

HOLY SPIRIT



SHEPHERDCHURCH

LESSON 7: FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

WELCOME

Answer one of the following:

- Which is the ultimate test of your patience: heavy traffic, the DMV, assembling IKEA furniture, or _____ (you fill in the blank) and why?
- Share which fruit you like the most, which you like the least, and why.

Not to sound like a broken record, but please don't skip the Welcome section, even if your Life Group has been together for years! Questions/prompts like these may seem simple, but they give everyone a chance to relax, laugh, share something about themselves, and reconnect before jumping into the lesson. You may even learn something new about people you've known for a long time. Someone in your group may have had a long day, and a lighthearted conversation can help them put it aside so they can be fully present during your Life Group time together. This time also helps quieter Life Group members join the conversation early, makes it easier for new people to feel included, and creates a natural transition into the week's topic. And as always, keep it fun!!!

WORSHIP

Read **Psalm 100** and do the following as a Life Group:

- Identify the different ways the psalm invites us to respond to God.
- Then, ask each person to finish this sentence: "God, I'm thankful for..."
- Ask one person to close in prayer.

Psalm 100 reminds us that worship is more than singing. Worship is responding to God with joy, gratitude, praise, and confidence in who He is. As your Life Group identifies the different ways to approach God in Psalm 100, keep the conversation focused on worship rather than on a deep Bible study. Identifying the different responses prepares your group for the next part of the prompt exercise: "God, I'm thankful for..." Ask everyone to be specific in their answers, but don't pressure anyone to share more than they are comfortable sharing. Then either you or someone else should close in prayer and move on to the Word section.

WORD

Read **Galatians 5:17–25**.

1. What do *Galatians 5:17–21* and *Romans 7:15–23* reveal about the battle between our sinful nature and our desire to follow Jesus?

Guide the Conversation

These passages remind us of that which we Christians feel on a regular basis: we can genuinely want to follow Jesus and still experience a very real battle with sin. As your Life Group reads the two passages, ask them to pay attention to how Paul describes this struggle in both passages (e.g., the competing desires, actions, forces he mentions, etc.). It may help to clarify that experiencing temptation or struggling with sin doesn't mean the Holy Spirit is absent. It doesn't mean that you or whoever is struggling isn't growing. At the same time, Paul doesn't lighten the seriousness of sin. If people decide to be very authentic about their struggles, remind them there's no pressure to share in depth. They should feel free to share as much or as little as they want. Before ending, emphasize the need to depend on the Holy Spirit rather than just "trying harder" on our own.

Deeper Dive

Galatians 5:17–21 and *Romans 7:15–23* describe the very real battle happening inside Christians between our sinful desires and our desire to follow Jesus.

- In *Galatians 5:17*, Paul calls our sinful nature "flesh," from the Greek word *sarx*, which refers to our "fallen human nature and its desires apart from God."

Paul says the flesh "desires" what is contrary to the Spirit, while the Spirit desires what is contrary to the flesh. In other words, these are 2 opposing influences pulling in different directions.

Paul then lists the "acts of the flesh" in verses 19–21, including sexual sin, idolatry, jealousy, anger, selfish ambition, division, envy, and drunkenness. Take note of how many of these sins seriously damage relationships as the first-century Christians in the region of Galatia saw. They were dealing with conflict and division, so for them, *Galatians 5:19–21* wasn't a theoretical list. Paul wanted them to realize what happens when sinful desires shape the way they live. He also wanted them to understand that experiencing this struggle doesn't mean the Spirit is indifferent or has left them. As a matter of fact, the very fact that we struggle reminds us that the Spirit is at work within us!

In *Romans 7:15–23*, Paul describes this struggle from another angle... a much more personal angle. He writes about the painful gap between what he wants to do and what he actually does: "For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out" (v. 18).

- The Greek word translated "desire" is *thelō*, meaning "to will, want, or desire something."

Even though Paul desires and delights in God's law in his "inner being," he sees another "law" at work within him, "waging war" against his mind (vv. 22–23).

- The verb translated “waging war,” *antistrateuomai*, uses military imagery, showing that Paul understands his internal struggle to be intense.

Paul is teaching us that following Jesus doesn't instantly erase temptation and sinful desires. Christians are being transformed, but we haven't reached perfection yet. Why? Because our perfection isn't our job. We'll reach perfection when we're in God's presence because our perfection is His job (Romans 8:29–30; 1 Corinthians 13:9–12; 15:49–53; Philippians 1:6; 3:20–21; Colossians 1:28–29; 3:4; 1 John 3:2).

The Christian life is about loving God and people. It's about making disciples to His glory. It's about refusing to let the flesh control us and learning to walk, live, and keep in step with the Spirit (Galatians 5:16; 25), trusting Him to change our deepest desires, everyday choices, and transform our character as we become more like Jesus.

2. How do the 9 qualities of the Fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22–23**) impact our interactions with others?

