some words that describe what love is *not*?
3. Why do you think love is called the "greatest"?
4. According to these verses, what does our love tell others about us?
5. What might non-believers think about Jesus if we do *not* show love?

I

INVESTIGATE YOUR HEART

1. Do you think other people can tell you are a Jesus follower by the way you act?
2. When you look at all the characteristics of love mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13, which ones come most easily for you?
3. Which of the the characteristics do you struggle with?

T

TRY

There's an awful lot packed into that 1 Corinthians passage, isn't there? That's because there are so many different ways to show God's love! When we truly start to notice and care about the good of those around us, that's the fruit of love. And it leads to all the other fruits of the Spirit too! For example, love can spur us to show self-control, so that we don't harm those around us. Or it can help us show patience when we have to wait.



Don't get discouraged if you feel like you can't live up to everything on that list: Remember, growing in the fruit of the Spirit takes time. Take it one step at a time!

Try this: On a sticky note, write down one aspect of love you'd like to grow in your life: For example, "Love doesn't boast" or "Love is patient." Place this note somewhere you will see it often during the day. (Alternative: Wear a rubber-band around your wrist as a reminder to keep working on this aspect of love.)

A STORY OF JOY

Day 7

F

FILL

Ask the Spirit to fill your heart as you study the Bible today.

R

READ

Read the definition of joy.
Read *Singers in Jail* - Acts 16:16-34

U

UNDERSTAND

1. What do you think it would feel like to spend a year in prison? What would you do with your time?
2. Who displays joy in this story? (Hint: There's more than one person!)
3. What are some bad things that happened to Paul and Silas in this story?
4. Did Paul and Silas deserve to be thrown in jail? Why or why not?
5. How do they show joy while they are in the jail? How do they show joy after the earthquake?
6. What impact does Paul and Silas' joy have on the jailer?

I

INVESTIGATE YOUR HEART

1. How often do you feel grumpy? What gets you "out" of a grumpy mood?
2. Can you think of three good things about God that are worth praising, even on a bad day?

T

TRY

The story of Paul and Silas in jail shows us something powerful about joy: It's contagious! The jailer saw these men focusing on God's goodness, even though they'd just been beaten and thrown in jail. And then, when the jailer faced a problem of his own—a possible jailbreak!—Paul and Silas used the opportunity to teach him about God instead of running away. Their joy through hard times helped the jailer to believe in God's goodness too.



As you end today's study, ask God to help you spread joy this week! Hopefully you won't get thrown in any jails. But if you do face an unhappy situation, ask God to help you stay cheerful like Paul and Silas.

Try brainstorming three ways you could bring joy to your world this week.

THE FRUIT OF JOY

Day 8

F

FILL

Ask the Spirit to fill your heart as you study the Bible today.

R

READ

Read the definition of joy.
Read Psalm 28:7, Psalm 19:8, Psalm 5:11, John 15:9-11

U

UNDERSTAND

1. What are some reasons listed in the Psalms for finding joy in God?
2. What does Jesus teach about joy in John 15:9-11?
3. Where does Jesus find joy?
4. If we do not keep God's commands, how will that affect our joy?

I

INVESTIGATE YOUR HEART

1. How often do you sing praises to God? What are some other ways to "rejoice" in God?
2. Has disobedience ever made you feel disconnected from God? How does that affect your joy?

T

TRY

By now, you're probably starting to see a big difference between the ideas of happiness and joy. We usually feel happiness because of our circumstances. Something good happens or we receive a fun thing, and it makes us feel good. But those things can disappear—and then so does the happiness. And we have to look for something else to make us happy again.



Joy, on the other hand, can live in our hearts during both good and bad times. We can have joy any time, because it's rooted in God's goodness, and that's never going away! When we can celebrating his goodness—in both good times and bad—we see the fruit of joy growing in our hearts.

Try listening to praise songs as you get ready for school or work each morning this week. Let them remind you of God's goodness. Ask the Spirit to fill you with joy as you listen to them.

F

FILL

Ask the Spirit to fill your heart as you study the Bible today.

R

READ

Read the definition of joy.

Read James 1:2-4, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, 1 Peter 1:6-7

U

UNDERSTAND

1. According to these verses, what circumstances should give us joy?
2. What are some activities mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 that can help us focus on joy, even in hard times?
3. What are some reasons for joy, even when bad things happen?
4. How does joy show that “your faith is genuine”?
5. How can hard things help you in your faith?

I

INVESTIGATE YOUR HEART

1. When trials—or unhappy situations—come to you, do you usually respond with anger or with joy?
2. Can you think of a hard situation that made you stronger because you went through it?

