

# Healthy Choices for God's Children

Personal Decisions About Receiving and Giving Nourishment to be Spiritually, Mentally, and Physically Healthy

## Introduction

It's been said that it takes a month to build a habit. So, let's take a month – 4 weeks, actually – to develop and practice the habit of making healthy choices. This study will dig into four specific areas in which we can practice that habit, but the overall habit that we're focusing on is the habit of making healthy choices. You can then apply that habit consistently in the future to many other specific areas than the four discussed here.

**NOTE:** when you see the word "healthy" in this study, always think of the health of the whole person – spiritually, mentally, and physically.

You know that God has chosen you (*Colossians 3:12*, for instance), and he consistently blesses you with healthy alternatives. When you habitually have the habit of consistently looking for those healthy choices, and persistently make the healthy choice, you enjoy God's blessings even more, and you are a blessing to others.

God often emphasizes in His Word the importance of making good choices. See for instance:

The words of  
Moses to the  
Israelites in  
**Deuteronomy**  
**30:19 – 20**

*This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*

The words of  
Joshua to the same  
Israelites in  
**Joshua 24:14 – 15**

*Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.*

See also *Proverbs 16:16*, *John 7:17* and *James 4:4*.

It is clear that God is actually giving us the choice. We don't create the blessings. God does that. But we make the choice to accept the blessings. God doesn't do that. But it is also clear that not all choices are equally healthy. You may remember the line from the *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* movie about the bad guy in the movie: "He chose poorly." Who of us has not experienced that realization? One of the great things about God's grace is that he gives us a lot of second chances. And we often learn a lot from our mistakes. But we just know that if we can make as many healthy choices as possible, we will benefit greatly from those decisions.

The goal of this study is that we will be able to say:

*I will consistently and persistently make regular healthy choices to receive nourishment from God and pass that nourishment on to others.*

Receiving  
and Giving

Receiving and giving – that is always one of the signs of a healthy life. If you are consistently receiving the nourishment you need – spiritually, mentally, and physically – and are persistently giving that nourishment to others whenever you have the opportunity to do so, you are healthy, growing, and fulfilled – again spiritually, mentally, and physically.

## The Heart and Strategy of This Study

Each week of this study, you will focus on one element of nourishment (love, joy, peace, patience). You may recognize that these are the first four parts of the fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22 – 23*). It's not uncommon to approach these qualities from the standpoint of "*what do I need to do to improve in them?*" But another way to consider the Spirit's fruit is nourishment that God is giving you. Yes, everything in that list is also taught in other Scriptures as qualities that we need to exhibit in the way we treat others, but they start as fruit God is giving us to make our lives healthy. So, you will be encouraged in this study to put yourself in the position to receive this nourishment from God and to make yourself available to give this nourishment to others. Each week, you will be asked the following two questions about the nourishment topic of that week.

Two deep questions to help us develop the habit of making healthy choices.

- 1) What is one choice I can make every day this week that will put me in a good position to receive this nourishment from God and from others?
- 2) What is one decision that I can make every day this week that will improve my availability and capability to give this nourishment to others?

The organization of this study is very flexible and can be done at any pace that fits you, but you will see a suggested schedule that you could use consistently each of the 4 weeks. The emphasis is on meditating on Scripture and daily putting it into practice.

In addition to these daily practices, it would also be great if you could also:

- 1) do this study with a partner or small group, and
- 2) find some time each week for some silence and solitude with God, trying to receive a full dose of his nourishment.

These two aspects of the habit of healthy choices will definitely help you focus on the nourishment topic of the week and, at the same time, be practices that you might want to continue.

## WEEK 1: The Nourishment of Love. "I Choose Love."



Read and write your thoughts on the following Scriptures about love – God's love for you, your love for God, your love for yourself, and your love for others. Choose to believe that God loves you personally and that he has given you the ability to live a life of love.

**Ephesians 5:1** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Colossians 3:12 – 14** \_\_\_\_\_

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**1 Peter 4:8** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Matthew 22:37 – 39** \_\_\_\_\_

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### Put yourself in the position to receive this nourishment.

What is one decision you can make everyday this week that will put yourself in a good position to receive love from God and from others? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Make yourself available to pass this nourishment on to others.

Identify one choice you can make everyday this week that will improve your availability to pass love on to others. \_\_\_\_\_

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Everyday read the Scriptures from Day 1 and your thoughts about them. Also practice disciplines, such as the following, every day:

- Wake up every morning with prayer and a reminder of your choices for the week.
- Think about it often during the day, looking for opportunities to practice your choices.
- Reflect on it at night, considering how your choices impacted your day and thinking about anything you might do differently the next day. Use the journal on the next page or another journal of your choice.

What are your plans about implementing this week the two practices suggested at the end of the *Introduction* about sharing your experience with others and spending time of silence and solitude with God?



## WEEK 2: The Nourishment of Joy. "I Choose Joy."



Read and write your thoughts on the following Scriptures about joy – God's joy about you, the joy you have in God, the joy you have about your life, and the joy you have about others. Choose to believe that God personally rejoices over you and that he has given you the ability to live a life of joy.

