



LIFEgroup Study Guide

May 1 - May 29

LIFEgroup Study Guide

This study guide follows along with LBF Church's current Sunday message series, and is intended to be a supplement in your daily passionate pursuit of Jesus.

• *Watch last Sunday's message video:*
www.lbf.church/messages

Lesson 1: Truly Free

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Is your group stumped? Did you come to a question that you feel needs clarification? Our church isn't too big. Contact Pastor Dan with your questions.

• *Contact Pastor Dan:*
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Walk By the Spirit

A Series through Galatians 5:13-26

The Holy Spirit is almost certainly the most mysterious person in the Godhead. We have a context for talking about the Father and the Son, but we sometimes slip into thinking of the Spirit as some sort of force. Far from being an impersonal force, the Holy Spirit is a personal being who can be grieved, can be quenched, and can be lied to. And Scripture says that he teaches, he reminds, he empowers, and he gives gifts.

The question before us in this series is this: How do we respond to the Holy Spirit? The answer given in Galatians 5 is that we respond to him by walking with him. In this series we will focus in on what it looks like to walk by the Spirit.

WALK BY THE Spirit



Truly Free

Lesson 1 • May 1 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Freedom is given by God so that we can serve others.

Introduction

We love freedom! Especially in the United States. We prize our freedom, fight for our freedom, and defend our freedom.

Sometimes we are reminded, though, that our freedom was not free. We stand on the shoulders of people who have paid for our freedom with their blood. Most of them would be glad that we have the freedoms we have today, but it is likely that some of them would bemoan the foolish ways we use our freedom. They might say, “I want you to have freedom of speech, but I wish you wouldn’t use this freedom in order to say horrific and hurtful things to other people.”

As believers in Jesus, we have freedom. We have freedom from the different rules and regulations that marked life for people in Old Testament Israel. We are free from these regulations because Jesus fulfilled them in his life, his death, and his resurrection. Our Christian freedom was not free. Jesus shed his blood in order to purchase our freedom. And while he wants us to revel in this freedom, he knows that we can misuse the freedom he bought for us. We can mistreat people or indulge our instincts under the banner of “Christian liberty.”

In this lesson we look at what our Christian freedom means, and what it looks like to use our freedom for its proper purpose.

Getting Started

1. How do you define the word “freedom”?

2. Name three ways that people can use their freedom well, and three ways they can misuse their freedom.

Digging In

Read Galatians 5:13-15.

13 You, 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.

14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” **15** If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Read the following verses. In what sense are believers in Jesus free?

Colossians 2:16-23

Romans 7:4-6

5. How can freedom be misused in order to indulge the flesh?

6. How can freedom be used to serve others?

7. How does the command to love your neighbor serve as a command that encapsulates all other commands?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Paul says that the whole law is fulfilled in the command to love your neighbor. But different people might define love differently. How can believers make sure that we have a proper understanding of how love guides us in daily decisions?

Connecting To The Gospel

9. Read Colossians 2:13-15. What stands out to you most about what Jesus did in order to purchase your freedom?

Taking It To Heart

10. In what ways have you been flippant about your Christian freedom? What impact has your flippant attitude had?

11. What opportunities has God provided for you to use your freedom to serve others?



The Battle Inside

Lesson 2 • May 8 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

Believers have a daily choice between the Holy Spirit and the flesh.

Introduction

We tend to believe that someone is crazy if they say that they hear voices in their head. We want to get that person professional counseling or medication. And yet there is a sense in which we all would acknowledge that we hear voices in our head. One voice tells us to calmly forgive the person who wronged us, while the other voice tells us to strike back in revenge. One voice tells us to be patient, while the other voice tells us to demand our way. One voice tells us to speak up courageously, while the other voice tells us to stay quiet in self-protection.

We all hear these voices. We all feel the pull to do what we believe to be right, and yet we also feel the pull to do what will make us feel good in the moment. The yearning for instant gratification is what the Bible calls “the flesh.” It is the part of ourselves that wants to get us to indulge our appetites and instincts, regardless of the consequences. And yet Christians are also indwelt by the Holy Spirit. He is the one who prods us to trust God, to love others, and to exercise self-control.

