



Making GOD Smile

4 Week Leader's Guide & Group Worksheets

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INTRODUCTION

*Then, too, I need your help, for I want not only to share my faith with you
but to be encouraged by yours: Each of us will be a blessing to the other.*

Romans 1:12 The Living Bible

WELCOME

Welcome to the Leader's Guide for group study of *Making God Smile*, where we will learn how to match our desire to live as God intends with our everyday actions—to become more consistently faithful, self-controlled, patient, gentle, kind, loving, good, peaceful, and joy-filled. As you and your group work through the guide together, you will become more aware of your thoughts, words, and actions. As one reader summarized, “It inspired me to think more carefully about how I respond to daily challenges and to make more thoughtful choices on a consistent basis”, walking in, guided and empowered by God's Spirit.

This guide may be somewhat different from others you've seen. In this guide, you won't find completely structured questions or prepared fill-in-the-blanks. As your group studies together, you will find that one size does not fit all; something that may be important to one person, may not necessarily carry the same importance to another. The suggestions and questions you find here will be open-ended, to prompt discussion meaningful to *all* group members, wherever they are on their spiritual journey.

Because the book's goal is action, not just learning, its group study needs to be tailored to the experience, situation, and needs of the group members. Together, we complement and inspire each other. Where one of us is weak, another is strong; where one has questions, another has answers. In this setting, the leader's role becomes not to ask a list of questions which may or may not have relevance to the entire group, but to elicit the questions that do, to lead each discussion in a way that encourages participation and ensures that all have an opportunity to contribute. God has equipped you, leader, for such a time as this.

TIMELINE

Making God Smile focuses forty days on each fruit of the Spirit, where each day looks at a different aspect and message of the fruit. So how do you fit 365 readings into a group study? This guide is a focused guide that spends 4-weeks on each fruit. You can use it in two different ways:

- **Option 1:** For an intensive study of all the fruits, you can treat this as a 36-week guide. You may opt to take certain weeks off, such as during the summer months or around the holidays, and if you do, this will fit nicely into a year-long curriculum. See the Timeline Handout for reference on how to fit this content into a 12-month, year-long study. Whether you start at the beginning of the year or somewhere in the middle, this handout will demonstrate how to divide the content throughout the year.
- **Option 2:** For a customized study where your group can choose what fruit to focus on, you can jump to that 4-week section of this guide. You can add on additional fruits to make the study as long as you need it to be.

MATERIALS

This guide provides:

- Suggested discussion questions and prayers for the group leader.
- A Table of Contents handout to help group members navigate between the different fruits.
- A Weekly Assignment Checklist showing what group members need to do before each weekly meeting.
- A Personal Statement worksheet to help group members articulate why they want to be faithful on this journey.
- Self-Assessment worksheets that members can fill out as they reflect on each week's reading.
- A Personal Action Plan worksheet to help members put what they are learning into action.

ORDER OF STUDY

Making God Smile does not present the fruits in the same order as you find them in the Bible. As explained in the book's introduction (Can I Really Make God Smile?), the fruits are arranged in a way that allows each fruit to build upon the previous one. While your group may be choosing a different fruit or completing the study in a different order than the book, I do recommend that you start your study with faithfulness, since faithfulness is a foundational fruit for all the others. All group members should recognize its importance and prepare their own Personal Statement of why they want to remain faithful to the study, to their group, and to God as they grow each week.

GETTING STARTED

Two weeks before the first group study session, contact your group members to make sure everyone has a copy of *Making God Smile*. Remind them to bring the book to each group session, along with a Bible, a pen, and something they can write notes in. If you are studying a single fruit or are tackling a different order than the book, announce to your group what fruit you are starting with. You will also need to provide each group member with the following (all included in this guide):

- Copies of all participant handouts and worksheets: the Table of Contents handout, the Personal Statement worksheet, copies of the Self-Assessment worksheet (you'll need one for each fruit you're going to study) and the Personal Action Plan worksheet.
- A reminder that the study will only be as successful as their participation and their commitment to complete the readings and assignments.
- Their assignment to be completed before the first group session:
 - Read the Introduction to *Making God Smile* (Can I Really Make God Smile?) and The Journey Begins (days 1 through 3).
 - Fill out their Personal Statement worksheet articulating how and why they are going to be faithful to this study and to the members of this group. You may also want to let them know they will be invited to read this out loud in the next group session.
 - Referring to the Table of Contents handout, read the definition of the fruit you're studying and fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for that fruit.

