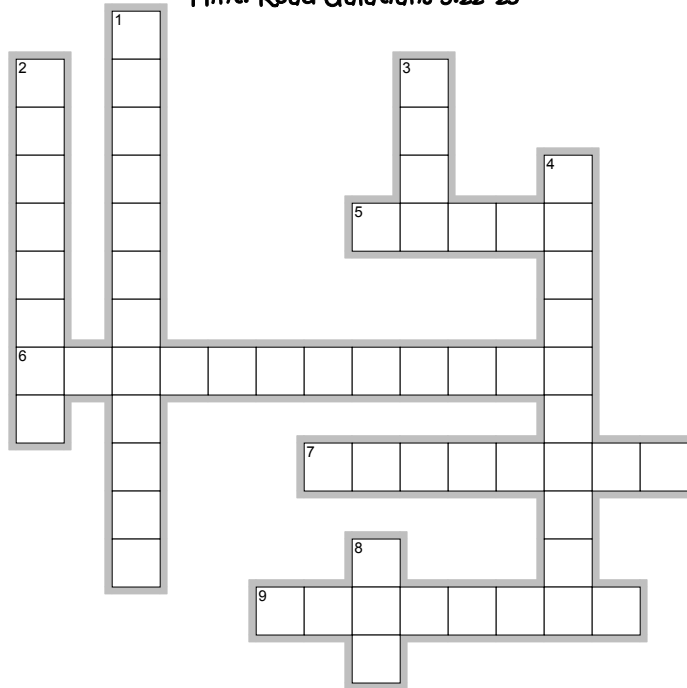


Spirit-Filled (Fruit of the Spirit)

Hint: Read Galatians 5:22-23



Created with EclipseCrossword — www.eclipsecrossword.com

Across

5. the Christmas angels spoke of it
6. rein in yourself
7. parents sometimes lose this
9. not bad

Down

1. being true to someone
2. it replaces meanness
3. opposite of hate
4. not rough
8. rhymes with boy

ARE WE THERE YET?

Reproducible Vacation Devotions
from CTA, Inc.



Tim Wesemann



www.CTAinc.com

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- Minnesota _____
- Mississippi _____
- Missouri _____
- Montana _____
- Nebraska _____
- Nevada _____
- New Hampshire _____
- New Jersey _____
- New Mexico _____
- New York _____
- North Carolina _____
- North Dakota _____
- Ohio _____
- Oklahoma _____
- Oregon _____
- Pennsylvania _____
- Rhode Island _____
- South Carolina _____
- South Dakota _____
- Tennessee _____
- Texas _____
- Utah _____
- Vermont _____
- Virginia _____
- Washington _____
- West Virginia _____
- Wisconsin _____
- Wyoming _____

License Plate Game

Check the box beside a state's name when you see a license plate from that state. Then lead your family in a brief general prayer for the people of the state or choose a more specific prayer request, such as for government leaders, pastors, unemployed workers, unbelievers, teachers, medical personnel, children, churches, the homeless, or the dying. On the line, write what you prayed for the people in that state.

- Alabama _____
- Alaska _____
- Arizona _____
- Arkansas _____
- California _____
- Colorado _____
- Connecticut _____
- Delaware _____
- Florida _____
- Georgia _____
- Hawaii _____
- Idaho _____
- Illinois _____
- Indiana _____
- Iowa _____
- Kansas _____
- Kentucky _____
- Louisiana _____
- Maine _____
- Maryland _____
- Massachusetts _____
- Michigan _____

GET OUT THE MAP!

Taking a trip, but can't find the map? Check the glove compartment. Maybe it's under the aspirin bottle, tire gauge, and gloves. (Does anyone actually keep gloves in the glove compartment?) When you find it and carefully spread its accordionlike folds, the map will show you the shortest distance to your destination, the best route to take, sites of interest, and geographical features along the way.

Every twenty-four hours we take a trip through one day. While we're on vacation, we'll spend those hours sleeping and sightseeing, eating and enjoying ourselves, playing and praying, walking and worshipping, talking and traveling. We have so many places to go, so many people to see! If we only had a map to help get us through the day!

Our Father—our heavenly Father, that is—provides a map to do exactly that. That map—*the* map—is the gift of his Word. Sometimes we forget to take the map out. Often we choose not to take it out, thinking we can find the way on our own. But without it, we travel through the day in the dark, without light!

