



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 52

## THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

*The fruit of the Spirit marks the lives of Christians.*

NOTE: THIS PASSAGE CONTAINS SEVERAL REFERENCES TO CIRCUMCISION. GIVEN THE KEY ROLE OF CIRCUMCISION IN THE BIBLE, IT MIGHT BE GOOD TO TACTFULLY EXPLAIN ITS MEANING TO YOUR GRADE-SCHOOL CHILDREN. ONCE YOUR CHILDREN LEARN TO READ, THEY WILL DISCOVER REFERENCES TO CIRCUMCISION THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE.



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### MONDAY

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#### **THE STORY: GALATIANS 5:1-15**

Christ has set us free from the law. Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians to correct problems in that local church. After Paul first brought the gospel, men who were “false brothers” came in distorting the gospel by claiming that a person needed to be circumcised to be saved (see Galatians 2:3-5). In this passage Paul reclaims the purity of the gospel by explaining that those who are believers in Christ are free from the law. In other words, we are accepted by God because of what Jesus did. We cannot earn our way to God by any work we do.

Paul goes on to say that all believers are free from the bondage of trying to earn salvation, but all remain bound to love one another. Because we are saved, we are free to obey without threat of punishment. In addition, we are not to use our freedom (from the slavery of the law) to indulge the flesh (sin). Instead we are to use our freedom to live for God by loving one another.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

Does the gospel require us to do any outward work to be saved? (No, there is nothing we can do, no work we could do, that can save us. None of us could ever be good enough to earn salvation. Salvation is a free gift that comes to us while we are sinners. What we must do is believe the gospel and accept the free gift of God's grace.)

What do we do to the gospel when we try to earn salvation by something we do? (Jesus paid the price for our sin. When we tell someone they have to do something extra [some work] to be saved, we are saying Jesus' work was not enough to save us. Jesus' sacrifice and death are sufficient to save us from our sin. Nothing needs to be added to what Jesus did. We obey out of worship and gratitude for what Jesus did, not to earn salvation or mercy from God.)

Do men still try to add works to the gospel today? (Yes, sometimes we feel better about ourselves if we are doing good things. We need to be careful that we do good things for the right reasons. All believers are accepted by God even though they continue to sin. We strive to obey in order to honor God, not to earn salvation. Salvation is completely free!)

**PRAY:**

Thank God that His salvation is free. Our sin -- past, present, and future -- was fully paid by Jesus on the cross. Because He died for us, ask God to help us to live for Him.

**TUESDAY****THE STORY: GALATIANS 5:16-23**

In this passage Paul directs our attention to the internal war that goes on in the life of every believer. The desires of the flesh (or the old, sinful nature) are in opposition to the desires of the Holy Spirit (which come to the new nature as a result of our conversion). We must fight the sinful nature because its desires seek

to entice us and drag us away (see James 1:14). Each day we have choices to make. The Spirit within us gives us power to overcome remaining sin inside us and live righteously for God. For every sinful temptation, we find within us the opposite holy desire. We are no longer bound to sin but instead can put sin down and follow the way of the Spirit. So we cultivate godly desires from the Spirit and “put to death” sinful desires from the flesh. Paul tells us that it is not complicated. Our sinful desires are obvious, and so is the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

Where do you see the fruit of the Spirit at work in the lives of your family members? (Parents, help your younger children here. Go through the list and help them remember when they saw these evidences of God’s grace in the lives of their brothers, sisters, and parents.)

Where do you see the desires of the flesh or sinful nature at work in your life? (Parents, help your children go through this list and confess their weaknesses. It would be good for you to set an example in leading in confession.)

**PRAY:**

Ask God to help each member of your family with their weaknesses. Thank God for the grace you see in each person as well.



**WEDNESDAY  
WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?**

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**THE STORY: GALATIANS 5:24**

Notice that Paul doesn’t call the fruit of the Spirit the fruit of the good man. The truth is that apart from Christ, none of us are good, and the only way we can demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit is if we have been given a new nature by God through the gospel of Christ. That is why Paul says in Galatians 5:24, “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its sinful passions and desires.” The gospel is the doorway to Christ, and He is our only help. Apart from the

sacrificial death of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, all our efforts fall short, and we would at best be doing good works with mixed, self-honoring motives. The Spirit of God is the one who changes our desires from sinful to truly righteous.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

What does it mean to belong to Christ? (When we surrender our lives to Christ and believe the gospel, we become a part of the body of Christ - the church. Christ comes to live in us by His Spirit and we become forever linked to Christ [see John 15:4-7 and 17:21].)

What does it mean to crucify the flesh (the sinful nature) with its passions and desires? (We need to be killing sinful desires. When we say “no” to sinful desires we are putting our sinful flesh to death.)

**PRAY:**

Ask the Spirit of God to empower you to recognize your sin and put it to death by refusing to indulge your sinful desires and walking away from sin.



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**THURSDAY**

**THE STORY: GALATIANS 5:25-6:1**

We need to help each other in our fight against sin. Although the desires of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are obvious, we need others in our lives to help us obey. Rather than becoming prideful in our accomplishments, we are called to humbly serve those who have stumbled. We are to restore them gently and be careful so that we do not stumble ourselves.

None of us are perfect. We are all sinners and continue to sin. Therefore, none of us perfectly walks in step with the Spirit. We all have areas where we stumble, and often we are blind to those areas ourselves. We need to help each other see these areas of compromise. What is difficult for us to see is usually easy for others to see. When we restore each other humbly, in a spirit of gentleness, bearing one

another's burdens, we fulfill the law of Christ in loving our neighbor as ourselves.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

Why is it important to restore someone in a spirit of gentleness? (We always need to keep in mind that we are fellow sinners who are also in need of forgiveness for the sins we commit. Apart from the grace of God we would be hopelessly fallen in sin. Humility demands we be kind and gentle. In addition, God has been kind and gentle with us, not treating us as our sins deserve.)

What does it feel like to be corrected harshly? (Parents, draw out your children here.)

When are you most tempted to be harsh in your corrections? (Parents, take the lead and confess first, then draw out your children.)

**PRAY:**

Ask God to help each member of your family bring corrections to one another with gentleness, always remembering the cross and how God has been gentle and forgiving toward us.



**FRIDAY  
ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS**

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**THE STORY: JEREMIAH 9:24-26**

Our boast can only be in knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. Jeremiah prophesied about a day when it would not be sufficient to simply be circumcised in the flesh. One would also need to be circumcised in his heart. In Romans 2:29 Paul tells us that circumcision of heart is the way true believers are marked. Physical circumcision pointed forward to the day when Jesus would die and circumcise the hearts of believers by the work of the Holy Spirit in regenerating them. This is

only possible through the work of Christ, the one who brought righteousness to the earth.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

What are we to boast in? (We are to boast that we understand and know God.)

How does this compare with Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 1:27-31? (Paul is directly referring to the passage in Jeremiah as his authority for directing all of our boasting to what Jesus has done for us.)

**PRAY:**

Ask God to help you boast only in the Lord and not in your own accomplishments apart from Him.