

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for "the big question."*

Read Galatians 5:16-25 aloud.

1. What lifestyles are contrasted in this reading?

How do these two lifestyles relate to one another? Is it possible to pursue both? *"They are in conflict with one another."*

What would you say to a friend who wants to honor the Spirit, but who still enjoys aspects of the sinful nature?

How does this conflict keep us from being the people God wants us to be?

If you are confused about who you are supposed to be, it will always limit your effectiveness.

2. What actions characterize a life that gratifies the sinful nature?

Which sins seem out of place in such a nasty list?

Impurity, discord, jealousy, selfish ambition, and envy can have smaller consequences than some of the "biggies."

Why would "lesser" sins be mixed in with "big" sins?

What happens to people who pursue the sinful nature (21)?

How could we interpret the phrase "not inherit the kingdom of God"?

It could mean "miss out on eternal life in Heaven" but that is not the only possibility. A better translation might be "reign of God," which offers other options like missing out on a relationship with the king or missing out on an abundant life right now.

3. What is the fruit of the Spirit?

Why is "fruit" singular when there are multiple characteristics?

What is involved in the Spirit's fruit? What does each word mean?

The sinful nature "acts," but the Spirit bears "fruit." What is the significance of these two words? What do these words teach us about life in the Spirit vs. gratifying natural desires?

4. According to verse 24, what happens to the desires of the sinful nature when a person loves Jesus?

How long does it take for sinful passions to die?

Conversion takes a moment, and conversion takes a lifetime.

What is helping you fall more in love with Jesus and out of love with sinful desires?

5. What does it mean to "keep in step with the Spirit"?

How do we learn to keep in step with the Spirit?

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

Look at the fruit of the Spirit in 5:22-23.

Go around the circle and ask the group which part of the Spirit's fruit is evident in each person's life.

"In Joe's life I see patience and joy."

Which part of the fruit would you like for the Spirit to increase in your life?

Resources

Bible notes

- Some translations use the literal “flesh” for what NIV calls “sinful nature.” While sinful desires are so intense and frequent that they seem to inhabit every cell of our body, the human problem lies more with our will than with our skin, blood & bones. The notion that spirits are pure but material bodies are evil comes from Plato, not Jesus.
- Commentators have divided the list of vices into four categories:
 - Sexual acting out.
 - “Ritual” sins – idolatry and witchcraft.
 - Eight dealing with relationships.
 - Two dealing with abuse of alcohol.

You could highlight these categories, to keep it from being such a long laundry list. “The fact that Paul ends with ‘and such like’ shows us that the list is by no means exhaustive.” (Alan Cole)

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Play musical chairs, but play several songs (at least 3) at the same time.

What was difficult about this game?

How did the multiple tunes make it hard to hear the right tune?

Read Galatians 5:24-25 aloud.

Who are we trying to keep in step with? Who are we trying not to listen to?

Read 5:22-23 aloud.

What happens if you keep in step with the Spirit? What does it mean for him to bear fruit in your life?

What happens if you follow voices other than the Spirit?

What helps you stay in touch with the Spirit?

Recite the fruit of the Spirit. If a group member knows one of the “fruit” songs, sing it as a group to improve your memory.



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LIFE Group Guide

Galatians 5 – In step with the Spirit

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **contrasting life in the Spirit to following sinful desires.**

Kevin is leading us through a sermon series called “Overflow.” This week’s topic is learning to follow the Spirit’s lead, based on Galatians 5:16-25. This text will make a great life group discussion.

Leadership tip:

Share the leadership. Find roles for group members – assistant, apprentice, childcare coordinator, snack coordinator, full-time host, prayer journal keeper, “person-to-call-the-church-office-and-report-attendance” specialist, etc. Each time you give away responsibility, you equip someone to feel greater ownership within the group and you invite them to discover ways to use their gifts for God’s glory.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone’s spiritual pulse, and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ Gimme five...things not to do to a cat.
- ❖ What is your favorite fruit?
- ❖ What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “fruit of the Spirit”? Can you recite the fruit? How did you learn?