Psalm 119:105 reads, "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*" As we travel through each day, God provides the moon to light the night, the sun to light the day, and a constant light—the Holy Scriptures—to show us Jesus, the light of the world who lights our way to heaven.

God's Bible map provides help and direction as we travel through each day. Our Lord has packed it with the Good News of Jesus and the forgiveness for our sins that he won for us on his cross! So don't forget to pack God's Bible map as you travel . . . every day!

Prayer: Thank you, Lord, for the map of your Word. Help us to use it to guide and lead us daily as we travel now into this new day that you have made! Keep our faith safe as we journey with you. In Jesus' name we pray, play, and live! Amen.

DETOUR!

I dread detour signs and road construction areas! When I see one, I know our trip won't go as planned. It may take far, far longer to get where we are going than we had hoped.

Think about some unexpected detours God's people took. Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus detoured to Egypt on their way home from Bethlehem to Nazareth. Paul took lots of detours on his missionary trips. Can you think of other examples from the Bible of people whose lives took unexpected detours? Can you think of times when your own life took an unexpected detour? Maybe you lost a friend, failed a test, lost a job, or got sick.

Things don't always go as we plan. But we know that in all things God is at work in the lives of those who love him, at work for our good (Romans 8:28). What a comfort to know that our Lord can use even the most difficult situations to grow our faith and strengthen our relationships with him and one another! He leads us safely through all those "faith-under-construction" times of our lives.

Thankfully, Jesus also took a detour. From his home in heaven he came to earth, to a cross on Calvary, to a grave, the garden tomb. But Jesus arose from death three short days later and ascended to heaven where—right now—he is preparing an eternal home for each of us. Now because Jesus lives, we can live—forgiven and eternally—as we trust in him with our lives.

During your vacation day today take a detour to Jesus' cross. Stop there to confess your sins to him. Receive his forgiveness, rest in his love, and rejoice in his promise to travel with you everywhere you go, working in all the circumstances of your life—even in those detours—for your good!

Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for coming to earth to die and rise for me! And thank you for working everything out for my good and your glory. Amen.

ARE WE THERE YET?

"Are we there yet?" is a question you expect to hear from children, but I suspect adults might think it silently just as often! We've hardly left home when we think it. We ask it of ourselves more than once during most trips that last more than a few minutes.

Although the question can grate on parents' nerves, it reflects children's excitement about the destination. If they didn't want to go, they wouldn't be in such a hurry to arrive!

Some common responses to that age-old question include: Soon! It's not much farther! It's just over that hill!

Daily we find ourselves in the middle of our trip, heading for the wonderful destination of heaven. Jesus made the trip possible. He invited us to travel with him. We can look forward to an eternity of no more tears, death, or pain; no more anxiety, anger, or sadness—only perfect peace, love, and joy. All these await us when we arrive. Doesn't that make you want to shout, "ARE WE THERE YET?"

Our Father, in the driver's seat, looks at us and says, "Soon! But until we arrive, there is much we need to enjoy and do along the way. Be patient. Look for opportunities to serve." He provides a bit of heaven to enjoy on earth through his forgiveness, his peace, and his love as we wait patiently, trusting in his perfect timing.

With that in mind, we can relax in his care. We can enjoy the scenery, encourage others up and down the hills, invite others to join the traveling troupe, and keep our eyes on Jesus—the only way to heaven.

[Jesus said,] "Surely I am coming soon." [His people respond,] "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" Revelation 22:20 (ESV)

As part of God's family, we are anxious to arrive at our destination, but we are also thrilled that he has chosen us to join him in this journey of grace!

Prayer: Come, Lord Jesus, quickly! Amen!

DIRECTIONS: TO ASK OR NOT TO ASK?

Someone once said the reason it took Moses forty years to lead God's people through the wilderness was that, like most men, he couldn't bring himself to ask for directions. Do you have a defective direction gene?

Not only is it *okay* to ask directions, it is *essential* to ask God to direct us as we come to crossroad after crossroad in our lives. Our loving Savior takes care of the smallest details of our lives, as well as life-changing decisions. His wisdom, advice, and direction are always perfect. He knows and wants what is best for us.

Our lives should become one continual prayer, seeking God's direction at every turn. Psalm 105 reminds us to look to the Lord and his strength, to seek his face always.