Finally, before you begin, pray! Pray for guidance and insight for your leadership of the study. Pray for the group members who you will be leading. Pray for open, honest, and helpful discussion. Pray God's Word will act in the lives of your group.

Now, let's get started!

LEADER'S GUIDE WEEK ONE



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, We're about to embark on a journey, a journey to bring us closer to who you want us to be, a journey to bring us nearer to the life you want us to have. While we want to live all the fruit of your Spirit, we've chosen to focus now on your fruit of _____. May this study lead us to live it more consistently every day. We thank you that you will be with us every step of the way. Help us to remember to turn to you, share with you, trust in you, and follow you. We give you our hearts Lord. May we be our best for your glory. May we always make you smile. Amen.

DISCUSSION

- In the book's Introduction and Days 1, 2, and 3, what resonated most with you?
- What questions or insights did you have as you read?
- Do you feel you're doing your best for God? Whether your answer is yes or no, will you share more about your answer with the group?
- How can your life make God smile?
- Read out-loud Galatians 5:16-17, 22-23. Is your relationship with the Holy Spirit what you want it to be? If not, how would you like it to change? What can you do to bring about that change?
- Are you consistently self-aware or do you tend to operate on auto-pilot?
- Why is self-awareness important?
- Using the Table of Contents handout, find the definition of your chosen fruit in the book. Does the definition of [chosen fruit] match your definition? If not, how does it differ?
- Who's willing to share their Self-Assessment for this fruit? *Note: If you do not have any volunteers, go through the questions on the self-assessment day indicated on the Table of Contents handout (the book provides self-assessment questions for every fruit but joy.)

PERSONAL STATEMENTS

Take turns reading your Personal Statements out loud to the group. These statements will help group members verbalize how and why they want to be faithful to this study. Reading them out loud will help them stay accountable, but if any group member is not comfortable with that, invite him/her to summarize what they hope to get from this group.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you that you are faithful and that you never change. Thank you that we can count on you to be with us, hear us, guide us. You have blessed us richly. You've given and given without asking anything in return, save that we believe in you, love you, and follow you. We believe in you Lord, and we love you. It's in following you that we so often fall short. We hope to change that through this study. Open our minds and our hearts to what you want to teach us, Lord. And if we stumble, give us your grace. Thank you for never giving up on us.

Thank you for this time we've had together, to share, to listen, to encourage, to walk alongside each other. Lead us, guide us in the week to come. Help us to be as faithful to you as you are to us. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK 2

Remind your group they will need to:

- Read days 1-13 of the fruit you're studying, praying the prayers given.
- Start their Personal Action Plan, noting specific things they will do to apply these lessons to their life and to make sure they remember what they've learned.
- Take their copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and their worksheets to the group session.

LEADER'S GUIDE WEEK TWO



OPENING PRAYER

Refer to your Table of Contents handout to find the prayer for the fruit you are studying. Ask a volunteer to pray those words, changing the singular to plural since you are praying for the entire group.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefitted them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Have you found it difficult or easy to live [chosen fruit] consistently? How can the readings for this week help you be more consistent?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure you remember to do these things? As we discuss each other's answers to these questions, make any additions you'd like to your own Personal Action plan.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you Lord for this time we've had together, to share, to listen, to encourage, to walk alongside each other. Thank you for all we've learned this week and for the progress we're making toward being who you want us to be and living the life you want us to have. As we go about our busy days, help us keep in mind what you're teaching us, and help us to truly live what we're learning. We thank you for giving us the guidance and the strength we need, for we cannot do it in our own power. We love you and we need you. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind your group they will need to:

- Read days 14-26 of the fruit you're studying.
- Add to their Personal Action Plan for this week, noting specific things they will do to apply these lessons to their lives and to make sure they remember what they've learned.
- Take their copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and their worksheets to the group session.

LEADER'S GUIDE WEEK THREE



OPENING PRAYER

Refer to your Table of Contents handout to find the prayer for the fruit you are studying. Ask a volunteer to pray those words, changing the singular to plural since you are praying for the entire group.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefitted them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Have the readings for this week helped you be more consistent with this fruit? Why or why not?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure you remember to do these things? As we discuss each other's answers to these questions, make any additions you'd like to your own Personal Action plan.