Because of the Spirit and the flesh, we have a battle going on within us.

This lesson walks through a passage that describes the internal battle that every believer in Jesus faces. And it gives powerful insight into what's at stake when we respond to this battle between the Spirit and the flesh.

Getting Started

1. Describe what it's like for you when you are experiencing an internal battle between doing what's right and doing what's wrong.
2. What kinds of things do you do in order to try to keep yourself from giving in to selfish and sinful temptations?

Digging In

Read Galatians 5:16-18.

16 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.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Look up the following passages. What does each say about the role that the Holy Spirit plays in the lives of believers?

John 14:26

Acts 1:8

Romans 8:14-17

1 Corinthians 2:11-16

5. What do you think it means to “walk by the Spirit”?

6. According to verse 17, why will you not gratify the desires of the flesh if you walk by the Spirit?

7. Focus on verse 18. How is being led by the Spirit different from simply obeying a set of laws?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. There are multiple ways to understand Paul’s statement in verse 17: “so that you are not to do whatever you want.” What do you think this phrase means?

Connecting To The Gospel

9. How is Paul’s guidance in these verses different from the moral instinct that many of us have to simply tell ourselves (and others) to behave better?

Taking It To Heart

10. What internal battle is raging within you, and what is your strategy for resisting temptation?

11. What practical steps can you take to walk by the Spirit?

WALK BY THE *Spirit*



The Acts of the Flesh

Lesson 3 • May 15 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

When we walk in the flesh, the results are disastrous.

Introduction

There's a famous saying that goes like this: "Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an action and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny." The quote illustrates that the conduct of our lives (whether good or bad) is not simply the result of our choices in the moment. Rather, our conduct is the result of a number of choices along the way. In other words, I am not the way I am because I woke up this morning and decided to be this way; I am the way I am because of a lifetime of choices that led me to today.

In this lesson we look at a passage that is unpleasant to read. In this passage, Paul speaks of the "acts of the flesh," which are characteristics of a life in which the flesh has full reign. If a person continually indulges their desire for instant gratification, then the result will be a life marked by what Paul describes in these verses.

When we read Paul's list, many of us will have the instinct to think that we must try hard to stop doing the things he names. We will be tempted to tell ourselves, "Stop being jealous. Stop committing sexual immorality. Stop acting out in rage. Stop getting drunk." But that is not what Paul is going for. Instead of giving us a list of what not to do, Paul is giving a list of what we will do if we indulge the flesh. In other words, our first thought should not be to try to stop the "acts," but to go back several steps and change what is leading to them manifesting themselves in our lives.

Getting Started

1. Name a bad habit that you have. Describe how it became a habit.

2. If you are a Christian, then you are saved by God's grace and not by good works. Why then should it be important to you to live in obedience to Jesus?

Digging In

Read 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.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. In this passage Paul gives a list of “the acts of the flesh” which serve as a contrast to what he later calls “the fruit of the Spirit” (verse 22). How then does this list relate to what Paul said in verses 16-18 about the battle between the Spirit and the flesh?

5. What common threads do you see as you look at the list that Paul gives in this passage?

6. As you look at Paul’s list of “acts of the flesh,” what two or three stand out to you as issues in your own life?

7. According to verse 21, what is the final result of living out the acts of the flesh?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Paul says that those who practice the acts of the flesh “will not inherit the kingdom of God.” How do you think his statement here connects to the fact that he teaches elsewhere that nothing (not even our own sin) can separate believers from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39)?

Connecting To The Gospel

9. Second Corinthians 5:17 speaks of believers being new creations in Christ. While we are not saved by our good behavior, how does becoming a believer in Jesus relate to our good behavior? (If you need help, look up Romans 6:1-2.)

Taking It To Heart

10. When you think of the role that the “acts of the flesh” are playing in your life, what does this tell you about how God is calling you to respond?

11. In what tangible ways can you choose to walk by the Spirit, so the flesh does not have so much influence over you?

WALK BY THE *Spirit*



The Fruit of the Spirit

Lesson 4 • May 22 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

When we walk by the Holy Spirit, the results are supernatural.

