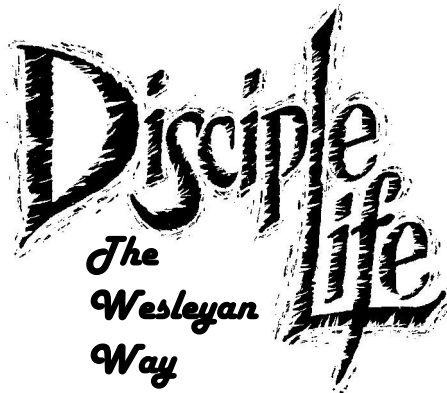


“Fruit is always the miraculous, the created; it is never the result of willing, but always a growth. The fruit of the Spirit is a gift of God, and only He can produce it. They who bear it know as little about it as the tree knows of its fruit. They know only the power of Him on whom their life depends”

— [Dietrich Bonhoeffer](#), [The Cost of Discipleship](#)



Week # 8

Well, May the 10th has passed and everyone tells me that it is now safe for Debbie to plant her garden. You might have noticed that we have added another raised bed garden for her this year. So, we should get twice as much fruit as we did last year. However, even though we have not yet planted, it doesn't mean that in the first garden something is not growing. Volunteer tomatoes are springing up all over the garden! Seems as if, we can't always control the nature of how things are going to happen in our lives. Sometimes, God's processes are at work and will continue to work, with or without our help.

I suppose that, in one way, this is what Bonhoeffer was saying in the quote above. The Fruit of the Spirit is not something that we can go out to the store and buy and then come home and plant in the garden of our souls. Instead, it might be more like those volunteer tomatoes that simply spring up. It's a miracle. They sit dormant until the conditions are right and then they spring forth. Neither Debbie, nor I deliberately planted them, yet here they are—growing and getting ready to produce fruit.



Start the
Conversation:
Provoke One
Another in Love

PROVOKING QUESTION:

This week, you are encouraged to ask a church member the following:

Ask someone to share a story with you about how they have experienced God's grace in his or her life.

I suppose, that as we talk about the Fruit of the Spirit, we need to always remember the element of grace that is involved in their growth. God plants and waters them in our soul. God brings them to fruition. It's our goal to simply step out of the way and accept what God has so freely offered to us. Grace—God's unmerited favor upon us—is able to transform our lives for the betterment of God's kingdom. Grace is able to surprise us and remind us of God's unfailing love for us.

Think about your life this week. Specifically, look for those episodes in which you feel that God's grace has sprung up and produced some change—some evidence of the Fruit of the Spirit. Give thanks to God for those moments and be prepared to share a story of God's loving moment of grace in your life with someone this week.

Carry the cross  **and follow me.**
Luke 14:27, NRSV