

Galatians: The Gospel for Everyday Life

Galatians 5:16-26 - *The War Within* (Part 2)

Group Member Guide

Start the conversation - What makes the perfect fruit salad?

Let's agree for the sake of this conversation, that the perfect fruit salad must have exactly nine different fruit in it.

Which fruit make it into the serving bowl, and which are set aside for tomorrow's smoothie?

One Yield (Galatians 5:22a)

What is subject/verb agreement of this sentence and why do you think this is significant?

Why do you think it matters that this is the fruit of the Spirit, and not the results of your life of obedience to the law?

The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace...

How would you define each of these first three?

How do you see these as "fruit" or outgrowing of God's Spirit in you?

What are ways you see God manifest love, joy, and peace in supernatural ways in your life?

Patience, kindness, goodness

How would you define each of these next three?

It has been said that when you pray for patience, God doesn't give you patience, but He gives you circumstances that require patience. Do you agree with this? What do you think

it means? Why do you think it might be significant that this statement is true? How does this relate to kindness and goodness and the other fruit?

What are ways you see God manifest patience, kindness, and goodness in supernatural ways in your life?

Faithfulness, gentleness, and self control

How would you define each of these final three?

What is the difference between having self control and giving control of one's self to God's Holy Spirit?

The Flesh, Crucified (Galatians 5:24)

What does verse 24 mean to you in practical ways?

Keep Step! (Galatians 5:25)

What does it mean to you to "keep step with the Spirit?" How do you do that?

The following pages
are for small group leaders.

Galatians: The Gospel for Everyday Life

Galatians 5:16-26 - The War Within (Part 2)

Small Group Leader Guide

Prepare: Things to do before your small group gets together

- **Remember** times in your life where God's Spirit worked through you to bless others. **Think** about how God has given you the opportunity to participate in His ongoing work in this world. **Thank God** in prayer for His Holy Spirit that fills you and works through you to touch the lives of other people.
- **Review** Galatians 5:16-26 to review the content of the biblical focus. **Invite** God to speak to you with a fresh application of His timeless truth. **Ask** God to open your eyes to see opportunity to share His love and truth with others, that you might also live by faith. **Submit** your heart to God's conviction, that you may be exhorted to experience anew the timely activity of God's Holy Spirit in your life.
- **Read** the provided [commentary on Galatians 5:16-26](#). **Preview** this material and engage with God's Spirit as He guides your study.
- **Pray** for your small group members by name, asking God to reveal a meaningful appreciation for their part in the family of God. **Seek** God's wisdom in leading your small group to apply God's word to their lives. **Commit** yourself to the Lord, that you would live what you teach.

To The Point - What to impart to your small group

Key Verse: And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:24, ESV)

Objectives: Through your time exploring this passage, your small group members will:

Discuss the fruit of the Spirit.

Explore what it means to crucify the flesh with its passions and desires.

Apply the principles of keeping step with the Spirit to everyday living.

Leader Guide Key:

Blue - hyperlinks to other resources

Red - Reading prompts

Green - Leader headers and *sample responses to questions*

Encounter: A suggested plan for your small group experience

Ice Breaker Idea - ID the Fruit

Prepare

Items needed:

- Nine fruit of different sizes and textures - Banana, apple, orange, grapes, grapefruit, kiwi, pear.
- Blindfold
- A plate/platter, knife and fork.

Say

I need three volunteers. We are going to play a fun game called ID the Fruit. The volunteers can't have any allergies to the fruits chosen.

Have the first volunteer identify the fruit by sight. Simply look at the fruit and name it.

The second volunteer is blindfolded and identifies the fruit by feel (after the fruit is rearranged).

The third volunteer is also blindfolded. The fruit is rearranged, and cut into pieces so it cannot be identified by shape. Someone feeds the blindfolded volunteer a bite of each fruit and identifies the fruit by taste.

Ask

Which was easiest? Which do you think was most difficult? Why?

(To the third volunteer): When you tasted the fruit, could you "see" it in your imagination?

Say

In our time together, we're moving into the more well-known areas of the book of Galatians, where Paul presents these manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. It is a list we know as the Fruit of the Spirit. And by reading the list, we can identify it, much like our first volunteer. And like our second volunteer, we can have some "tactile experience" with the fruit, when we are involved in moments where God's Spirit expresses these blessings to us through others ("Oh, this is what patience "feels like," etc). But like the third volunteer, we can also taste and see these spiritual fruit when God blesses others through you.

(proceed to biblical content)

ALTERNATE OPTION

Start the conversation - What makes the perfect fruit salad?

Say

Let's agree for the sake of this conversation, that the perfect fruit salad must have exactly nine different fruit in it.

Ask

Which fruit make it into the serving bowl, and which are set aside for tomorrow's smoothie?

(Allow for robust dialog.)

Say

Last time we met, we talked about the works of the flesh, which are the categories of ways that our selves, our bodies, our physical beings, express its rebellion against God. As we continue now, we explore the fruit of the Spirit, or what God manifests in your life as you live in the freedom He provides through faith. And like the perfect fruit salad, we are going to discover the harmony of the fruit of the Spirit, these categories and how they are related, cooperative, and expressed together. We are not striving to merely understand this wonderful experience better, but also to make the personal connection and application of how to see this fruit come to bear in your life.

Open in prayer for your time together.

One Yield (Galatians 5:22a)

Read aloud

But the fruit of the Spirit is...

Ask

What is subject/verb agreement of this sentence and why do you think this is significant?

