



The Newsletter

July 2025

*Glorify God in all we do,
Grow with Him daily &
Go with Him to share
His love.*

**For the Lord
is the Spirit,
and Wherever
the Spirit of
the Lord is,
There is
Freedom.**

2 Corinthians 3:17

July at a Glance

- 3: 2 pm BINGO at Sibley Specialty
- 4: Happy Fourth of July!!
- 6: Communion Sunday
- 7: 6:00 pm Elder & Deacon Meetings
7:00 pm Full Consistory will meet
- 11: 2 pm BINGO at Sibley Specialty
- 13-19: Osceola County Fair
- 13-19: Pastor Brian will be at a conference
- 18: 2 pm BINGO at Sibley Specialty
- 21: 9:30 am Faith Bible Study
3:00 pm Patience Bible Study
- 25: 2 pm BINGO at Sibley Specialty
- 30: 2 pm FRC in charge of Nursing Home Service

*Sundays:

- 9:00 am Praise & Worship Service
- 10:10 am Coffee Fellowship Time
- 10:10 am Sermon Discussion Group
- Sunday School is on Summer Break

*Tuesdays:

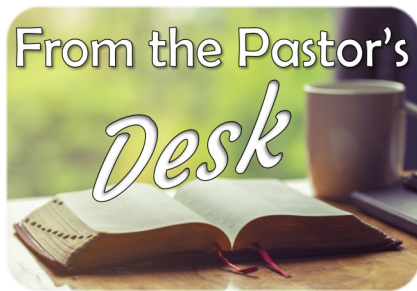
- 8:30 am Quilting Chicks will meet

*Wednesday Evening:

- Bible Classes and Youth Groups:
On Summer Break! See you in the fall!

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 www.facebook.com/firstreformedsibley
 [@sibleyfirstreformedchurch566](https://www.youtube.com/@sibleyfirstreformedchurch566)



A Target to Aim At Pt. 3

Last month we thought together about the proper role of feelings from a certain perspective. I argued that feelings are good and necessary to our survival and wellbeing as human beings, but that they cannot and must not be in the driver's seat of our lives, or they will lead us to ruin. Feelings are often opposed to the genuine good because by their very nature they are often fixated on some extremely narrow slice of reality and think of that as the greatest good... the good they must have at all costs. This sort of obsession regularly ruins lives in our day, and not just the lives of the people who are obsessed. These situations also often catch innocent victims, like children or spouses, in the crossfire, usually with devastating consequences. The New Testament word for these obsessive feelings is "epithumia" which is usually translated as lust in our English Bibles. It can have to do with sex, but it doesn't have to. Any feeling or desire that will hijack your life and send you off to pursue something other than the good, as God has defined it, is every bit as destructive as the misuse of sexuality. Our feelings are excellent servants. They are disastrous masters.

The children of light, on the other hand, have learned how to say no to feelings that have become disordered. They understand that the function of the will is to be a traffic signal for the feelings. What is good and productive and well-ordered should be allowed to proceed. Feelings and desires that are disordered or are in some other way inordinate should be put under the control of the will and told no. The old name for this virtue is Temperance. CS Lewis, writing on the cardinal virtues in Mere Christianity remarked that Temperance was, in his day, most often associated with the excessive consumption of alcohol. He says,

"One great piece of mischief has been done by the modern restriction of the word Temperance to the question of drink. It helps people forget that you can be just as intemperate about lots of other things. A man who makes his golf or his motor-bicycle the centre of his life, or the woman who devotes all her thoughts to clothes or bridge or her dog, is being just as intemperate as someone who gets drunk every evening. Of course, it does not show on the outside so easily: bridge-mania or golf-mania do not make you fall down in the middle of the road. But God is not deceived by externals."