Guide the Conversation

The fruit of the Spirit is not just about who we are becoming on the inside, but also about how other people experience us. And as the Holy Spirit grows these qualities in us, our relationships should increasingly reflect Jesus' character. Ask your Life Group to look carefully at all 9 qualities in Galatians 5:22–23 and discuss what each one might look like in everyday relationships with family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and even difficult people (see the “deeper dive” below for examples). You might ask which qualities help during disagreements, stress, disappointments, and conflicts. Ask them to look for specific examples of what love, patience, kindness, gentleness, or self-control might look like in a real conversation or situation.

Deeper Dive

The 9 qualities of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23 are deeply relational because they shape both who we are becoming and how others experience us.

- Paul calls them the “fruit” (*karpos*) of the Spirit, using the singular rather than “fruits,” which presents these qualities as the collective result of the Spirit's transforming work.

In Galatians 5:19–21, many of the “acts of the flesh” destroy relationships with the enemy's tools, including hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy. Then, in Galatians 5:22–23, Paul gives a counter-culturally different picture of life shaped by the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” As mentioned in the “deeper dive” under the previous prompt/question, Christians in the Galatia region had significant theological disagreements and relational conflicts, so for them, this “list” was much more than a collection of private virtues. The Spirit was producing a new kind of community where Christians could love instead of hate, pursue peace instead of division, show patience instead of anger, respond with gentleness instead of trying to overpower one another, and... well, you get the point.

All of this to say: one of the clearest places we should see the fruit of the Spirit is in the way we treat people (especially when relationships become difficult).

- Love asks, “What is best for this person?”
 - Joy keeps our circumstances from controlling the atmosphere we bring into a relationship.
 - Peace seeks reconciliation rather than unnecessary conflict.
 - Patience (the Greek word *makrothymia*) literally means being “long-tempered,” refusing to retaliate quickly when frustrated.
 - Kindness and goodness move us toward actively doing what benefits others.
- Faithfulness makes us dependable and trustworthy.
- Gentleness is strength under control (similar to humility and the “meek” in Matthew 5:5), allowing us to speak the truth without becoming harsh.
 - Self-control keeps our impulses, anger, words, and desires from controlling our responses.

The fruit of the Spirit is evidence of the Holy Spirit forming the character of Jesus in us (that formation process might move faster for some than others). As that happens, the people around us should notice (or start to, or continually notice) the different ways we listen, disagree, forgive, handle pressure, manage conflict, and love people (again, even the difficult ones)

3. How do you see Jesus displaying each of the 9 qualities in the Gospels?

When you look at the 9 qualities of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22–23, you’re really looking at a picture of Jesus. As such, your Life Group should identify specific moments in the Gospels when Jesus demonstrated love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, or self-control (try to find as many as you can). Don’t rush to provide the examples yourself. Give your Life Group time to recall examples from Jesus’ life, search the Gospels, use cross-references, help one another find passages, and/or whatever they need to do. Some qualities may be easier to identify than others, and even that can lead to a great discussion! As examples are shared, ask what each one teaches us about Jesus and how His example helps us better understand that specific fruit.

Below are some examples of Jesus demonstrating each of the 9 qualities, though there are many more examples than these. Consider NOT sharing the list below with your Life Group unless you really need to.

- Jesus showed love by having compassion for hurting and overlooked people, and ultimately by giving His life for us (John 15:13).
- He demonstrated joy even with the cross ahead of Him, rejoicing in what God was doing through His disciples (Luke 10:21).
- Jesus brought peace into fearful situations, whether He was calming a storm or telling His anxious disciples, “Peace I leave with you” (John 14:27).

- We see His patience over and over with disciples who misunderstood Him, doubted Him, argued about who was greatest, and still had so much growing to do.
- His kindness is unmistakable in the way He treated people others pushed aside, like when He welcomed children (Mark 10:13–16) or restored dignity to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1–11).
- He demonstrated goodness by consistently doing what was right and seeking what was best for others. Acts 10:38 actually summarizes His ministry by saying that Jesus “went around doing good.”
- His faithfulness is seen in His determination to carry out the Father’s will, even when obedience led Him toward suffering and the cross (Luke 22:42). His gentleness did not mean weakness.
- Jesus described Himself as “gentle and humble in heart” (Matthew 11:29), yet He could confront hypocrisy, speak hard truth, and still treat hurting people with incredible tenderness.
- And think about His self-control during His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. He was mocked, falsely accused, beaten, and insulted, yet He refused to retaliate and even prayed, “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34).

4. How does the Fruit of the Spirit help us to “live by the Spirit” and “keep in step with the Spirit” (**Galatians 5:25**)?

Guide the Conversation

When looking at Galatians 5:25 and the phrases “live by the Spirit” and “keep in step with the Spirit,” think about what they suggest about an ongoing relationship rather than a one-time decision. What pictures does each phrase bring to mind? What action words are in each phrase, and how are the action words connected? Connect those ideas back to the 9 qualities in verses 22–23, and discuss how growing in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control is evidence that we are following the Spirit’s direction. Help your Life Group understand that keeping in step with the Spirit is about staying close to Jesus, responding to the Spirit’s leading, and allowing Him to gradually shape our character.

