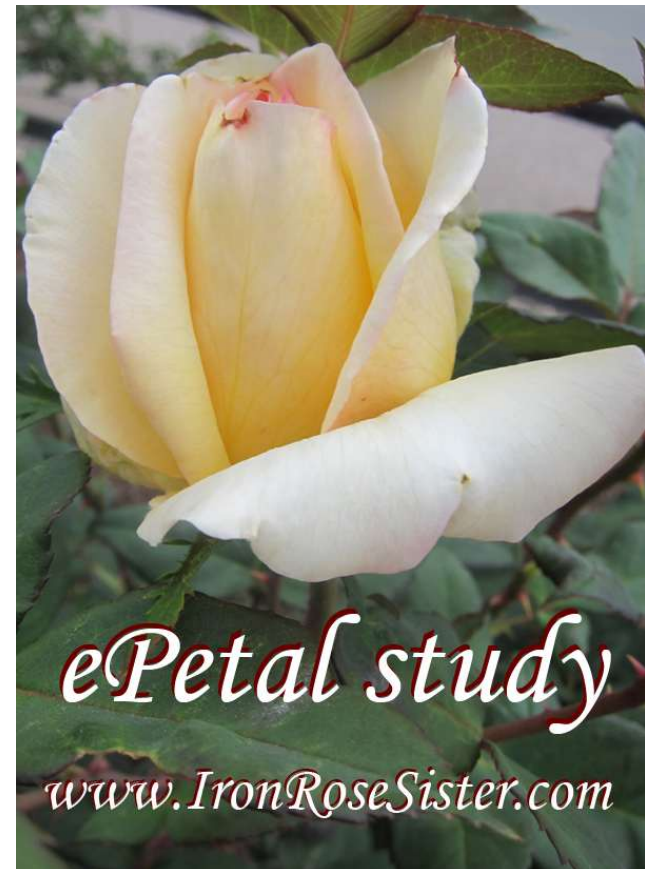


The Common Threads and their Application to the Fruit of the Spirit

*Feel free to print this ePetal Bible study to be used
as a personal and small group Bible study resource.*

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Date _____

In preparation for a campaign in Cozumel, Mexico, in the year 2000, our student group planned a Vacation Bible School for the kids. The theme was “The Fruit of the Spirit” from Galatians 5:22-23.

Each night, we focused on a different aspect of the fruit of the Spirit, and we taught the kids a song that we made up from Galatians 5, starting in verse 22. The words of the song came straight from scripture, so, to this day, every time I read that verse in Spanish, I immediately begin singing the song.

This song affords me the opportunity to remember and reflect on the fruit of the Spirit and how it can grow in my life.

However, the application can get a bit complicated. I want to grow in love or remove the thorn of impatience... but taking the next step can be the greatest challenge.

A tool was developed to combat this very issue by Iron Rose Sister Ministries: The Common Threads. They are a way of making any lesson very personal and practical—whether the sermon on Sunday morning or one’s personal devotional time.

And while the application is designed to be personal, it is deepened and strengthened in relationship with an Iron Rose Sister.

Iron Rose Sister Ministries? Iron Rose Sisters? Let me take a moment to explain what Iron Rose Sister Ministries (IRSM) is all about and why I’m so passionate about it.

As a brief introduction, IRSM is a multilingual (English, Spanish, and Portuguese) women’s ministry resource dedicated to equipping, encouraging, and empowering women in their relationships with God and other women. The ministry’s name is rooted in the fact that we all want a Christian sister who can be like iron sharpening iron (Pr 27:17), encouraging and inspiring us to be as beautiful as a rose in spite of a few thorns—an **Iron Rose Sister**. For more information about IRSM, visit <https://IronRoseSister.com>.

When we refer to a **rose**, we think of its vibrant colors and fragrant aromas. The **thorns** we could do without, and the **roots** are usually not the first thing we think of, yet they are what allow the flower to grow so beautifully.

Every part of the rose is essential for its growth and beauty—much like in our spiritual life and our transformation. The more we follow the teachings of God, the example of His Son, and the guidance of His Spirit, the more the fruit of the Spirit will become evident in us, as Paul describes in Galatians 5:22-23.

We are going to take advantage of those same verses as an example of how we can apply the Common Threads in our own lives along with a deeper explanation of them.

The Iron Rose Sister Ministries logo includes three elements that we utilize as a spiritual application, both personally and in small groups, through the Common Threads.