Positively speaking, what can we say about the feelings of the children of light? They are dominated by love. First of all by love of God. They are centered on God and are oriented to all else with reference to him. Therefore all other good things are welcome. They are positive, but realistically so. This is because they understand the nature of God and how things really stand in the world. Knowing that God is really God and that we don't have to try to do his job for him frees up enormous mental and emotional energies and resources for the good. Therefore the children of light invest the emotional side of their being in love. They love their life, even if it is difficult and beset by many difficulties and challenges, even if it involves persecution or martyrdom. They receive it all as God's good gift, or at least something he allows for a good purpose. In their challenges they learn about God's goodness and greatness by experiencing them firsthand. They love who they are, and long to be even more like God would have them be. Therefore they do not indulge thoughts of rejection, failure, or hopelessness because they know better. They are also freed up to love people. My wife recently confessed to me that she likes to run a little love experiment as often as she can. When she encounters people that look as though life has passed them

by somehow, and they are ignored or not noticed, she goes out of her way to engage them, look them in the eye, and just let them know in subtle ways that she does see them, she values them, and considers them worthy of her attention. She loves to watch them open up and smile warmly and just bask in the idea that they are significant and noticed and valued. I find this an admirable use of her time and attention.

Part of the reason really loving our neighbor as ourselves, as God calls us to do, is something we often hesitate to do, is that we are finite creatures with finite resources. We only have so much energy. We only have so much time. We only have so much attention. We use significant amounts of these things just navigating our day-to-day existence. We lavish what we can on our children and spouses and friends. Many days there seems to be very little left over for ourselves. And then here comes another person with some sort of need. It is a need we could meet, maybe, at least for a little while. But we are tired. We are afraid what one good deed will lead to. Will the person come back for a second bite at the apple? A third? Will there be any apple left for us? We are unsure about the appropriateness of good boundaries and whether or not this person's needs will overwhelm us. We must learn the difference between love and enabling a person's bad habits and behaviors, but we must also learn that God will give us the resources to do what he calls us to do. But he generally doesn't deliver that to us pre-packaged and ready to go when we need it. Usually he gives us each day or daily bread and counsels us to let today's own trouble be sufficient for the day. He is a "just in time" kind of God. We just have to learn this by obeying him when it's scary to do so, and watching how it all unfolds as it should. We learn about life with God by interactively living with him. You will find him to be a very wise, kind, and generous being.

OCMAYA (OSCEOLA COUNTY MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION
YOUTH ALLIANCE) PRESENTS:

YOUTH NERF NIGHTS

🟠 Tuesday Nights in June & July

🟢 5th-8th grade 🔵 6:30-8:00pm


JUNE

- 10 First Presbyterian Church
- 17 First Reformed Church
- 24 First Baptist Church - Annex

JULY

- 1 First Baptist Church - Annex
- 8 First Baptist Church - Annex
- 15 Christian Reformed Church
- 22 First Presbyterian Church
- 29 Christian Reformed Church






Love reading a particular Christian Author or Book? Want to see it on our library shelves? We want to know your opinion!! Please fill out this form and drop it off at the church office or put it in Jamie Hulstein's mailbox. Thanks!

Library Book Recommendation Form

Book Title: _____

Author: _____

Genre: _____



Praise and Worship Greeters

- 6: E: Brian and Chelsey Alexander/family
C: Kim Alsip/family
W: Bobby and Dee Baker
- 13: E: Gretchen Bartelson
C: Tony and Jamiey Bevers/family
W: Troy and Meggan Block/family
- 20: E: Jerrad and Tracee Brouwer
C: Brayden and Alyssa Bruxvoort/family
W: Jamie and Jennifer Bruxvoort/family
- 27: E: Nathan and Angie Buysman
C: JoAnn Calsbeek
W: Laura Carpenter/family

Children & Worship during the service



Children and Worship
is on break until fall

The Bountiful Blessings Table Is Back!!



A great way to share your abundance of
garden produce, flowers, baked goods,
home canned items, crafts...
(all items are appreciated)



All items donated to the table are
available to take home for a free-will
monetary donation.