T

TRY

When we hear the word “joy,” we probably picture smiling faces and happy occasions. And of course, those things do give us joy! But today’s Bible verses reminded us to look for joy *even when life isn’t going our way*. God doesn’t promise that we won’t have any problems, but he does promise to help us through them. And with the Holy Spirit in our hearts, those hard situations can even help us grow.



Challenges can teach us how to depend on God and be brave. Sometimes they help us see sins that have been hurting us. Many people have gone through hard times, and come out of them with more wisdom and strength than they had before.

If you are struggling with a problem right now, try asking God’s Spirit to help you grow stronger because of it. And if you’re not struggling with anything right now, say a prayer today for someone who is.

A STORY OF PEACE

Day 10

F

FILL

Ask the Spirit to fill your heart as you study the Bible today.

R

READ

Read the definition of peace.
Read *Abram Makes Peace* - Genesis 13:5-18

U

UNDERSTAND

1. When was the last time you had to split something up in order to share it with someone (or a group)? How did you decide the best way to divide it?
2. Who shows peace in this story? How do they show peace?
3. Who was quarreling at the beginning of the story and what were they fighting about?
4. What was Abram's plan for dealing with the quarrels?
5. What are some things Abram does in this story that show he was content with what God had given him?
6. How does God respond to Abram's willingness to take the "lesser" land?

I

INVESTIGATE YOUR HEART

1. How do you usually respond when fighting breaks out? How do you react when you feel like you've been given less than others?
2. How could you follow Abram's example next time you have to share something?

T

TRY

Whether it's a news report about war in another country, or a disagreement between your friends, quarrels show up often in our everyday lives. But the fruit of the Spirit is supposed to bring peace. So how do we avoid these fights and arguments with others? Abram's story shows us that a good place to start is by learning to be content with what we already have.



When we're content with what God's given to us, it's easier to let others go first or have the "better" choice. But when we're always looking to get "more" or to have the biggest and best, this can lead to fights with others.

Ask God's Spirit to fill your family with contentment. **Try listing at least ten things you can be thankful for today.**

THE FRUIT OF PEACE

Day 11

F

FILL

Ask the Spirit to fill your heart as you study the Bible today.

R

READ

Read the definition of peace.
Read Romans 12:17-21, 1 Peter 3:9-11

U

UNDERSTAND

1. What do these verses teach us about how to handle situations where other people do something wrong to us?
2. What are some ways that kids try to take revenge on each other when they feel hurt?
3. What is the difference between revenge and sticking up for yourself (or self-defense)?
4. Why do you think God dislikes revenge?
5. How can you stick up for yourself while still “keeping your tongue from evil”?

I

INVESTIGATE YOUR HEART

1. What people most often do harm to you? What do they do?
2. What is your usual response if someone wrongs you? Do you hurt them back? Just let it go without saying anything? Stick up for yourself? Something else?
3. What are some ways you can bless the difficult people in your life?

T

TRY

What happens when someone kicks you in the leg or calls you a cruel name? For many of us, our instinct is to hurt them back. Others might feel afraid to say anything, so we just take it. But with the Spirit's help there's a third path that can lead toward real peace: We can *calmly* ask the person to stop doing the hurtful thing—or share our problem with an adult who can help us stand up for ourselves.



If we want peace in our lives, we have to avoid taking revenge—but we should also avoid just taking abuse. It's not “blessing” someone to let them get away with poor behavior toward you or anyone else.

Try brainstorming some “hurtful behavior” scenarios with your family today, and then practice offering a peaceful response to them.

F

FILL

Ask the Spirit to fill your heart as you study the Bible today.

R

READ

Read the definition of peace.
Read 1 Peter 5:7, John 16:33, Philippians 4:6-7

U

UNDERSTAND

1. Anxiety (or worry) is an opposite of peace: How do these verses tell us to handle anxiety?
2. What kind of troubles do you notice in your world?
3. How did Jesus "overcome the world"? How can knowing about this help us deal with worry?
4. What do these verses tell us about God? How does he feel about us and our worries?

I

INVESTIGATE YOUR HEART

1. How often do you feel worried? What are some things that make you feel worried or anxious?
2. When you're worried, do you usually try to fix things yourself, or do you usually pray about those things first?

T

TRY

In our last study, we talked about handling fights that happen with other people. But what can you do when the conflict is inside yourself? How do you find peace when your mind is filled with worry?



It's normal to feel scared about new or stressful situations. We all have some fears about what could happen in the future. But that doesn't mean we have to worry about these things. These verses remind us that God cares about us and wants us to pray about our worries.

Say a special prayer for each family member who feels worried about something today: Ask God's Spirit to replace that worry with peace.