The subject/verb agreement is singular, which means that the fruit being expressed is singular in nature. What follows is a list of different types of fruit, which would seem to indicate a plurality of fruit, but this is not the case. This means that every believer can expect to see each of these categories of Spirit-originated manifestations of goodness expressed in his faith life, and not merely some.

Why do you think it matters that this is the fruit of the Spirit, and not the results of your life of obedience to the law?

The fruit of the Spirit is an affirmation that it is God doing the blessing through the person. It is a demonstration of the effectiveness of the adoption of God in blessing His children. It is a manifestation of the life of faith, experiencing freedom as a person trusts in the living God. These things are not manufactured by human efforts in any way. While there may be humanistic efforts that resemble the fruit of the Spirit, and may even be called by the same name, they are not the same (human love vs. God's love, human patience vs. God-given patience, etc.).

The Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)

Say

As a counter-consideration to the 17 categories of the works of the flesh, God inspires Paul to list nine expressions of the singular fruit of His Holy Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace...

Ask

How would you define each of these first three?

Love is the selfless, sacrificial expression of benevolence toward others as an expression of relationship.

Joy is the uniquely Christian expression of expectancy of God to fulfill His promises.

Peace is the matter of being in good standing with God. Accordingly, you can be in good standing with others.

How do you see these as "fruit" or outgrowing of God's Spirit in you?

Love is the manner in which God relates with His creation. Our ability to selflessly love is really His loving others through us. When we live in the expectancy of God's fulfillment of His promises, it is impossible to not be optimistic and joyous. This is contradictory to the world's default perspective of pessimism, negativity, and cynicism. Being at peace with God permits a person to be fully available to God. Only by being at peace with God can a

person be truly free from the enslavement of the flesh.

What are ways you see God manifest love, joy, and peace in supernatural ways in your life?

Allow participants to share their experiences and insights.

Patience, kindness, goodness

How would you define each of these next three?

Patience is the ability to endure in the face of adversity. Kindness is the elevation of patience that causes the person to respond with calm gentleness in the face of adversity, expressing the assurance of God's sovereignty. Goodness is the extension of benevolence or goodwill in adversity or to those or oppose goodness. It is the expression of God's benevolent nature.

It has been said that when you pray for patience, God doesn't give you patience, but He gives you circumstances that require patience. Do you agree with this? What do you think it means? Why do you think it might be significant that this statement is true? How does this relate to kindness and goodness and the other fruit?

It means that patience isn't the gift. God's Spirit is the gift. God's ability to endure or long-suffer is merely the expression of His Spirit in the right way at the right time for the right purpose. When a person needs patience, what they really need is God's Spirit to lead and guide. It requires a submission of self and abiding in Christ. Just as this is true with patience, it is true with all spiritual fruit...that the expression of these fruit is not the objective matter of import. What matters is that God's indwelling Spirit is expressing Himself through the person who fully believes in Jesus by faith. .

What are ways you see God manifest patience, kindness, and goodness in supernatural ways in your life?

Allow participants to share their experiences and insights.

Faithfulness, gentleness, and self control

How would you define each of these final three?

Faithfulness is both loyalty and the quality of being full of faith. The two are related, in that God gives the faith to remain loyal to Jesus (and His gospel of grace), and to be full of faith (or to have faith at all) is because of God giving faith to the person. Gentleness is meekness, or having one's strength constrained by God's Holy Spirit, trusting Him to be sufficient rather than having to rely on personal resources of might. Self control is the willful submission of a person's self (or being) to the control of God's Holy Spirit.

What is the difference between having self control and giving control of one's self to God's Holy Spirit?

Self control is a matter of policing the self using worldly, religious, moral, cultural or traditional standards. It is unsustainable. However giving control of self over to God's Spirit is to trust Him to express Himself through the person, giving glory (attention) to Jesus, rather than to the self.

The Flesh, Crucified (Galatians 5:24)

Say

Paul summarizes this list with a statement about how the Spirit has victory over the flesh.

Ask

What does verse 24 mean to you in practical ways?

While answers will vary, it is important to help group members see that a key to experiencing victory over the flesh is to conscientiously remember that their material life (physical desires, worldly motivations) were crucified on the cross in Jesus. When He died for a person's sins, it was these very deeds that were covered by Christ's atonement. They are part of the judgement of death. By faith we identify those passions and desire as dead, as having no power. As having no effect. We must mortify the flesh to experience a vivacious life in the Spirit.

Keep Step! (Galatians 5:25)

Say

As a person recognizes that their carnal desires are crucified, they are free to live in the Spirit. This verse explains how.

Ask

What does it mean to you to "keep step with the Spirit?" How do you do that?

God's Spirit is forever progressing. He is never stagnant, and never retreating. This verse seems to indicate, then, that the means for living in freedom in Jesus is to daily, perpetually remain in an attitude of faith and trust and relationship with God. It means to continually resist the temptation to fall back into the law which can only lead to carnal living, either in licentiousness or in legalism. Keeping step with the Spirit means to experience life by faith in a continual manner.

Say

The fruit of the Spirit is the manifestation of God's goodness, provision, blessing and love to you and through you. In the "war within you," God's fruit will prevail if you keep step with the Spirit. If you walk in your flesh, you do not walk in step with the Spirit, and your works will be evident. Let's strive to encourage one another to walk by faith and not by sight. Let's close in a time of prayer for one another toward this noble aim.

Invite the group to pray for one another. Pray over any needs or issues that were shared in your time together. Pray over the content discussed in your small group, highlighting the aspects that God's Spirit revealed to your group as important. Confirm your plans for your next gathering!