Common Threads:



How you'd like to grow or bloom



A thorn you'd like to remove



An area in which you are striving to dig deeper or need someone to hold you accountable

Most women long to be more beautiful and grow in various aspects of their lives. As Christians, it is our desire to grow in our spiritual lives as well. Similarly, **the rose** represents an area in which we want to grow or bloom.

The stem represents the thorns in our lives. We all have them and at times they may hurt others because they are so rough or sharp. They can even hurt us if we aren't careful with them.

If **the thorn** is a sin, then we must remove it (Heb 12:1). If the thorn is something like what Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, who begged God three times to

remove it from him, God may be glorified more by it than without it.

How does God respond to Paul's petition in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10?

Do you believe God can use any circumstance, situation, or condition in your life for His good (Ro 8:28)?

Finally, **the nail** represents the sister who serves as iron sharpening iron. Together, you are striving to be more like Christ (look at the form of the nails). These are roots of faith that we must deepen and strengthen. The nail can also be described as the next step that you must take to bloom or to remove the thorn.

As you can see, the Common Threads is a tool with which you can grow in your spiritual friendships as Iron Rose Sisters—to serve as iron sharpening iron, and to encourage and inspire one another to be as beautiful as roses in spite of a few thorns.

As we walk together in the process of transformation, I invite you to learn what it means to have someone who serves as a sharpener, a prayer partner, and a Christian friend, that is, an Iron Rose Sister.

Throughout this ePetal study, we are going to use the verses in Galatians 5:22-23 to dive into the same Common Threads and in the same way, we will see how they can be applied to more than just these two verses as well.



This ePetal study (“e” for electronic and “Petal” as a single study versus a full rose) is a stand-alone lesson that follows the model and pattern of other IRSM interactive Bible studies for women’s small groups.

I encourage you to study this lesson on your own and then gather with other sisters in Christ to deepen and broaden the application of this lesson in the context of community. We have so much to offer each other!

Throughout the lesson, you will be asked to look up verses, answer questions, think through your answers, and discover truths from Scripture. We remember and own those truths as we go through the process of learning them—not permitting someone else to spoon-feed them to us.

If you don’t feel as though you have all the answers, don’t get discouraged! None of us have all the answers. **Transformation is the process of discovering and learning, and a journey we do not travel alone.**

Just as God placed Ruth and Naomi in each other’s lives, or the example of David and Jonathan’s deep friendship, I trust that God has already placed at least one Christian

sister in your life with whom you can each serve as Iron Rose Sisters. I invite you to be iron sharpening iron for one another, to celebrate each other’s beauty, despite a few thorns.

If you don’t feel that you have someone in your life who can serve as an Iron Rose Sister or for whom you can be an Iron Rose Sister, spend some time in prayer asking God to lead you to that person. Feel free to approach someone at church and ask if they want to meet for coffee and discuss this ePetal Bible study. While face-to-face time together is best, you can also share this study with someone over the phone or virtually. Be creative and open to God’s leading!

Throughout the lesson, some questions will be highlighted with the logo of Iron Rose Sister Ministries (IRSM).



The IRSM logo identifies questions you can use for good discussion when you meet with your small group or new Iron Rose Sister(s).

Please make the ePetal study your own and feel free to discuss any and all parts of the lesson with your Iron Rose Sister(s). For those who would like more guidance, we have included the logo next to suggested discussion questions.

We can know a tree by its fruit.

One time, a recently graduated agricultural student said to an old farmer: “Your cultivation methods are outdated. I would be surprised if you gathered two pounds of apples from this tree.”

The farmer responded, “It would surprise me too, given that it’s a pear tree.”

In some areas, we tend to think we know everything. The younger we are, the more we may pretend that we have all the answers for our spiritual growth and that of others as well.

What does Isaiah 55:8-9 say about this?

We struggle to live according to the Spirit and not according to our own thoughts or our sinful nature. It is a struggle that Paul writes extensively about, as we see in Galatians 5.

We have Christ’s life as an example of the difference between sinful and human nature. He demonstrated how to live in the flesh in a holy way. The first IRSM interactive Bible study book, [Human AND Holy](#), addresses this same struggle that we all have.

What does Paul say about the struggle between sinful nature and living according to the Spirit in Galatians 5:16-18, 24-26?

What are the fruits or works of sinful nature? (Gal 5:19-21)

And the fruit of the Spirit? (v. 22-23)

Which aspect of the fruit of the Spirit do you think is the most important? What other Bible verses support your response?

What do 1 Corinthians 13:13 and Matthew 22:34-39 say about one fundamental aspect of the fruit of the Spirit?