Deeper Dive

Galatians 5:25 says, “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” Paul uses two important Greek words here.

- The word translated “live” comes from *zaō*, which means “to be alive or have life.” Paul’s point is that the Holy Spirit is not simply helping Christians become better versions of themselves. He is the source of our new spiritual life.
- But because the Spirit has given us life, Paul says we should “keep in step” with Him. That phrase comes from *stoicheō*, which means “to walk in line, follow in order, or keep in step.” Think about people marching together. You don’t decide your own pace and direction. You pay attention and adjust your steps to stay in line.

This fits the larger context of Galatians 5, where Paul contrasts the “acts of the flesh” in verses 19–21 with the “fruit of the Spirit” in verses 22–23. Paul’s answer to the Galatians’ theological and relational disagreement was not simply, “Try harder to behave.” He taught them to walk by the Spirit and allow the Spirit to reshape how they lived and treated one another.

That’s where the fruit of the Spirit comes in: we cannot manufacture spiritual fruit through willpower alone. The Holy Spirit produces it as we surrender to His direction and align ourselves with His work. At the same time, “keep in step” shows that Christians are not passive. We make daily choices to follow where the Spirit leads, reject the desires of the flesh, obey God’s Word, and stay close to Jesus. So, there’s an important balance here: the Spirit produces the fruit, but we choose whether we will keep walking with Him.

5. In the video lesson, Cole challenged us to pray, “Holy Spirit, what do You want to grow in me?” Choose one fruit of the Spirit from **Galatians 5:22–23** that you want to grow in this week. Share it with your Life Group, brainstorm ways to practice it, and then pray about it each day this week.

This final question/prompt moves the lesson from understanding the fruit of the Spirit to intentionally depending on the Holy Spirit for growth. After each person chooses a fruit of the Spirit, help each person brainstorm one or two practical situations where they can intentionally practice that fruit this week (especially in places where it may be difficult). Instead of “I’m going to be more patient this week,” be more specific: “I chose patience, so this week I’m going to work on not interrupting my spouse and pausing before I respond when I’m frustrated.”

Below are some more examples of how they could practice a fruit. Think about NOT sharing any of the examples below with your Life Group unless necessary, because you want them to think through this on their own.

- **Love:** Do something thoughtful for someone without being asked, spend time with someone who feels overlooked, intentionally show love to someone who is difficult to love, etc.
- **Joy:** Start each day naming three things you are grateful for, celebrate something good happening in someone else’s life, choose to praise God during frustrating situations, etc.
- **Peace:** Pause and pray before reacting to a stressful situation, step away from an argument, be calm during a tense moment, etc.
- **Patience:** Let someone else go first, listen without interrupting, stay calm during traffic or a long line, respond graciously when someone is running late, etc.
- **Kindness:** Send an encouraging text, compliment someone, help a coworker or neighbor with something, etc.
- **Goodness:** Do the right thing when no one is watching, speak up for someone being treated unfairly, etc.

- **Faithfulness:** Follow through on a promise, show up consistently for someone who needs you, finish a responsibility you have been putting off, etc.
- **Gentleness:** Listen before responding, correct someone privately (without embarrassing them), notice how your words might affect someone, etc.
- **Self-control:** Wait before sending an angry text or email, limit something that easily consumes too much of your time, pause before making an impulsive purchase, resist saying or doing something you'll regret, etc.

If you need to, remind everyone this is not about creating a spiritual checklist or trying harder to change themselves, but about asking the Holy Spirit to produce the character of Jesus in them. Before moving on to the Witness section of the lesson, consider having your Life Group members pray for one another, and ask everyone to pray Cole's question each day. Encourage them to look at the "Personal Reflection & Deeper Study for This Week" section, as the third question/prompt gives some ideas for keeping track of their focus on the specific fruit they chose.

****Shepherd Church's 2026 Revival coming up soon: October 17–21, 2026! Try your best to attend each night and try to sit together as a Life Group for at least one night of the Revival!

Because each night of the Revival gets very busy, make plans to attend each night. Talk about schedules and try to find at least one night that week to attend together as a Life Group.

WITNESS

With **Galatians 5:22–25** and **Matthew 5:16** in mind, who might see Jesus more clearly this week because of the way you serve, respond, or treat them?

This question helps your group connect the fruit of the Spirit to how other people experience Jesus in our everyday lives. Remind the group that Matthew 5:16 shows us that the way we live can point people toward God, so the goal is not simply to be nicer, but to allow the Holy Spirit to shape our character in ways that reflect Jesus to others. Ask everyone to think of one specific person they regularly interact with, such as a family member, friend, coworker, neighbor, classmate, etc., and consider how love, patience, kindness, gentleness, or another fruit of the Spirit could help that person see Jesus more clearly. If needed, try asking what serving, responding, or treating that person differently might actually look like this week.