Don't be too embarrassed, proud, or shy to ask constantly for directions from the one who knows the way and *is* the Way! He promises to hear our prayers and answer them in his time and in a way that is best for us. Ask! Then listen! Listen as your Lord speaks to you in his Word, in your circumstances, and through other people. Finally, trust! Trust in the Lord—*"lean not on your own understanding"* (Proverbs 3:5).

You never know, God's direction might save you from forty years of wilderness traveling! Go ahead and ask—then watch and listen for his answers, rejoicing in his perfect travel plans.

Prayer: Direct my life, Lord. May your will be done and not my own. I bring this request in the name of Jesus, my Savior, who gave his life for my sins and earned my salvation. Amen.

MAKING A SCENE

Did anyone make a scene today as you traveled? As you think back over the day, were there tense times in the car, arguments in the mall, or pouting over lunch?

Did you notice God also made a scene today? Dozens and hundreds, thousands and tens of thousands of scenes, in fact! And all of them for our enjoyment. Psalm 24:1 reminds us, *"The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."* God our Creator loves making a scene!

In the beginning God said, "Let there be light . . . water . . . land." God created them by merely speaking their names. The same Creator-God tells us every day that he loves us in our Savior, Jesus!

Think about the hills, rivers, lakes, grass, animals, oceans, wheat fields, clouds, sun, rain—all the scenes God put in your life today. Do you realize the same hands that created all those scenes also created *you*? You are a walking miracle, making a God-scene wherever you go! And God created everyone *you* see. God's Son, Jesus, created an incredible scene one Friday when he died on a cross, taking your sins and mine, the sins of the world, upon himself.

As we follow him, we can be assured he won't embarrass us by making a bad scene. It's an honor to travel with the Creator of heaven and earth. Let's enjoy the scenes he has created for us to see today, and join all creation in praising the Lord.

Discussion suggestion: Play "top that" as you talk about the amazing God-created scenes you've seen on your trip so far.

Prayer: Thank you, Creator God, for the beautiful scenes you've created in our lives. Help us to see in them your handiwork and to give you the praise. In Jesus' beautiful name we pray. Amen.

JOY IN THE JOURNEY

Complete this statement: My favorite part of a vacation is . . .

- sleeping in
- special activities
- family time
- maid service
- the change of pace
- visiting relatives
- meeting new friends
- something else _____

Whatever activity you choose, please *enjoy* it! Leave your guilt behind. The office can manage. You don't have to go to school. Your dog is okay. The laundry will wait. You didn't leave the iron on. Relax! Enjoy! Rejoice in this opportunity to get away . . . and let your rejoicing be in the Lord!

Think about it. Would you have a vacation without God? He's the driving force behind this trip. He blessed you with money so you could get away from your daily routine. He created your body with the abilities to walk, swim, camp, ski, golf—whatever! But because he didn't create you with a bionic body, he knows you need time away. He knows you need to rest and be recharged. He even built one day of rest into every week. Thank him for it! He loves when his people rejoice in their blessings. So rejoice in God's gift of vacations!

Sometimes we need to be reminded to rejoice. We need to remember our Savior, our God who leads us from worry to rejoicing, from crying to laughter, from guilt to peace through forgiveness. Paul reminded the Philippians and he reminds us today, "*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*" (Philippians 4:4).

Prayer: Lord, bring us joy in this journey and wherever you lead us each day of our lives. We rejoice in your love. Amen.

THE REST OF THE STORY

Have you ever been too busy to eat? If so, don't feel alone. Jesus has been there too.

Mark 6:31-32 reads, "*And [Jesus] said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves*" (ESV).

Taking a rest from our busy schedules is important. God asks us to care for the emotional, physical, and spiritual health of ourselves and our families. Many times Jesus realized he also needed to take quiet time alone to rest and to pray. He left us a great example.

Take time to rest and to pray, just as Jesus did. *Make* time to rest and pray. It is important. Jesus invites us to come away with him for a truly restful time. He says, "*Come to me . . . and I will give you rest*" (Matthew 11:28). In *THE MESSAGE*, Eugene Peterson beautifully paraphrases Matthew 11:28-30.

Are you tired? Worn out? . . . Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.

What a blessed invitation! Get away with Jesus, your Savior. He is with you on your vacation. He wants to enjoy every aspect of your journey with you. Even in the most hectic travel schedule, Jesus brings real peace through his promises and presence. That's the *rest* of the story!

Prayer: Go with us, Lord, in our travels and bring us to rest in your peace, presence, and promises through Jesus. Amen.