



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK ONE

This week we are beginning a three-week study on the Fruit of the Spirit. Having spent most of the summer specifically praying for the Holy Spirit to invade our hearts, our homes, our church, and our world, we now see what the fruit of those prayers looks like. In the letter to the Galatians we read this, “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control.” Each day we will continue to pray together that the fruit of the Spirit might grow out of us. *If you are studying with your Providence Small Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide.*

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture. Follow the daily prayer prompt and then prayer this prayer together:

God, your Spirit is with us even when we fail to notice. In this season may we pay more attention to the life of the Spirit. We look for the fruit of a life empowered by your Spirit. Give us life and may it bear good fruit for your purpose. Today I look to cultivate love, joy, peace and patience. Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: GALATIANS 5.13-15

¹³You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” ¹⁵If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

- Paul challenges our common understanding of freedom. In the freedom we have been given by Jesus, we can choose the path of the flesh (worldly, selfish), or we can choose to live in the Spirit (the fruit of which is described later in the passage). What are some daily choices that you have to make between these two options?
- *Pray to live out of your freedom in a way that shows humility and love towards your neighbor.*

TUESDAY: GALATIANS 5.16-18

So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

- It is good that we notice the distinction between the desires of the flesh and the Spirit. Rather than ignore worldly desires, we can gain power over them as we give ourselves to the Spirit instead. Do you experience that conflict? How do you ordinarily handle this conflict?
- *Pray for a renewed awareness of the conflicting pull on your life—that you would claim the way of the Spirit.*

WEDNESDAY: GALATIANS 5.19-21

¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- This is a loaded list describing what Paul means by acts of the flesh (fleshly desires). It's a wide ranging list that encompasses personal acts as well as public acts. A helpful approach to this list would be to avoid using phrases like, "Well at least I don't have that problem." Instead examine your heart for the acts that can be stumbling blocks for you. Ultimately each act on this list has to do with the heart. When we participate in them, we are disconnected from our heart.
- *Pray for clarity and honesty as you look to shed the fleshly desires so that the Kingdom of God might come more and more into view.*

THURSDAY: GALATIANS 5.22

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience...

- Paul turns to the positive. As you are putting away these fleshly desires—here's what to look for instead. Because the fruit is already seeded in your heart! Have you seen an increase in any of these first four fruit? Love? Joy? Peace? Patience? *Pray for sprouts and growth of love, joy, peace, and patience in your heart.*

FRIDAY: 1 JOHN 4.7-10

⁷ Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

- At the heart of a life lived in the Spirit is love. The letter of 1 John gives a beautiful reminder of how love grows. Have you ever tried to invent love? Have you ever received the gift of love? How do they compare?
- *Pray with a focus on Jesus Christ. Pray that your love would flow from his love for you.*

SATURDAY: 1 JOHN 4.13-16

¹³This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love.

- Fruit is evidence of life. Fruit of the Spirit is evidence that God lives in us. One way that we profess that Jesus is the Savior of the world is by the way we love one another. That fruit reveals to the world who God is. God is love.
- *Pray for evidence of God's love to pour out of you. Pray that the love you show others would point them to Jesus.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- Pastor Jacob admitted that the fruit of the Spirit that he finds most challenging is patience. Which is most difficult for you to experience?
- The image of a gardener tending seeds and plants was central to this week's message. How are you tending to the fruit of the Spirit?
- How is love both the seedbed and one of the fruit of the Spirit?