

B E S T I L L  
A N D  
K N O W

D A Y 3



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# INDOOR GARDENS

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Gal. 5:22-23)*

## Spring has sprung.

I have friends who can't wait to get their hands dirty in their gardens and flowerbeds. Their posts show up on my Facebook feed every now and then, breaking through the steady stream of virus updates and political posturing.

Some people upload pictures of seed packets they have bought; others share their whole garden scheme (which seems like a bit of a power play, if you ask me). A couple of my friends are planning to establish a hugelkultur . . . whatever that is. In the midst of the heaviness of these days, these posts offer a bit of respite and hope; like little buds of life themselves, popping through dark soil.

I'm the last person who would ever offer gardening advice. My horticultural exploits have been few in number and failures all. However, we talked yesterday about how God uses deserts to grow people strong in spirit. That means that you and I should see certain things growing in our lives as God's Spirit flows in us and through us. So we're all involved in a process of spiritual gardening, whether or not we plan to plant anything in our backyards this year.

## What are the things we should expect to see breaking through the surface of our lives and hearts?

The answer to that question takes us to the fruit of the Spirit which we find listed in the verse above: love, joy, peace, and the rest.

God's desire and design is that these things would burst forth in our lives, developing in increasing measure. This is something that his Spirit makes possible - we can't manufacture goodness anymore than we can create an apple. But we have a vital part in either cooperating with that work ("Keep in step with the Spirit" is how Paul puts it) or constricting the flow of the Spirit within us. The more we cooperate, the more God produces good things within us day by day.

That includes these days. In the midst of self isolation and close quarters, we have the opportunity to grow a beautiful indoor garden, nurturing the fruit of the Spirit in our

homes and hearts. What does that look like? Let me offer a few thoughts and then encourage you to take the exercise further yourself:

- *The fruit of the Spirit is love.*  
A crisis clarifies what - and who - is really important in our lives. Reach out to the people you love. Take the time to check in on those who may be lonely. Enjoy the extra time with family.
- *The fruit of the Spirit is peace.*  
Set aside some time each day to remember that God is bigger than this pandemic. "Hear the laughter" as Nathan suggested in one of last week's devotionals. He's got this. And he's got you.
- *The fruit of the Spirit is patience, kindness, and gentleness.*  
These are all things we need to be offering to each other in a time of increased tension and uncertainty. Some of us are living with relational stress, and this situation only increases the pressure. Ask God for the grace to be kind and gentle with each other.
- *The fruit of the Spirit is self-control.*  
A steady diet of Netflix and junk food isn't going to help anyone. Limiting some activities and making space for others can make this a season of growth and development. Read a book. Get some exercise. Make good food together.

**Now it's your turn.**

Spend a few minutes thinking about the nine aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. Ask God to highlight one or two areas to focus on today.

**Happy gardening!**

## **FURTHER READING:**

Galatians 5:16-26

## **KEY VERSE:**

"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." (v. 25)

## CALIBRATING PRAYER:

*Thank you, Jesus, that you are the Master Gardener. You reach your hands into the soil of our souls and plant your goodness there. I choose to keep in step with your Spirit today, so that my life grows increasingly fruitful and fragrant.*