

130. FRUIT THAT HELP US LOVE - FRIDAY - MAY 22, 2026

Good morning, Grace Harbor – it's Dan. Happy Friday! I hope you've had a great week.

I've really enjoyed getting to share with you about the training I've been doing with Luke. This whole process has really helped me notice some of the Fruit of the Spirit in my life – both ones that I feel like I've got, and others I could certainly use more of.

Of course, it all starts with the love that I have for Luke. I'm working with him precisely **because** I love him.

I've also been able to really notice the difference between the emotion of happiness and the fruit of joy. I'm super happy when it seems like he's learning and making progress, but even when he's **not** getting it, I'm still really glad to be working with him.

That doesn't mean it's been easy. There are times when I feel like I'm being clear in my instructions and he looks at me with a face that says, "I have no idea what you're talking about." Or there were times when it seems like he's forgotten something he'd totally figured out the day before. It's helped me see where I need to make more space for God to grow the fruit of patience.

And did you know that **you've** been a big help in growing the fruits of faithfulness and self-control this week? I had no problem getting motivated to work with Luke on Monday and Tuesday, but Wednesday ended up being quite a

full day. I wasn't able to do anything with him before the kids went to bed, and once they *were* in bed, I felt like crashing myself.

But I also knew that you were tracking along on this journey with us. If I just dropped it after two days, that'd be a bummer – both for you *and* for Luke. So, I exercised some self-control by *not* crawling into bed, and instead I grabbed our bag of training treats. We got a quick session in, and even though it was shorter than normal, it helped reinforce what he was learning. And in that way, I was being a faithful dog owner. Someone he can count on to help him be his best.

As we look to wrap up this three-week series on the nine Fruit of the Spirit, I've been trying to think of a way to tie it all together. Something that will help us lock in what we've learned as we reflect on it.

And what came to mind was a time when Jesus was asked what the most important commandment was. Obviously, everything God asks us to do is important, but what's the *most* important?

Jesus responded that the greatest commandment is to love God. But he didn't stop there. He said that it was just as important to love one another. And you know what? He didn't quite stop there either. He said we need to love others in the same way that we love ourselves.

So, to simplify it, the most important things we can do – the way we can most simply understand what it means to

live the way God wants us to live – is to focus on loving God, loving others, and loving ourselves. And, if we're living the way God wants us to live, we'll *for sure* be giving God space to grow all of that good stuff God wants to grow in our lives.

And you know what? I think the three groupings we've been using actually align well with these three types of love. So, that's how we're going to wrap up and reflect on this series. If you have time to do that now, great. If you need more time, or you want to come back to this tonight or this weekend, feel free to pause the podcast. I'll be right here when you get back.

So, our first grouping we called the inner fruits – love, joy, and peace. How might the fruits of love, joy, and peace grow out of our love for God and God's love for us? When you have something to share, go ahead.

[PAUSE]

I was thinking of the Bible verse that tells us that God *is* love. The whole reason we can even love God, others, or ourselves is because God loves us and plants that fruit first. Like I said earlier, I've seen that in my work with Luke. The whole reason I'm giving him my time and attention is because I love him, and it's a reminder that all God does for us comes from love too.

Ok, our second grouping we called the outer fruits – patience, kindness, and goodness. We called them outer fruits because they tend to show up in our relationships

with others. Can you think of a time this week when you loved someone else by showing them patience, kindness, or goodness? Or was there a time when someone showed one of them to you? When you think of something, share it with each other.

[PAUSE]

One day this week – I think it was Wednesday? – I was a little later than usual to pick my daughter up from school. I wasn't *actually* late. Car line was still going on. But I know she doesn't like it when she's one of the last ones to be picked up.

Sometimes when that happens, she'll get in the car and ask why I was late. But this week, she got in, buckled her seat belt, and didn't say anything about it.

I apologized for running late, and she replied, "That's ok. I'm sure you were working on something important." And that was it. For her, that's a big sign of the fruit of patience!

Our final grouping, which we've been digging into this week, we've called the character fruits – faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. They help us choose better, wiser options, which is also a way of loving ourselves. Can you think of a time this week when you made a good choice and it had a positive result? You can share your story now.

[PAUSE]

I definitely feel like we can all see the progress Luke has made this week. That's made me feel proud of the work we put in together, even and especially when I didn't feel like it. It's also a way of showing love to myself because I know that as he continues to improve, I'll be able to be more relaxed when someone comes to the house knowing that Luke will greet them in a safe and loving way.

Ok, let's wrap up our week and our series with a prayer. If you want to, you can close your eyes and fold your hands.

Dear God, we thank you that you grow all of these amazing fruits inside of us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We're grateful for the ones that grow easily, and we ask that you would help us with the ones that come a little slower. May they shape us as we seek to love you, others, and ourselves. Amen.

Ok, Grace Harbor, have a great weekend! You know, there's a really cool holiday happening on Sunday, and I can't wait to tell you all about it next week.

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