

129. THE FRUIT OF SELF-CONTROL - THURSDAY - MAY 21, 2026

Good morning, Grace Harbor – it's Dan. Happy Thursday.

I want to start with a quick update on the Quackerson ducklings. They're officially one week old today! Just in the last day or two, they've started to swim around the pond at the Village Green. Mrs. Quackerson looks so happy to be back on the water, and it is of course adorable to see her eight little ones all in a row behind her.

I got to see them yesterday afternoon while Luke and I were out on a walk. As you know, Luke is our one-and-a-half year old golden retriever, and this week I've been dedicating time to doing training with him.

He's doing good. He's a quick learner, and once he figures out what I want him to do, he does it because he's eager to please.

We've been specifically working on how he greets people that come to our house. Whenever there's been a knock at the door or the doorbell rings, he's been going a little crazy with excitement. And when anyone new came in, he would greet them with loud barking, jumping, and a slurp or two if he could reach your face. And if he couldn't, he was more than happy to lick your hands.

So, we started with just the sound of knocking. We would be *in* the house, he would *see* us knock, and still get all worked up. Once he adjusted to that, we tried standing

inside and reaching around the door to knock on the outside or ring the doorbell. Now, we're working on someone being fully outside and knocking.

Taking it little by little, day by day is really helping him adjust. And I'll bet you can relate to that. Can you think of something you've had to learn or practice a little bit at a time? What is it, and how has that approach helped? Take some time to share about that together, and if you need more time, you can pause the podcast. I'll be right here when you get back.

[PAUSE]

This is such a great way to think about the Fruit of the Spirit, which is the good stuff God wants to grow in our lives. Some of them might come really easy to us, but others... not so much.

And that's ok. As you just talked about, there's lots of stuff we learn a little bit at a time. I'll bet some of you mentioned things like playing an instrument, learning a sport, or doing math. If you were to hand me a trumpet and expect me to play it perfectly by tomorrow, I'd fail spectacularly. Same if you put me on ice skates and gave me a hockey stick, or assigned me a worksheet full of advanced algebra.

But, if you helped teach me a little bit each day or each week, we'd sure make some progress. And that's how it's going with Luke. We're working on growing the fruit of gentleness, but we're especially working on the final Fruit

of the Spirit: self-control.

Self-control is all about making intentional choices about how we act rather than just doing whatever our gut tells us to.

Sometimes that means we choose not to do something we really want to do. Like if someone makes you mad and you really want to yell, but you choose to walk away. Other times, it might mean choosing to do something we *don't* want to do, like sharing the last cookie or helping to set the table for dinner even though it's not fun and we'd rather be doing something else.

So, we learn to listen to what our bodies, heart, and minds are telling us, but rather than reacting right away, we take a moment to decide what the best response is.

It would be a whole lot easier if those inner voices and urges would just go away. But the fruit of self-control God wants to grow in us doesn't do away with them. Rather it gives us the focus and wisdom to make good choices.

For example, this week Luke has been learning not to listen to the voice in his head that says he should bark whenever he hears a door knock. But then, when we took our walk to check on the ducklings, he couldn't resist the voice that said, "chase every squirrel you see!" That's ok, Luke. I still love you. One step at a time, buddy.

Ok, let's close in prayer. If you want to, you can close your eyes and fold your hands.

Dear God, we thank you for the voices inside of us that are usually trying to help us. Sometimes they might prompt us to do something because they think it'll be fun, or they might caution us because they want us to stay safe. But help us remember that those voices aren't always right. Plant within us wisdom and the fruit of self-control so we can be intentional about choosing the good. Amen.

Ok, Grace Harbor, have a great Thursday, and we'll wrap up our series on the Fruit of the Spirit tomorrow.

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