**Zephaniah 3:17** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Nehemiah 8:10** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Galatians 4:15** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Philippians 4:4** \_\_\_\_\_

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### Put yourself in the position to receive this nourishment.

What is one decision you can make everyday this week that will put yourself in a good position to receive joy from God and from others? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Make yourself available to pass this nourishment on to others.

Identify one choice you can make everyday this week that will improve your availability to pass joy on to others. \_\_\_\_\_

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Everyday read the Scriptures from Day 1 and your thoughts about them. Also practice disciplines, such as the following, every day:

- Wake up every morning with prayer and a reminder of your choices for the week.
- Think about it often during the day, looking for opportunities to practice your choices.
- Reflect on it at night, considering how your choices impacted your day and thinking about anything you might do differently the next day. Use the journal on the next page or another journal of your choice.

What are your plans about implementing this week the two practices suggested at the end of the *Introduction* about sharing your experience with others and spending time of silence and solitude with God?



## WEEK 3: The Nourishment of Peace. "I Choose Peace."



Read and write your thoughts on the following Scriptures about peace – the peace that the God of peace wants to give you, the peace you have in God, and the peace you want to give to others. Choose to believe that God personally gives you peace and that he has given you the ability to live a life of peace.

**Numbers 6:22 – 27** \_\_\_\_\_

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**John 16:33** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Colossians 3:15** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Philippians 4:7, 9** \_\_\_\_\_

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### Put yourself in the position to receive this nourishment.

What is one decision you can make everyday this week that will put yourself in a good position to receive peace from God and from others? \_\_\_\_\_

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### Make yourself available to pass this nourishment on to others.

Identify one choice you can make everyday this week that will improve your availability to pass peace on to others. \_\_\_\_\_

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Everyday read the Scriptures from Day 1 and your thoughts about them. Also practice disciplines, such as the following, every day:

- Wake up every morning with prayer and a reminder of your choices for the week.
- Think about it often during the day, looking for opportunities to practice your choices.
- Reflect on it at night, considering how your choices impacted your day and thinking about anything you might do differently the next day. Use the journal on the next page or another journal of your choice.

What are your plans about implementing this week the two practices suggested at the end of the *Introduction* about sharing your experience with others and spending time of silence and solitude with God?



## WEEK 4: The Nourishment of Patience. "I Choose Patience."



Read and write your thoughts on the following Scriptures about patience – the patience that God has with you, the patience you have with yourself, and the patience you want to show to others. Choose to believe that God is personally patient with you and that he has given you the ability to live a life of patience.

**2 Peter 3:9, 15** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**1 Corinthians 13:4** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**Colossians 3:12** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**1 Thessalonians 5:14** \_\_\_\_\_  
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### Put yourself in the position to receive this nourishment.

What is one decision you can make everyday this week that will put yourself in a good position to receive God's patience? \_\_\_\_\_  
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### Make yourself available to pass this nourishment on to others.

Identify one choice you can make everyday this week that will improve your availability to show patience towards others. \_\_\_\_\_  
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Everyday read the Scriptures from Day 1 and your thoughts about them. Also practice disciplines, such as the following, every day:

- Wake up every morning with prayer and a reminder of your choices for the week.
- Think about it often during the day, looking for opportunities to practice your choices.
- Reflect on it at night, considering how your choices impacted your day and thinking about anything you might do differently the next day. Use the journal on the next page or another journal of your choice.

What are your plans about implementing this week the two practices suggested at the end of the *Introduction* about sharing your experience with others and spending time of silence and solitude with God?



## Conclusion

As stated in the introduction, the main goal of this study is to help us develop the habit of consistently and persistently making healthy choices. As you could probably already see, you could continue this pattern of study with the other five parts of the fruit of the Spirit from *Galatians 5:22 – 23*, as well as with many other godly qualities, such as the ones listed in *Colossians 3:12 – 14*.

However, at this point it might be good to reflect on the over-all habit of making healthy choices in general, before you apply it to other nourishment topics.

Do you think that you have that habit in your life?

Here are some shorter questions that might help you answer that bigger question:

- Do you believe that God is consistently exhibiting these qualities towards you personally (i.e. *he loves me; he rejoices over me; etc.*)?
- Do you believe that God has given you the ability to choose these healthy alternatives (i.e. *live a life of love; live a life of joy; etc.*)?
- Are you looking for those alternatives every day?
- Do you think about making the healthy choice when those alternatives become available?

One final note about the words "*consistently*" and "*persistently*" used in this study describing the habit of making healthy choices. Consistent and persistent do not mean "*never makes a mistake*." In this case, it does not mean that you never make an unhealthy choice. We all know that there is only one person who can say that – and you're not Him!

It does mean, though, that this is your overall mentality and the general direction in which you are heading (i.e. you are consistent with it), and that you plan to stay with it the rest of your life (i.e. you are persistent with it). And when mistakes happen (notice, not "if," but "when"), you make the healthy choice of relying on the grace of God and using his power to repent and get back on the right track.

Finally, as a suggestion to conclude this study, complete the following sentence:

As a result of prayerfully studying and meditating on these Scriptures, this is my conviction about the habit of making healthy choices and the way it is expressing itself in my life:

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Thank you, and God bless!

*John Sullivan*  
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