

Lent 2021

Cultivating the Fruits of the Spirit

Discussion Questions

Developed by the Pastors and the Adult Deepening Team



Week Six: Self-Control

(Week of March 28)



UNITED PARISH IN BROOKLINE

American Baptist • United Church of Christ • United Methodist

Purpose of this Lenten study

To expand our individual understanding of the gifts - or fruits - of the Spirit

To explore how we can cultivate and embody these gifts to feel more in alignment with and authentic with God

To appreciate that each of us has particular gifts to contribute to the fruitfulness of our community aspirations and efforts

Based on Galatians 5:22-23:

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

Purpose of this session

To introduce and examine self-control as a Christian virtue

Week Six: Self-Control**Opening Prayer**

Dear God,

Giver of all the fruits of the Holy Spirit, be with us as we explore the virtue of self-control in this sixth week of Lent, that we know as Holy Week. We thank you for guiding all of us in the United Parish community who are joining us in this Lenten journey. May we learn to appreciate and exercise self-control as an expansion of our God-given gifts, rather than a restraint.

Amen.

Scripture

2 Peter 1:3-11 Good News Translation

³ God's divine power has given us everything we need to live a truly religious life through our knowledge of the one who called us to share in his own glory and goodness. ⁴ In this way he has given us the very great and precious gifts he promised, so that by means of these gifts you may escape from the destructive lust that is in the world, and may come to share the divine nature. ⁵

For this very reason do your best to add goodness to your faith; to your goodness add knowledge; ⁶ to your knowledge add self-control; to your self-control add

endurance; to your endurance add godliness; ⁷ to your godliness add Christian affection; and to your Christian affection add love. ⁸ These are the qualities you need, and if you have them in abundance, they will make you active and effective in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ But if you do not have them, you are so shortsighted that you cannot see and have forgotten that you have been purified from your past sins.

¹⁰ So then, my friends, try even harder to make God's call and his choice of you a permanent experience; if you do so, you will never abandon your faith. ¹¹ In this way you will be given the full right to enter the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

John 12:12-19

¹² The next day the large crowd that had come to the Passover Festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Praise God! God bless him who comes in the name of the Lord! God bless the King of Israel!"

¹⁴ Jesus found a donkey and rode on it, just as the scripture says,

¹⁵ "Do not be afraid, city of Zion! Here comes your king, riding on a young donkey."

¹⁶ His disciples did not understand this at the time; but when Jesus had been raised to glory, they remembered that the scripture said this about him and that they had done this for him.

¹⁷ The people who had been with Jesus when he called Lazarus out of the grave and raised him from death had reported what had happened. ¹⁸ That was why the crowd met him—because they heard that he had performed this miracle. ¹⁹ The Pharisees then said to one another, "You see, we are not succeeding at all! Look, the whole world is following him!"

Discussion Questions

How do you define self-control?

In what areas of your life do you see yourself having strong self-control? Where could you use more work?

Why is it important to human spirituality? To Christian discipleship?

How does it relate to Jesus' behavior during the last week of his mortal life?

How do you see it relating to the other "fruits of the Spirit" we've been considering (humility, gentleness, gratitude, generosity, service, patience) and will consider (love, compassion, joy)?

How does it relate to self-actualization (the pursuit and/or realization of one's God-given talents and purpose)?
See Maslow's hierarchy ([here](#))

Who in your life has been a shining example of self-control?

Closing Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for your great love and care, your goodness and mercy, and your true generosity toward all Creation, in this Lenten journey and always. Thank you for giving us this opportunity to explore the Fruits of the Spirit together. As we journey toward Easter, may we be truly generous, grateful, humble, and patient. May we support each other as we grow these fruits in our communal Spirit.

In your many names we pray,

Amen.