

Discussion Guide for Fruit Group Cluster #5
2021 Fruitful Living Lenten Journey
Self-Control & Wrap Up
Pastor Fritz

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” Galatians 5.22-23

- THANKS EVERYONE for making time to be part of what God is doing in our Fruitful Living Series!
- Thank you, leader, for pulling this Fruit Group together.



Let's Get Started! To warm up, share your name and how you hope to celebrate Easter (watching one of the streamed services, at one of COS's four in-person services, or somewhere else).

Opening prayer: *Thank you, Lord, for gathering us together for our fifth session of Fruitful Living. We know our world can be pretty sour at times. Thanks for your plan to use each of us to sweeten it with the Holy Spirit's help. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Discuss:

1. In Monday's daily email devotional, writer Clint Barbour joked that in order to deal with his two young children, the **self-control** he requires could fill up an Olympic sized swimming pool. How about you? What really challenges your **self-control**?
2. In the Tuesday devotional, Shirley Brown writes, "perhaps the one thing I've been missing is **self-control**: the control to give my life over to Christ, the control to, well, lose control and rely on Christ to guide me. My life has changed in the last four years. I have found a happiness and contentment that cannot be explained by anything other than my relationship with Christ with the help of Christ Our Shepherd." How do you connect with Shirley's concept of life feeling more in control when we give or accept more control from Christ?
3. In her sermon, Pastor Miriam shared that the concept of "self" is important in the fruit of self-control. That made me think of how, oftentimes, our energy goes to blaming others or outward circumstances instead of our self-responsibility or as this word suggests, our "ability to respond." Your thoughts?

4. With all this talk of self-control it's easy to think of the term "remote control." Is there a specific situation you would like God to just use God's remote control on you to steer you through life? Why do you think God refuses to "remote control" you through life but instead wants to do life with you?
5. The Wednesday devotional speaker, Bill Porter (who is our COS Director of Technologies for Worship & Presentation as well as the Assistant Director of Contemporary Worship), shared the self-control story of his incredible weight loss this past year. Your reaction and thoughts?
6. As we conclude this fifth and final Fruit Group gathering, reflect on the joys and challenges of committing to a small group as part of your faith journey. Are you part of a small group where you can regularly talk about faith issues as we have for at least 30 minutes on a regular basis? If you are not, but would like to consider options, please speak to our COS Director of Connecting Ministries, Barbara Anderson at connect@coslutheran.org or one of the pastors. Remember, one of Jesus' key commitments was to doing life with a small group of 12 other friends. Even though Jesus would be betrayed and denied by members of the group, Jesus felt he needed the group for his journey and it was a positive thing overall. 😊
7. One key hope for choosing Fruitful Living as our Lenten theme was this: amid the presidential election and pandemic last year, it seemed society had a gravitational pull toward fear, meanness, worry, and division. Since Jesus calls us to a better way, we wanted to bathe ourselves instead in the life-multiplying fruits of the Spirit. Did it work? Have these 5 weeks exploring the Spirit's fruit served as a sort of vital vaccine against a virus of pessimism? Share your thoughts.
8. Final question: Another key hope for this Fruitful Living series was to dig deep into Jesus' promise that God is always with us and we are never alone. Do you believe more deeply that the Holy Spirit dwells in you? How do you explain the increased joy that brings to you?

Fruity friends, congratulations and thank you for participating in all five of these Fruit Group conversations! Our belief is that when Jesus followers support each other through conversation and interaction, God strengthens us, and therefore our families, neighborhoods and whole world. May the Lord continue to bless you this Lenten season.

Closing Prayer: Dear Lord, thanks again for these holy sessions and my "fruit group" friends in Christ. Be with us this week. Steer our schedules so our lives support your purposes and pleasure. We're honored that it's your desire to partner with us in making life less of a jungle and more a garden, even if in little ways. Because little ways add up to big differences. Guard and guide us. In Jesus' name, Amen.