All money collected by the end of the
season will once again be donated to
the Upper Des Moines Food Pantry.



Worship Service Nursery

Nursery is open
but unstaffed
during the
summer months.

Fellowship Coffee Servers

- 6: Clayton and Jodi Wagenaar
13: Lawrence and Ruth Wiersma
20: Nate and Angela Buysman
27: Laura and Jordan Carpenter

Library Volunteers



- 6: Pauline Van Engen
13: Marcia Van Ruler
20: Alfreda Verdoorn
27: Kathy/Joel Verdoorn

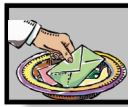
Willing Hands Group



Group #1
will be responsible for
services during the month.

Co-chairpersons are:

- Diane/Arnie Langstraat
- Gretchen Bartelson



Stewardship & Giving

Offering Summary through June 28:

- **General Fund: \$181,226.11**
Budget: \$363,794.52; 49% of budget
 - **Benevolent Fund: \$6,936.64**
Budget: \$61,125; 10% of budget
 - **Building Fund offerings to date: \$895**
- *****

Average Monthly Offering Needed:
\$35,493.29

Total Ben./Gen. Offerings through June 28
\$26,615.60

*Total Ben./Gen offering does not include
"Special Monthly Offering" donations as they
are technically not part of the estimated budget.*



Faith In Action for July

Bright Beginnings Supplies

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| *Buttons | *Crayola Washable Markers |
| *Stickers (Esp. Holliday ones) | *Crayola Crayons |
| *Q-tips | *Pony Beads |
| *Cotton Balls | *Foam Shape Stickers |
| *Sequins | *Card Stock (Colored and White) |
| *Coffee Filters | *Feathers |
| *Tissue paper of all colors | *Ribbon |
| *Popsicle sticks (regular and jumbo) | *Yarn |
| *Playdough Tools | *Sidewalk chalk |

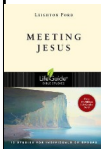


Joshua Trivia Time!!

1. Whose bones "were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that (his father) bought for a hundred pieces of silver from the sons of Hamor?"
2. Who was buried in the land of his inheritance, at Timmath Serah in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash?
3. The Kohathites, Gershonites and Merarites were subdivision of which tribe?
4. Who placed the entire nation of Israel in danger of being defeated by its enemies by stealing a robe, gold and silver from the plunders of Jericho?
5. Who said, "Come up and help me attack Gibeon, because it has made peace with Joshua and the Israelites."?
6. When the Israelites broke camp to cross the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, the water stopped flowing and piled up at what town?
7. Who said, "Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon."?
8. How many kings did the Israelites defeat on the west side of the Jordan?



Faith Bible Study, will meet on **Monday, July 21 at 9:30 am**. We will be studying lesson #1, "Experiencing God, Experiencing Christ" in our new six-lesson study book *Experiencing God* by *Tim Chester*. Scripture will be Colossians 1:24-2:10. Leader will be Jan Henrichs and Rhonda will serve as hostess. All are invited! Please join us as we start our new study, Experiencing God, Finding true passion, joy, peace and rest in Christ.



Patience Bible Study, will meet on **Monday, July 21 at 3:00 pm**. We will be studying lesson #3 "Jesus the Storytelling Teacher," in our book *Meeting Jesus*. Scripture for the lesson is Mark 4:1-25. Barb will lead and will serve as hostess.

Fellowship Bible Study Opportunities!

****Message Discussion and Application Bible Study****

*Fireside Room at 10:10am Sunday Mornings

****Digging into God's Word****

This group is currently studying the book of **John**.

