

Galatians *Freedom in Christ*

7. Living by the Spirit

Galatians 5.16-25.

Aim: To recognise that our old sinful nature still holds a very real temptation for us and that we must be active in fighting this. But as we live out a life of faithfulness to God, the Holy Spirit grows in us fruit.

Note to leaders:

Galatians is about the freedom of a life lived in Christ. The Spirit is there to help us. This passage makes us face up to sin in our lives but there is also a lot of hope and promise. The gift of the Holy Spirit works with us and guides the path before us. Allow people to be challenged but also reiterate that it is the Spirit that works this transformation within us. People should leave encouraged rather than condemned!

To Start with:

Ask people to discuss,

'If you were a fruit, what fruit would you be and why?'

(N.B This is just a bit of fun - nothing too meaningful, others in the group may have suggestions for each other!)

Or discuss 'either/or' of the following around the room. (This is just a conversation starter/ get to know each other game, feel free to add your own.)

- Fruit or Veg?
- Apples or bananas?
- Pizza or pasta?
- Sea or mountains?
- Book or movie?
- Cats or dogs?
- Quiet night in or Wild night out?

Engaging with the Text:

Read Galatians 5:16-25.

1. What do you think Paul means by the 'flesh' and the 'Spirit'?
2. If we are free, as we discussed last week, then why then does our sinful nature still hold such a temptation for us?
3.
 - a. Get people to put the behaviours listed in v10-21 into categories.
 - b. How relevant would you say they are for our society today? What does that tell you?
4. How does Paul say we should deal with these sinful desires? What does that practically mean and how do you react to that idea? *(You might like to explore some specific examples of how to break out of some of these sorts of sin patterns, if people have experience of that and feel able you might encourage them to share how they got free.)*

Read v.22-23.

5.
 - a. What do you understand the fruit of the Spirit to be? *(N.B. It's **fruit** - not **fruits**!)*
 - b. Why do you think Paul uses the metaphor of fruit?
 - c. How does this fruit grow in us?
6. Looking at the list - choose one of the examples of what this fruit looks like:
 - a. Who do you know that demonstrates it? What does it look like?
 - b. If it were fully cultivated in your character how would that affect your life? Particularly those areas of sin you struggle with? (e.g. how would it affect your relationships, work, ministry, thinking etc)

Spend some time praying either about those things that need crucifying in people's lives or the fruit of the Holy Spirit people want to ask God to grow in them.

