

## Leader Resources for Small Groups | May 19, 2019

Anyone leading the group this week may find additional Small Group Leader Resources at <http://www.wcchapel.org/resources-for-small-group-leaders/>

### *Explore the Holy Spirit — Walking in the Holy Spirit*

**Focus Passage:** Galatians 5:13–26

**Context:** Galatians 5:1–6:36

**Other Passages Referenced:** John 15:1–5

**Sermon Recap:** If we analyze our various conflicts, we will find that there is usually an underlying unseen conflict beneath the conflicts that we see. That underlying conflict is a battle between the desires of our flesh and the desires of the Holy Spirit. The Big Idea of this week's sermon is: "The Holy Spirit replaces our flesh with His fruit." The fruit of the Spirit grows as we walk by the Spirit (v. 16), are led by the Spirit (v. 18), live by the Spirit (v. 25), and keep in step with the Spirit (v. 25).

### **Introductory Comments to Leaders**

- It may be helpful to point out some major differences between the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. There is a wide variety of spiritual gifts and it doesn't appear God intended for any believer to have all of them. In contrast, Paul uses the singular "fruit" rather than "fruits" when he describes the fruit of the Spirit. Lead your members to reflect on this difference between the gifts and the fruit of the Holy Spirit. While it is good to recognize that we don't have all of the gifts, we do hope to see all of the fruit growing in our lives. We might rightly say, "I don't have that spiritual gift," but none of us has the liberty to say, "that's just not my fruit." As the Holy Spirit works to conform us more and more to the likeness of Jesus, He also wants to produce all of the fruit of the Spirit in every believer.
- Although we are discussing the fruit of the Holy Spirit and contrasting it with the works of the flesh, we need to be aware of our tendency to try to produce the fruit of the Spirit by our own efforts. That is to miss Paul's point in Galatians 5 completely. Be sensitive of that gravitational Spirit-to-flesh pull. As was noted in a previous sermon, trying to live the Christian life in our own efforts is lethal. Reinforce to your members that Paul is not saying, "You need to be more loving, more joyful, more patient, kinder, etc." Paul, through the Holy Spirit, is saying, "You need to walk by, be led by, live by, and keep in step with the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that will produce all of this fruit in you. Genuine fruit of the Spirit will come but it only comes from the Spirit planted in us." You may find it helpful to cross reference Matt 7:15–20 and James 3:10–12. In those passages, both Jesus and his brother James talk about fruits coming according to the plant they derive from. A brief survey of the word "fruit" in the gospels shows that Jesus talked about it quite often.

### **Background Helps**

- **3 Kinds of "spirits"** referred to in the New Testament – the spirit of a human being ... evil or demonic spirits ... the Holy Spirit. Bible publishers often use a capital "S" in "Spirit" when referring to the Holy Spirit. Paul mentions the human spirit once (Gal 6:18), evil spirits once (Gal 4:3), and all his other uses of the word "spirit" in Galatians refer to the Holy Spirit.
- **Different meanings of "flesh"** – There are times in the Bible when "flesh" refers to the physical flesh of animals or humans. The incarnation that refers to Jesus taking on human flesh and blood is one of Christianity's fundamental doctrines. Having flesh and blood is not negative but the way God created us when He said, "It is very good." However, "flesh" may also refer to our human appetites and efforts that operate apart from or in opposition to God's Spirit. In this negative sense, "Flesh refers to fallen human nature, the center of human

pride and self-willing. Flesh is the arena of indulgence and self willing, the locale in which the ultimate sin reveals itself to be the false assumption of receiving life not as the gift of the Creator but procuring it by one's own power, of living from one's self rather than from God."—Timothy George

- The Greek language leaves open the possibility that Paul may have intended his readers to understand that, "The fruit of the Spirit is **love**: "Joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." That would make everything after "love: ..." in the previous sentence descriptors of how "love" is to be manifest. That possibility seems more likely in light of Gal 5:14, "For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
- **Greek for "if/since"** – over the last century, there has been debate about how the only Greek word for "if" should be translated. Some scholars say that if what follows the literal word "if" is true, it is better translated "since." We have an example of this in Gal 5:24. The NIV and a couple of translations opt for "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit." The ESV and the majority of other translations go with "If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

**Hook:** *Pick a Question to Help Ignite Conversation*

*What is your favorite fruit to eat?*

### **Look—Observing and Interpreting:**

**READ: Galatians 5:13–26**

1. What does Gal 5:16 say will happen if we walk by the Spirit?
2. What does Gal 5:18 say will happen if we are led by the Spirit?
3. List the works of the works of flesh cited in Gal 5:18–21.
4. List the fruit of the Spirit cited in Gal 5:22–23.
5. What do you think Paul is talking about when he writes, "If we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit?"

### **Illustrations:**

Illustrations and quotes can be found on the "Sermon Slides" link at the bottom of [www.wcchapel.org](http://www.wcchapel.org)

**Took:** *Applying the message to our lives.*

1. Think of a conflict you are experiencing currently or have experienced in your life? Can you see how the unseen conflict beneath the seen conflict is/was a battle between the desires of your flesh and the desires of the Holy Spirit? How so?
2. Can you give an example of how the Holy Spirit has been replacing your flesh with His fruit?
3. Which components of the fruit of the Spirit listed in 5 above do you least see in your life? ... Why do you think

those qualities are lacking?

4. In what area have you consistently resisted submitting to Jesus?
5. In order to keep in step with the Spirit, what do you need to stop doing? ... What do you need to start doing?

**Prayer:** Please spend some time praying for one another.

**What we hope members glean from the passage:**

1. We will not gratify the desires of the flesh.
2. We are not under the law.
3. Works of the flesh — sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality,<sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions,<sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these
4. Fruit of the Spirit — love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control;
5. We received new life in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Christians “live by the Spirit.” That is how our life in Christ began. Paul says, “If/since we started our Christian life by the Spirit, we need to continue walking and keeping in step with that same Spirit.”