FRC Fireside Room Sunday Nights at 6:30pm



Consistory Highlights for June:

Meeting Minutes

- MMSA to allow Josh to use the church Fellowship Hall, Kitchen, and Basement for OCMA Nerf Games on June 17
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AMERICA
BLUE
BRAVE

FIREWORKS
FLAG
FOURTH

FREEDOM
INDEPENDENCE
JULY

LIBERTY
RED
STARS

STRIPES
SUMMER
WHITE

Happy 4th of July



USA





Celebrations

~~Birthdays~~

- | | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Hannah Lucas | 20 Caelyn Hurlburt | 27 LaVon Dykstra |
| 4 Roger Verdoorn | Adelyn Hurlburt | 28 Jamie Klaassen |
| 6 Aiden Ver Steeg | 22 Brooks Heronimus | 29 Wilma Loerts |
| 8 Ted Schutte | 23 Alivia Weg | 31 Paisley Kreykes |
| 9 Jan Juffer | 26 Maria Mans | Angie Ackerman |
| 10 Megan Ackerman | | |
| 11 Lesa Stofferan | | |
| 12 Joel Verdoorn | | |
| 13 Jared Kruger | | |

I have found
THE ONE
Whom my soul Loves
SONG OF SOLOMON 3:4

~~Anniversaries~~

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|
| 14 Mark Hulstein | 1 Nate and Angie Buysman | 6 years |
| Ryan Wiersma | 9 Robert and Janice Groen | 48 years |
| 16 Shelia Van Der Slood | 11 Nick and Maria Mans | 10 years |
| 17 Elliot Daiker | 12 Duane and Pam Vande Hoef | 51 years |
| 18 Scott Dykstra | 13 Kevin and Twila Heemstra | 40 years |
| Clark Haken | 14 Davis and Kristen Beyer | 24 years |
| Austin Wassman | 20 Larry and Alfreda Verdoorn | 60 years |
| 19 Olivia Daiker | 22 Dave and Jessica Mc Dyer | 19 years |
| Karen Stevenson | 23 Derek and Megan Ackerman | 9 years |
| | 23 Dr. Greg and Deb Kusters | 45 years |
| | 24 Harvey and Marcia Van Ruler | 55 years |
| | 24 Tim and Jodi Kruger | 26 years |
| | 25 Jon and Amy Elser | 27 years |
| | 27 Randy and Kalie Fuoss | 1 year |
| | 27 Mark and Melissa Langstraat | 23 years |
| | 29 Kevin and Laurel Klaassen | 31 years |

BE A
Prayer
WARRIOR

Luke 21:36

Our Missionaries

Dr. Bernadeth Kelly &
Adrian Bobb
Sayuri Kist—Okazaki
Brian & Donna Renes
J.J. & Tim TenClay
Rowland & Jan Van Es
Grace Covenant Ministries
Jeff and Chelsea Lampen

Helen Vander Veen

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



PRAY FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Ethel Jurgens | 16. Chuck and Katha Kruger |
| 2. Karen Jurgens | 17. Pam Kruger |
| 3. Karen Keiper | 18. Pray for our College Students |
| 4. Clint Klaassen; Haley, Colt, Katie | 19. Pray for our Church |
| 5. Pray for our College Students | 20. Tim and Jodie Kruger |
| 6. Pray for our Church | 21. Jodene Kruse |
| 7. Jamie Klaassen | 22. Charlie and Brenda Kuhl |
| 8. Joanne Klaass | 23. Dave and Sandy Lamfers |
| 9. Kevin and Laurel Klaassen | 24. Arnie and Diane Langstraat |
| 10. Natalie Klaassen | 25. Pray for our College Students |
| 11. David and Donna Kleinwolterink | 26. Pray for our Church |
| 12. Pray for our College Students | 27. Mark and Melissa Langstraat;
Emma, Addysen, Taylor |
| 13. Pray for our Church | 28. Cindy Larson |
| 14. Greg and Deb Kusters | 29. Wilma Leusink |
| 15. Mitch and Abby Kreykes; Dawson, Paisley | 30. Brad and Sarah Loerts;
Parker, Blake, Brynna |
| 16. Martha Krikke | |