Why is love the basis of all the other aspects of the fruit? (e.g. What does love have to do with peace or kindness?)

Note: You don't have to have a perfect response for the previous questions. We are not looking for "the right answer." It is an opportunity to dive deeper into Scripture and to discuss these topics with other sisters in Christ.



So, if love is the basis of everything, we must begin our study of the fruit of the Spirit and the Common Threads with an affirmation of God's love, the love that we have for God, and the love we can have for one another. That's what the first and Greatest Command is all about, isn't it?

How is the love of God described? (Include a few Bible references in your answers.)

Can I reflect love if I don't know the love of God? Not very well. Love must be the basis of our relationships as Christians and as Iron Rose Sisters. Having mentioned the fundamental basis of love, allow me to remind you of the definition and purpose of an Iron Rose Sister, in the context of the Common Threads.

What is an Iron Rose Sister?

An Iron Rose Sister is a sister in Christ who serves as iron sharpening iron (Pr 27:17),

encouraging and inspiring one another to be as beautiful as a rose in spite of a few thorns.

Purposes of Iron Rose Sisters relationships:

- Encouragement and inspiration
- Prayer
- Understanding and affirmation
- Confidentiality
- Spiritual auditing (IRS)
- Mutual call to holy living (accountability)
- Spiritual friendship and conversation

When we are sharing things about our personal and spiritual lives, we must be sure that the other person is going to continue praying over them in confidence. We need those who encourage and inspire us, but those who also speak the truth in love when we need the iron that sharpens iron (Eph 4:15).

Throughout this ePetal interactive Bible study, you will learn to put these purposes into practice and the blessing of Iron Rose Sisters in such a way that you can share and reproduce in your relationships with God and other sisters in Christ. And it is for that reason that the Common Threads are developed.

Let's go back to Galatians 5...

The fruit of the Spirit is one fruit, but it has nine distinct facets or characteristics.

Note: Some facets are listed with more than one descriptor because it translates differently in different versions of the Bible. The expanded list allows us to understand the breadth and depth of these biblical concepts.

Read the verses that describe the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit and write your own description of the same. Don't forget to include a way that we can observe that aspect of the fruit of the Spirit in the life of a Christian.

Love (1Jn 4:7-16; 1Co 13:4-8a)

Joy, gladness (Php 4:4; Jas 1:2; Ne 8:10; Ps 30)

Peace (Php 4:7-9; Mt 5:9; Lk 7:50; Lk 19:38; Ro 5:1)

Patience (Ps 37:7; Ro 12:12; Col 1:9-14)

Kindness (Lk 10:25-37; Ac 28:7)

Goodness (Lk 6:35, 45; Eph 2:4-7)

Faith, faithfulness (Heb 11:1, 6; Ro 1:16-17, 4:16-24, 10:17; 1Co 2:4-5; 2Co 5:7)

Gentleness, meekness, humility (Php 2:3-11; Jas 1:21, 3:3; 1Pe 5:5)

Self-control, temperance (2Ti 1:7; Tit 2:11-14)

Conclusion

Now that we have dug deeper into the facets of the fruit of the Spirit, you have the opportunity to bring that fruit to personal and practical applications with one another.

The Common Threads not only serve as a tool of prayer and personal application, but the lesson also has the date at the beginning so that it can serve as a spiritual diary. So, you can return to this study in the future and delight in seeing the growth you have undergone which is noted in these pages.

Your Common Threads may come from Galatians 5:22-23, or from the concept of iron sharpening iron. I encourage you to spend some time in prayer to consider the ways in which God is accompanying and guiding you in your relationship with Him and with other sisters in Christ.

When you meet as a group, set aside some time to share the Common Threads and to pray for one another.

Common Threads:



How you'd like to grow or bloom (maybe an aspect of the fruit of the Spirit in which you want to focus your growth)



A thorn you'd like to remove (maybe something opposite of the fruit of the Spirit or that prevents you from growing in that area)



An area in which you are striving to dig deeper or need someone to hold you accountable (how others can help encourage you and challenge you to grow more profoundly in the selected areas of the fruit of the Spirit)

A message of hope, an encouraging word, or empowering scripture from this lesson.

Thank you for joining us in this deeper look at the fruit of the Spirit and the application of the Common Threads. We invite you to find out more about other resources, conferences, and Bible study materials available at **IronRoseSister.com**.

We can all encourage each other in our relationships with God and one another. Iron Rose Sister Ministries serves to equip women on that journey.

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