CLOSING PRAYER

Thank you Lord for this time we've had together, to share, to listen, to encourage, to walk alongside each other. Thank you for all we've learned this week and for the progress we're making toward being who you want us to be and living the life you want us to have. As we go about our busy days, help us keep in mind what you're teaching us, and help us to truly live what we're learning. We thank you for giving us the guidance and the strength we need, for we cannot do it in our own power. We love you and we need you. Amen.

ASSIGNMENT

Remind your group they will need to:

- Read days 27-40 of the fruit you're studying.
- Add to their Personal Action Plan for this week, noting specific things they will do to apply these lessons to their lives and to make sure they remember what they've learned.
- Review their Self-Assessment worksheet for this fruit. Complete the last part of the worksheet, considering any new insight or inspiration they have gleaned through the study. Compare their before-the-study assessment and their after-the-study assessment. Invite each group member to think about how they've grown in living the fruit of God's Spirit.
- Review their Personal Statements and Personal Action Plan. You may also want to let them know that they will be invited to read these out loud at the final session.
- Take their copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and their worksheets to the final group session.

LEADER'S GUIDE WEEK FOUR



OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Please help us remember that though we're almost at the end of our study, we're not at the end of our journey. Help us to celebrate the progress we've made and live the truths we've learned together. As we continue on our own journeys, may we also continue to uplift and encourage each other. Thank you that you are always with us, loving us, leading us, guiding us. Thank you for the insights you've given us. May we continue to uplift and encourage each other today, and every day. Amen.

DISCUSSION

To start your discussion, go around the room and take turns identifying which day's message resonated with each member the most (this could be a day, a story, or a Scripture that benefited them the most or challenged them the most.) This is a great way to make sure each member participates by allowing everyone to recap their own reading experience. Compare and contrast the answers among the group. This time will more than likely grow into an organic discussion session. As that discussion concludes, move on to the following questions that focus on implementing the fruit throughout the next week:

- Have the readings for this week helped you be more consistent with this fruit? Why or why not?
- What is your one most important take-away from this week's readings?
- What specific things will you do to apply these lessons to your life? What will you do to make sure you remember to do these things? As we discuss each other's answers to these questions, make any additions you'd like to your own Personal Action plan.
- Study Summary: Invite each member to share their new self-assessment or summarize any change they saw between the assessments they took before week one and the assessment they took this week.

- Take turns once again reading out-loud your Personal Statements and Personal Action Plan worksheet. Discuss how you can continue to live this fruit every day even after the study and how you will be held accountable for doing so.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for all we've learned through this study and for the progress we're making toward being who you want us to be and living the life you want us to have. As we go about our busy days, help us keep in mind what you're teaching us, and help us to truly live what we're learning. We thank you for giving us the guidance and the strength we need, for we cannot do it in our own power. May we live every day filled to overflowing with your fruit of _____ . Amen.

MAKING GOD SMILE
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TIMELINE HANDOUT
SUGGESTED YEAR-LONG STUDY SCHEDULE (2019)