<u>College Students:</u>			
Elliot Daiker	Grace Beavers	Marissa Ackerman	Carter Brouwer
Cole Dykstra	Michael Block Jr.	Halle Block	
Sofia Hisek	Ella Bruxvoort	Tayler Bremer	Grant Brouwer
Alexis Hulstein	Aiden De Zeeuw	Madison Brouwer	Ryan Van Marel
Alyssa Jacobsma	Karissa Hulstein	Regan Crichton	
Addysen Langstraat		Keegan De Zeeuw	
Parker Loerts		Maverick Elser	
Kaylee Maxwell		Emma Langstraat	
		Gannon Rockman	
		MacKenzie Beyer	
		Teddy Van Gelder	

At a college reunion, a group of successful alumni—now doctors, lawyers, business owners—decided to visit their old professor. They chatted about their careers and families, but soon the conversation shifted to life's pressures, stress, and constant chasing after more.

After listening for a while, the professor smiled and said, "Hold on a minute. I'll go make us some coffee."

He came back with a large pot and a tray full of cups—none of them matching. Some were fine porcelain, others were plain ceramic, a few were chipped glass mugs, and one even looked like it came from a diner.

As everyone reached for a cup, the professor watched in silence. Once they all had coffee in hand, he said:

"Notice what just happened. Most of you instinctively reached for the nicest cups—leaving behind the simpler ones. It's normal to want the best for ourselves, but that's often where the stress begins."

He gestured toward the cups.

"The cup doesn't make the coffee taste any better. What you really wanted was the coffee. But you still focused on the cup."

Then he paused.

"Life is the coffee. Your job, your house, your income, your status—those are just cups. They help contain life, but they don't define it. And the trouble is, the more we focus on the cup, the more we miss out on the coffee."

He smiled.

"Remember, happy people don't always have the best of everything. But they know how to make the best of what they have."



Kids away at camp this month

June 30- July 2

Braelyn Hurlburt, Discovery

July 7-11

Paisley Kreykes, Lodge Camp

Joanna Lucas, Day Camp Explorers

July 21-25

Brynna Loerts, Lodge Camp

Addison McDyer, Lodge Camp

Students always love receiving mail from home. If you would like to write to students who are attending camp please send letters to:

Inspiration Hills Camp, % (Student Name/Camp attending), 1242 280th Street, Inwood, IA 51240.



This is just a short note to say thank you for your continuing support of our family as we work in Hannover, Germany. The kids are in their last month of school before summer break (they'll be done the first week of July). We just celebrated the 10th anniversary of the RELISH congregation and we're grateful for all the ways we can continue to walk alongside folks here as they continue to faithfully follow Jesus Christ together.

For our family, please pray that our residency paperwork can be processed soon, and that we can continue to lead our congregation with wisdom, love, and a deep sense of hospitality in the name of our Lord Jesus. Let us know if you have any prayer requests as a church, too, and we'll join you in prayer.

In Christ,
Jeff and Chelsea
Lampen



Lorelei (11), Caspian (7),
and Evander (3) on
Easter Sunday



Chelsea grabs some ice cream with
other staff members from the
World Communion of Reformed
Churches



The kids, who (besides ours) come from
America, Africa, and India, listen in during
a children's sermon

Evander (left)
enjoys a German
"Brezel" together
with his friend
Robin at the
playground



Hello First Reformed Church,



When Hannah and I first started having kids we were panicking. We had no idea how to raise Joanna up in the Lord. I was freaking out. Maybe you are in the same boat. Maybe you have older kids, and you still do not know what to do, or how to do studies together as a family. Let me tell you, that is okay, but do not stay there. This is what the church is here for, to encourage and equip you as parents to help you on this journey of raising up Godly children. Here in this article, I will give you tools, resources, and tips on active, engaging, and effective family worship methods, but first I want to spend a quick moment on why this specifically is important. I have made arguments and cases as to why your family should be in Sunday worship, Sunday School, and Wednesday night activities, but why family worship at home? I want to give you a math equation, your kids, if they go to public or private school, will go to school for an average of 7 hours each day (obviously if your child is in kindergarten or pre-school, it is less but bear with me on this), five days a week. That is not including sports or any other extracurricular activities. Just in school hours alone your child is out of house for a minimum of 35 hours a week. If you are a working parent, you will not be getting home until around 5 or 6 pm. The average time that kids go to bed is 9 pm, you only have about 3 or 4 more hours each day left until your child must go to bed. Do you see the importance of making faith a priority? You do not have time to do anything else, unless you make that time up some way or somehow.

