



Empowered by the
Holy Spirit

Discovering ways to help you draw on the Holy Spirit for strength and encouragement

REVIEW

Recap on your experience of the challenge. Ask the following questions:

How did it go? Was it helpful?

If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question:

Where and how did you experience God last week?

SPIRIT LYFE FRUIT

As disciples of Jesus, we sometimes mistakenly measure our progress in terms of how often we pray, read the Bible, turn up for church or even how much we give. Instead we should focus on how patient we are, how much kindness we demonstrate, the evidence of peace, joy and love in our lives. These are the fruits of the Spirit which God promises to grow in us.

READ

† Galatians 5.16 – 26

God's Spirit and Our Own Desires

¹³ My friends, you were chosen to be free. So don't use your freedom as an excuse to do anything you want. ¹⁴ Use it as an opportunity to serve each other with love. All that the Law says can be summed up in the command to love others as much as you love yourself. ¹⁵ But if you keep attacking each other like wild animals, you had better watch out or you will destroy yourselves. ¹⁶ If you are guided by the Spirit, you won't obey your selfish desires.

¹⁷ The Spirit and your desires are enemies of each other. They are always fighting each other and keeping you from doing what you feel you should. ¹⁸ But if you obey the Spirit, the Law of Moses has no control over you.

¹⁹ People's desires make them give in to immoral ways, filthy thoughts, and shameful deeds.

²⁰ They worship idols, practice witchcraft, hate others, and are hard to get along with. People become jealous, angry, and selfish. They not only argue and cause trouble, but they are ²¹ envious. They get drunk, carry on at wild parties, and do other evil things as well. I told you before, and I am telling you again: No one who does these things will share in the blessings of God's kingdom.

²² God's Spirit makes us loving, happy, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, ²³ gentle, and self-controlled. There is no law against behaving in any of these ways. ²⁴ And because we belong to Christ Jesus, we have killed our selfish feelings and desires. ²⁵ God's Spirit has given us life, and so we should follow the Spirit. ²⁶ But don't be conceited or make others jealous by claiming to be better than they are.

Contemporary English Verse - CEV

REFLECT

Setting the scene:

- ▶ Paul founded the church in Galatia – a huge Roman province. Paul insisted that repentance and faith in Christ was all that was needed to receive this new life with God – but now some Jewish teachers were insisting that non-Jews needed to be circumcised and observe Jewish laws. Paul is not happy and suggests if that is true then why not go the whole hog and castrate yourself! (Gal 5.12)

- ▶ So, Paul in chapter 5, begins a magnificent dialogue on 'freedom in Christ'. Christ has saved us to set us free – not to live permissive, indulgent lives – but freedom to live as God's children. Paul contrasts two lists of behaviours – the first are the result of fallen human desires – flesh here is not bodily flesh but humanity when opposed to God. The second set are the result of faith in Christ and the impact of the Spirit upon our lives.
- ▶ 'Fruit' is an old metaphor – but one that was obvious

in the agricultural setting of Israel. Jesus also spoke about 'recognising a tree by its fruit' (Matt 7.16).

- ▶ What are the 'shockers' and 'blockers' for you in this passage?
- ▶ Which of the 'fruits' listed in v22 do feel is least evident in you? Which ones come more easily to you?
- ▶ Which of the fruits would you like to be most evident in your life right now?

RESPOND

Fruit challenge: This session opens up the 'fruit' of the Spirit which come to us through interaction with the Holy Spirit. As a group, create a challenge that will help you to develop more of these fruits.

Challenge ideas:
If you struggle to come up with your own challenge then why not try one of the following...

01 Meditation

Paul says we are to 'keep in step' with the Spirit, which helps the Spirit to grow in us. Set aside time this week to reflect on the passage from Galatians and keep in mind the different fruits mentioned as you go about your daily interactions with people. At the end of the day, take

some time to reflect on where you felt you demonstrated love, joy, peace etc and also where you struggled. Use this time of self-examination to help you become more aware of the Spirit at work in your life and use daily interactions to help you exercise each area. If you are a parent, reflect on how much patience you have. If you are under stress at work, how much self-control you demonstrate. Don't beat yourself up, just be aware and ask the Spirit to increase these fruits in you.

02 Get Dressed!

Colossians 3.12 invites us to 'clothe' yourself with love, gentleness, kindness, love etc. As you get dressed each morning this week – mentally attach

each one of the fruits to each piece of clothing you put on and ask the Spirit to help you be a conduit for each of the fruits today. Throughout the day, be an example of love, kindness, self-control, patience etc.

03 Chastity

Chastity refers to treating all people with dignity and respect. The last fruit mentioned in Galatians refers to 'self-control' – with reference to sexual behaviour. This week, commit to treating each person you meet as someone made in the image of God. You can practically practice this by intentionally focusing your eyes on their face rather than other parts of their body.

'The Holy Spirit empowers believers. God, as Spirit, dwells in each of us. It is our job to surrender ourselves to the awesome work of the Holy Spirit and to engage in activities that enable the Spirit to equip and empower us.' [Richard J Foster Streams Of Living Water](#)

Don't Forget

1. To record your experience of the challenge so that you can accurately share it with your lyfe group when you next meet. You might like to text/tweet each other throughout the experience!
2. Consider posting your created challenge on the lyfe facebook site for others to view.

More resources on 'Spirit Lyfe'

- [Listen to video interview with James Parker and Joe Davis](#)
- [Read article by John Ortberg on the Holy Spirit](#)
- [Read 'lyfe story' biographies on John Wimber and Jackie Pullinger](#)
- [Recommended reading - 'Come Holy Spirit' by David Pytches](#)

GROUP PRAYER:

You might like to commit to praying for each person in the group this week as you focus on being filled with the Spirit and developing the fruits described in Galatians.