| Week | From Date | To Date | Content to Study |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | December 31, 2018 | January 6, 2019 | (no study, holiday break) |
| 2 | January 7, 2019 | January 13, 2019 | Faithfulness |
| 3 | January 14, 2019 | January 20, 2019 | |
| 4 | January 21, 2019 | January 27, 2019 | |
| 5 | January 28, 2019 | February 3, 2019 | |
| 6 | February 4, 2019 | February 10, 2019 | |
| 7 | February 11, 2019 | February 17, 2019 | Self-control |
| 8 | February 18, 2019 | February 24, 2019 | |
| 9 | February 25, 2019 | March 3, 2019 | |
| 10 | March 4, 2019 | March 10, 2019 | Patience |
| 11 | March 11, 2019 | March 17, 2019 | |
| 12 | March 18, 2019 | March 24, 2019 | |
| 13 | March 25, 2019 | March 31, 2019 | |
| 14 | April 1, 2019 | April 7, 2019 | Gentleness |
| 15 | April 8, 2019 | April 14, 2019 | |
| 16 | April 15, 2019 | April 21, 2019 | |
| 17 | April 22, 2019 | April 28, 2019 | |
| 18 - 31 | April 29, 2019 | August 4, 2019 | (no study, summer break) |
| 32 | August 5, 2019 | August 11, 2019 | Kindness |
| 33 | August 12, 2019 | August 18, 2019 | |
| 34 | August 19, 2019 | August 25, 2019 | |
| 35 | August 26, 2019 | September 1, 2019 | |
| 36 | September 2, 2019 | September 8, 2019 | Love |
| 37 | September 9, 2019 | September 15, 2019 | |
| 38 | September 16, 2019 | September 22, 2019 | |
| 39 | September 23, 2019 | September 29, 2019 | |
| 40 | September 30, 2019 | October 6, 2019 | Goodness |
| 41 | October 7, 2019 | October 13, 2019 | |
| 42 | October 14, 2019 | October 27, 2019 | |
| 43 | October 21, 2019 | November 3, 2019 | |
| 44 | October 28, 2019 | November 10, 2019 | Peace |
| 45 | November 4, 2019 | November 17, 2019 | |
| 46 | November 11, 2019 | November 24, 2019 | |
| 47 | November 18, 2019 | December 1, 2019 | |
| 48 | November 25, 2019 | December 8, 2019 | Joy |
| 49 | December 2, 2019 | December 15, 2019 | |
| 50 | December 9, 2019 | December 22, 2019 | |
| 51 | December 16, 2019 | December 22, 2019 | |
| 52 | December 23, 2019 | December 29, 2019 | (no study, holiday break) |

PERSONAL STATEMENT WORKSHEET



Why I want to be faithful on this journey:

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET



SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM FOR _____
(name of fruit being studied).

Answer the following as you prepare for your first group session

On a scale of 1-10, rate how you live the fruit you are studying this week. (1 =never; 10=always.)
Circle your self-assessment on the scale below:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Reflect on the number you chose. Why that number? What could you do to improve that number?

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Answer the following as you prepare for your final group session

On a scale of 1-10, rate how you live the fruit now that you have completed this study. (1 =never; 10=always.)
Circle your self-assessment on the scale below:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Reflect on the number you chose. Why that number? Has it changed? Why or why not? How can you continue to improve that number in the future?

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MY PERSONAL ACTION PLAN FOR LIVING THE FRUIT OF GOD'S SPIRIT



As you work through the study, use this worksheet to list specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.

WEEK 2 of study

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEK 3 of study

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEK 4: To help me remember to carry out my action plan, I will:

1.
2.
3.
4.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST



Mark off the tasks as you read through *Making God Smile* each week. The tasks listed for each week are your homework to complete *before* you meet with your group that week. For example, complete week one tasks before your first session with the group.

WEEK ONE

- Read the Introduction to *Making God Smile* (Can I Really Make God Smile?), The Journey Begins (days 1-3), praying the prayers given and/or prayers of your own.
- Prepare your own Personal Statement handout, explaining why you have chosen this journey and why you want to remain faithful to it.
- Referring to the Table of Contents handout:
 - o Read the definition of the fruit you're studying.
 - o Find the day which discusses self-assessment for the fruit you're studying and ask yourself each question in that day's message.
- Fill out a Self-Assessment worksheet for the fruit you're studying.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK TWO

- Read days 1-13 of the fruit you're studying, praying the prayers given and/or prayers of your own.
- Start your Personal Action Plan for this week, noting specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK THREE

- Read days 14-26 of the fruit you're studying, praying the prayers given, and/or prayers of your own.
- Add to your Personal Action Plan for this week, noting specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper, and your worksheets to the group session.

WEEK FOUR

- Read days 27-40 of the fruit you're studying..
- Add to your Personal Action Plan for this week, noting specific things you will do to apply these lessons to your life and to make sure you remember what you've learned.
- Re-read the self-assessment day for the fruit you are studying and re-ask yourself each question in that day's message.
- Fill out the bottom portion of your Self-Assessment worksheet you used in Week 1.
- Review your Personal Statement and your Personal Action Plan. Talk to God about your ongoing journey.
- Take your copy of *Making God Smile*, a Bible, pen, paper and your worksheets to the group session.