Our children are starving for the truth and for our time and attention. What better way to spend quality time together then to worship the Lord, read His word, and pray together as a family? I would argue nothing. If we make it a priority in the home, our kids will make it a priority out in the world. What is family worship? It is a time where you and your family sit down and you all typically read a passage of Scripture with a devotional attached to it, sing a song or two, and then pray for one another. Each family does family worship different, you must decide what is the best way to do it. We have found that with small children it is best to do it first thing in the morning. Our family worship time consists of a family devotional I found, sing a song, and then pray. The song that we sing is usually the doxology because it is short, easy, and easy to remember. In short, our family worship time is about 10-15 minutes long. With that we also watch God honoring movies and shows together, have prayer time before meals, and before we go to sleep. There are plenty of resources out there, I would recommend going to Answers in Genesis store to see their resources for family worship materials. You can also go to Westminster bookstore; they have a lot of good Reformed resources. Finally, you can simply just go through a book of the Bible as a family. Parents need to decide what is best for your family at the current time. The last advice on family worship is to not be discouraged if it seems your children are not getting anything out of this, I promise you they are. The key to this is to be like Nike and "Just do it!" Don't wait until next month or when school starts, start as soon as you can. Thank you for taking the time to read this article. Next month I want to give some encouragement for parents with older children who are out of the house. What do you do with those children? Look for my next month's article and see. God bless all of you!

Blessings,
Josh

Dad Jokes with Josh:

What do you call a frozen pop star?..... A popsicle!!!

Sportsmen's Devotional

Today's Photograph . . . The Difference Is That, As Christians, We Know God Is Watching Over Us And, If Needed, Will Carry Us

Bible Study Verse Matthew 11:28

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (NKJV)



Thoughts

As we all know, life is not always just a relaxing hike in the woods! Even as Christians, we have what we consider to be burdens. The difference is that, as Christians, we know God is watching over us and, if needed, will carry us.

When hunting, most will agree that there are times we have burdens that need to be carried. It could be anything from hunting gear to recently killed game. To help carry their load, some hunters have turned to the sure-footed mule.

Action Point

As the mule will give the hunter rest from his burden, Christ reminds us in Matthew 11:28 that He, too, will give us rest. _

Instead of worrying, or letting life's burdens drag you down, turn to the One who can ease your burdens.

Sportsmen's Tip of the Day

When heading out on your camping or hunting expedition, think of ways to lighten your load. Use a portable game hauler (cart), an ice chest with wheels, a sling for your long gun, a sure-footed mule, or a few strong buddies. You'll enjoy your trip even more with the energy you save.

Joshua Trivia Time Answers:

1. Joseph 2. Joshua 3. Levi 4. Achon 5. Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem 6. Adam 7. Joshua 8. 31 Kings

From the library--



Two new books have been placed in the library. One is a donated book, a little out of season but new to the library and a fun read—WAITING FOR CHRISTMAS by Lynn Austin. “For the first time in her privileged life, Adelaide Forsythe couldn't be happier about the prospect of a quiet Christmas. That's not to say her transition from Miss to Mrs. has been without challenge. Though she doesn't regret marrying for love instead of wealth, she feels woefully unprepared to run her own household.

Then, on the first Sunday of Advent, winter winds bring surprising change, first through a young orphan boy and then a seasoned housekeeper who seems too good to be true.

