

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Leader's Notes

The goal is not necessarily to get through every question. Give priority to the passages and the questions that encourage **meaningful conversation** and **personal application**.

Filled With the Spirit

Purpose: To **understand** what Scripture teaches about the Spirit's indwelling and filling, **recognize the difference** between living according to the flesh and walking by the Spirit, and **identify practical ways** to depend on Him in everyday life.

Opening Question (5–10 minutes)

When you hear someone described as a "Spirit-filled Christian," what comes to mind? How does that compare with what Paul describes in Galatians 5?

Study 1 — The Spirit Who Lives Within Us (15 minutes)

READ: ROMANS 8:9–11, 15–16

Observation — What does the passage say?

1. What promises does Paul make concerning the Spirit's presence and work in verses 11 and 15–16?

Interpretation — What does it mean?

3. How does knowing that the Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead lives within believers change our understanding of the Christian life?
4. What is the significance of the Spirit assuring us that we are God's children? How might that differ from trying to earn God's approval?

Application — How does this affect my life?

5. In what circumstances are you most likely to forget that God is present and actively working in your life?
6. How might knowing you are God's adopted child change the way you respond to insecurity, failure, or fear?

Study 2 — Be Continually Filled With the Spirit (15 minutes)

READ: EPHESIANS 5:18–21

Observation — What does the passage say?

1. What attitudes and actions characterize Spirit-filled believers in verses 19–21?

Interpretation — What does it mean?

3. If every Christian already has the Holy Spirit, why does Paul command believers to continually be filled with Him?
4. Why do you think Paul connects being filled with the Spirit to worship, gratitude, encouragement, and our relationships with others?

Application — How does this affect my life?

5. What tends to influence or control your responses when you're frustrated, anxious, offended, or under pressure?

6. What might it look like to invite the Spirit's influence into an ordinary but challenging situation this week—at home, work, church, or in a difficult relationship?

Study 3 — Walking by the Spirit, Bearing His Fruit (20 minutes)

READ: GALATIANS 5:16–26 (Rob will deal with this passage in a few weeks so don't spend too much time here or skip it altogether for the sake of time is needed)

Observation — What does the passage say?

1. What conflict does Paul describe between the flesh and the Spirit in verses 16–17?
2. What two instructions does Paul give in verses 16 and 25?

Interpretation — What does it mean?

4. Does walking by the Spirit mean Christians will no longer struggle with sinful desires? How does the passage help explain the ongoing struggle?

Application — How does this affect my life?

5. Think of a recent situation involving conflict, disappointment, temptation, or anxiety. How might your response have been different if you had consciously depended upon the Spirit?
6. What is one practical way you could "keep in step with the Spirit" in a relationship or situation you're currently facing?

Bringing It Home (10–15 minutes)

READ: ROMANS 8:5–6, 13, 26

Group Reflection

Paul connects life in the Spirit with what we set our minds on, how we respond to sinful desires, and our dependence on God's help.

Discuss these three questions together:

1. **Our thinking:** What tends to dominate your thoughts when life becomes difficult? How could God's Word help you redirect your attention toward what is true?
2. **Our responses:** What is the difference between trying harder to become patient, loving, or self-controlled and actively depending on the Spirit to produce those qualities?
3. **Our dependence:** What habits or practices could help us become more attentive and responsive to the Spirit throughout an ordinary day?

Personal commitment for this week

This week, I want to intentionally practice:

Begin each morning with a brief prayer of dependence on the Spirit.

Pause before reacting to frustration or conflict and ask what a Spirit-led response would look like.

Meditate on Galatians 5:22–23 and identify one area where I need to grow.

Bring a particular fear, worry, or temptation to God in prayer rather than trying to handle it alone.

Closing Prayer: Invite group members to share one area where they need the Spirit's help. Pray for a greater awareness of His presence, willingness to obey His leading, and the fruit of Christlike character in everyday relationships.

Leader's Notes

The goal is not necessarily to get through every question. Give priority to the passages and the questions that encourage meaningful conversation and personal application.

Three ideas to keep in view:

- **Indwelling vs. filling:** Romans 8:9 establishes that every genuine believer has the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 calls believers to ongoing Spirit-filled living. Be sure no one suggest that the Spirit repeatedly leaves and returns.
- **Dependence vs. passivity:** Walking by the Spirit involves real choices, repentance, prayer, and obedience. It is not waiting for God to do everything while we do nothing.
- **Grace vs. guilt:** The goal isn't for people to leave feeling condemned for their lack of spiritual maturity. It is for them to recognize the gracious presence and power of God already at work within them.

One especially useful question to return to throughout the discussion is:

“What would dependence on the Holy Spirit actually look like in this situation?”

That moves the discussion beyond theological knowledge toward the everyday relationships, conflicts, fears, and choices where Spirit-filled living becomes visible.