

The Fruit of the Spirit

Cultivating Christlike Character

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BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Contents

<i>How to Use This Studyguide</i>	v
<i>Introduction</i>	1
1 Spirit Life: "Let Us Keep in Step with the Spirit"	3
<i>Galatians 5:16-26; John 15:1-8</i>	
2 Love: "Love Each Other as I Have Loved You"	9
<i>John 15:9-17; Mark 12:28-34</i>	
3 Joy: "In Him Our Hearts Rejoice"	13
<i>Psalm 33:1-11,20-22; 1 Peter 1:3-9</i>	
4 Peace: "The Peace of God... Will Guard Your Hearts"	19
<i>Romans 5:1-8; 12:16-21; Philippians 4:4-9</i>	
5 Patience: "Bear with Each Other"	25
<i>Matthew 18:21-35; Colossians 3:12-14</i>	
6 Kindness: "Be Kind and Compassionate to One Another"	29
<i>2 Samuel 9; Ephesians 2:4-7</i>	
7 Goodness: "The LORD Is Good"	33
<i>Psalm 100; Romans 7:18-20; 12:9,21</i>	

8 Faithfulness: "Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant" 39
Lamentations 3:19-24; Matthew 25:14-30

9 Meekness: "I Am Gentle and Humble in Heart" 43
Numbers 12:1-15; Matthew 11:28-30

10 Self-Control: "Add to Your Faith... Self-Control" 49
1 Corinthians 9:19-27; 2 Peter 1:3-7

Leader's Notes 55

Spirit Life: "Let Us Keep in Step with the Spirit"

GALATIANS 5:16-26; JOHN 15:1-8

Just for fun I once asked two friends, "How many fruits of the Spirit are there?" One said eight and the other replied nine. "You're both wrong," I countered. "It says 'the *fruit* of the Spirit *is*,' not the '*fruits* of the Spirit *are*.'" This may seem like hairsplitting, but it is significant.

If we think of *fruit* rather than *fruits*, we take away the freedom to be picky about the fruit we like and the behavior we choose. The fruit of the Spirit is to be seen not as a collection of unrelated fruits that can be selected according to personal preference, but rather as a composite description of our lives. Our all-around behavior is the direct result of a relationship with the living Lord who indwells his people by his Spirit.

1. Give an example of how your beliefs affected your behavior in a specific way today.

READ GALATIANS 5:16-26.

2. What conflict is described in verses 16-18?

In what ways have you experienced this struggle in your own life?

3. What are the results of living by the Spirit (verses 16,18,22,23)?

4. How might living by the Spirit affect the actions and attitudes Paul listed in verses 19-21?

5. How do you reconcile Paul's warning in verse 21 with his statement in verse 26, which shows that those in the kingdom also struggle with these sins?

6. Contrast *crucifying* the sinful nature with *living* by the Spirit. How are these two aspects of the Spirit life related?

7. What do you think is involved in keeping "in step with the Spirit" (verse 25)? How do we do this?

READ JOHN 15:1-8.

8. Who is the vine and the gardener, and who are the branches?

Why is this metaphor a good one for the truth Jesus was teaching?

9. What is significant about the reciprocal relationship emphasized in this passage (verses 4,5,7)?

10. How does Christ remain in us?

Name some ways we can remain in him.

11. What are some of the results of remaining in Jesus (verses 7-8)?

What might result if we fail to remain in him?

12. In what respect is a Christian responsible for the growth of fruit in his or her life?

13. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in this growth?