

Small Group Study Guide

“Walking By The Spirit” | Joyfully Spirit-Filled Series |
From Sunday October 6, 2019

Appetizer:

Question: What word pictures come to mind when you think of the word freedom?

Get someone to read Galatians 5:16-26 out loud to the group. Then choose another individual to read the passage through a second time, to allow the words to sink in.

Ask the group: What are some key words that stand out to you? Any repetitive words?

Most lists mentioned in the Bible are not exhaustive. Try to see if you can name some other acts of the flesh or fruit of the Spirit.

Main Course:

One of the first questions to ask when studying the Scriptures is: “*What did this passage mean to the original audience?*” Most of the Bible was written to a particular audience at a particular time for a particular reason. We apply the Bible best to our times when we understand what it meant to the original writers and listeners in their time.

One of the issues with the church in Galatia was that individuals with a strong Jewish leaning wanted to make sure all the new Christians were still significantly Jewish. This included, amongst other things, of encouraging the gentile men to practice circumcision in order to be considered part of the people of God. But Paul would have none of this. He told them not to change the Gospel. Because of Jesus, the law was no longer a necessary tool for salvation. This meant that if Christians had to be circumcised in order to become the people of God, Jesus died for nothing. This language was frustrating for the troublemakers. To them, if the law doesn't matter anymore, what keeps people living in obedience to God?

Question: Have you ever wrestled with the tension between the freedom found in Jesus Christ and the concerned with relaxed Christian behaviour? Share

some examples. In your experience, has the Christian community responded well to different views on behaviour?

One of the points mentioned in Sunday's sermon noted that contemporary spirituality has been divorced from community. In other words, people prefer an individual relationship with God over community responsibilities or caring for the needs of others. Do you agree? If so, why do you think this is the case?

Question: Paul mentions around 15 “acts of the flesh” in 5:19-21. The language of sin is not popular these days. Are any of the sins mentioned in the list offensive to you? Are there any in the list that you think Paul is making too big of a deal over? And are there any acts of the flesh that made the list that are an obvious issue in our society today?

Question: It was mentioned in the sermon that most of the sins in the list were sins committed against others. Why is this a significant observation?

Dessert:

The sermon defined the Spirit-filled life as when God's desires become our desires. How do you think this happens? And do you think Jeff was right by suggesting that we know simply by seeing the fruit of the Spirit showing up around us?

Reflection: We all face the battle between the ways of the flesh and walking by the Spirit. However, the passage suggests that walking by the Spirit takes away the desires of the flesh. Is this encouraging to you or discouraging to you? In other words, are you encouraged that we can have confidence that when we walk by the Spirit our desires of the flesh can disappear, or are you discouraged because, if this is true, you're really struggling to walk by the Spirit?

Question: If you could dream up a community of Spirit-filled people, what would it look like? Describe it.

Reflection: What steps can you take this week to be more aware of the desires of the Spirit?

Ephesians 3:16-21 was read over the congregation to end the service. Have someone read this passage as a prayer over the small group.