The boy, Jack, claims he isn't an orphan at all and is desperate to reunite his family. While Adelaide and her husband work tirelessly to solve the riddle of Jack's story, Adelaide's new endeavors open her eyes to a world beyond her past experience—and all the possibility it holds. As Christmas approaches, small glimmers of wonder light the way toward the answers Adelaide seeks and the most miraculous gift of all.”



The second book is ONE LAST STAND by Susan May Warren, the “Alaska Air One Rescue” trilogy has turned into a quartet, since this is book #4. ‘As a member of the Air One Rescue team, pilot London Brooks has built a new life—one far away from her clandestine past as an operative tasked to take down a branch of Russian terrorists. She has no desire to reenter that world or endure the grief of losing everyone she loved, including her fiancé. But the past won't stay past. When she finds herself falsely accused, her reputation tarnished, and her life in danger, she has no choice but to plunge back into the treacherous world she left behind. Even if she must surrender everything—and everyone—she loves in her new life.

Shep Watson will never forget the day he saved London Brooks from the avalanche that nearly killed her. He knows there is more to her story, but he's intent on keeping her secrets. Just when it seems she's finally ready to let him into her heart, her past comes knocking. But he can't bear to lose her again, which means somehow, he'll have to enter her world, keep up with her and figure out a way to bring her home. But when the danger comes home to Alaska, what will it cost the Air One Rescue team?’

Remember, the library is always open, there are many good books waiting for you to check them out.

Jeannette Juffer



The Mom I Want to Be Vs. the Mom I Am

"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!" Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

There's a big difference between the mom I *want* to be and the mom I am. Over my 15 years as a mother, I've realized if I tie my value to specific expectations — either for my own behavior or my children's — I'm setting us all up for failure.

The "Mom I Want to Be" always wakes refreshed, spends time with God, takes an early walk outside, and greets my husband and three kids with a big hug and the Bible verse of the week.

But ... "The Mom I Am" often wakes late, grumbles while I grab my phone to "count my steps" as I rush to the bathroom, runs downstairs to eat a bowl of cereal, and throws on a video for the kids while I grab something to wear.

It's easy to grow frustrated because I haven't yet become the mom I truly want to be.

Determined to find grace for this parenting journey, I searched the Bible to find an image that brought me freedom: the fruits of the Spirit. This is found in today's key verse, Galatians 5:22-23, which says: *"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!"*

I've seen that each day, I can make choices that move me toward or away from these fruits of character in my life:

Love or Hate.

Joy or Sadness.

Peace or Worry.

Patience or Frustration.

Kindness or Rudeness.

Goodness or Meanness.

Faithfulness or Indifference.

Gentleness or Harshness.

Self-control or Self-indulgence.

Keep in mind this isn't a divine scorecard or a new way to measure ourselves. Striving backfires when it comes to accomplishing God's work in our lives. But when we find ourselves operating out of the fruits' opposites, demonstrating things like hate, sadness and worry, our emotions serve as a signal. They show us whether or not we're headed in the right direction. It no longer matters how full our to-do list is or how much we've accomplished; what matters is our heart.

We see a similar pattern in nature. In a four-season climate, different months serve different purposes when it comes to producing fruit. If we judged a tree during winter, its seemingly unproductive time of year, we might decide it's dead. We might deem it a failure because it stopped bearing fruit, and make the mistake of cutting it down. *If only we'd waited!* Winter would end, spring would arrive, and buds would appear — just a preview of the tree's coming attractions.

It's the same with our spiritual lives. Sometimes, we need to remember to wait for the fruit to sprout. It's important that we make time to honor our personal life seasons, trusting God to bring up the fruit, to eventually bring the harvest He has planned, according to His perfect timeline. Let's rest in Him, confident that — thanks to His grace, and in spite of our struggles — we are exactly the mothers our kids need, even if we still have some growing to do.



Thanks to everyone who helped make VBS a success!! To see more pictures from this fun week at FRC, please visit our church website

www.sibleyfrfc.org

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