Introduction

In John 15, Jesus gave an illustration of him being the vine and his disciples being the branches. He told them that they would bear fruit if they stayed connected to him. And he warned them that if they were disconnected from him, they had no hope at all of bearing fruit.

In a similar way, in the passage accompanying this lesson, Paul speaks of the fruit of the Spirit. The idea is not that believers are meant to find a way to conjure up the virtues Paul lists. The idea is that by walking in the Spirit, these virtues will show up in the lives of believers. The virtues are not an aspirational checklist. Instead, they stand as a way for us to test ourselves to see if we are walking with the Spirit. If we are, then these virtues ought to mark our lives. After all, the Spirit will bring them about.

As you walk through this lesson, take the time to consider the results of living a Spirit-filled life. And reflect on whether or not your life resembles what Paul describes as the fruit of the Spirit.

Getting Started

1. Share about an area of your life that has been transformed through the Holy Spirit working in you.

2. If you were looking for someone who could help you grow in your faith, what kinds of characteristics would you be looking for?

Digging In

Read Galatians 5:22-23.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. By referring to this list as the “fruit of the Spirit,” Paul is conjuring up the idea of a tree branch and its fruit. What does this tell you about how this fruit comes about?

5. What common threads do you see that unite the nine virtues that Paul lists?

6. Of the nine virtues on this list, which one stands out to you the most, and why?

7. What do you think is meant by the final statement: “Against such things there is no law”?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. Fruit grows, not because a branch tries hard to make fruit, but because it naturally bears fruit when connected to the tree. How much of the Christian life do you think is intentional effort and how much is God doing the work in us?

Connecting To The Gospel

9. Think of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus. How do you see the fruit of the Spirit demonstrated in him?

Taking It To Heart

10. In what tangible ways can you reorder your life so that you are more fully walking by the Spirit?

11. In what ways can you thank God because of the fruit that he has brought about in you?

WALK BY THE *Spirit*



Keep Up!

Lesson 5 • May 29 • by Dan Franklin

Main Point

The Holy Spirit is moving, so keep up!

Introduction

A couple of years ago I went on a hike with a friend. I think of myself as being in pretty good shape, but my friend seemed to be cruising through the steep parts of the hike while I was struggling. I came to realize that I was hiking much faster than I would on my own for one simple reason: I was trying to keep up.

Have you ever tried to keep up with someone who was moving with intention? Doing so keeps you from taking your time and getting distracted. In order to keep up, you need laser focus. And to keep in step, you also need to keep your eyes on the one you're following.

In this final passage from Galatians 5, we get reminded that the Holy Spirit is not passive; he is active. He is going somewhere. And if we are going to walk in the Spirit, we will need to keep up.

(The good news, though, is that the Holy Spirit will never leave us in the dust, but will always empower us to keep in step with him.)

Getting Started

1. Share a story about a time when you were in some way trying to keep up with someone else.

2. How do you know if something you're doing is your idea or the Holy Spirit's idea?

Digging In

Read Galatians 5:24-26.

24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. **26** Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

3. What stood out to you in this passage? If you listened to the sermon, feel free to share something significant that you remember.

4. Verse 24 says that believers in Jesus have crucified the flesh. Since it is still possible for believers to walk in the flesh (verse 16), what do you think verse 24 means?

5. What ideas come into your mind when you hear the phrase “keep in step with the Spirit”?

6. In what ways does the negative command in verse 26 shed light on what it means to keep in step with the Spirit?

7. Why do you think Paul so frequently describes a believer's interaction with the Holy Spirit as a "walk"?

Wrestling With Big Ideas

8. What do you think is the practical difference between trying to get the Spirit to walk with us versus trying to keep in step with the Spirit?

Connecting To The Gospel

9. Paul says that believers have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. How then do our lives of obedience relate to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ?

Taking It To Heart

10. In what ways, right now, do you sense that you are being called to keep in step with the Holy Spirit?

11. What habits or attitudes do you think are keeping you from walking with the Holy Spirit more fully?