



# Fruit of the Spirit Bible Studies

2021



Watch the following video from the Bible Project for an overview of the letter to the Galatians.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmx4UjRFp0M>

## Introduction to Galatians & Fruit of the Spirit Studies

The book of Galatians is a passionate plea by Paul to the church in Galatia to not to drift from the Gospel. False teachers (Judaizers) insisted that the Christians followed the Jewish Law *in addition* to placing their faith in Jesus. They claimed this was necessary to be saved.

Paul's letter quickly reveals his shock at what's happening in the Galatian church. He argues for the legitimacy of the Gospel he had already taught them (1:10-2:14), pointing to the source of the Gospel (Jesus himself) (1:10-24); and the Gospel's endorsement by the Apostles in Jerusalem (2:1-14).

Paul makes his argument through various contrasts, that merge into each other:

- a) Faith and 'works of the Law' (2:15- 3:15)
- b) Promise and Law (3:15-3:29)
- c) Freedom and Slavery (4:1-5:15)
- d) Spirit and Flesh (5:16-26)

From Galatians 'the True Gospel' is the merging of Faith, Promise, Freedom and Spirit. The 'False Gospel' is a merging of: Works, Law, Slavery and Flesh.

The first two studies unpack the contrasts to set the foundation for growing the 'fruit of the Spirit'.

## Study 1: Living by the Law vs Living by the Spirit

### Talk About

A meritocracy is a system where people advance because of their talent, effort, and achievement, rather than their wealth or social class. What have been some of your experiences of merit or meritocracy in your life and how did this impact you?

### Scripture

Paul wrote this letter to the Galatians to correct a problem that was spreading through the church. Some believed that to be a follower of Jesus, you also had to follow the Jewish law. In this study we'll explore Galatians 2:15-3:14 where Paul explains why living by the law is incompatible with the gospel.

### Observation

#### Read Galatians 2:15-21

1. What do you personally think it means when we say someone is "justified"?

Note: The biblical term "justified" is a legal term which means "declared innocent" or "not-guilty".

2. Paul explains there is one way that will **never** lead one to be "justified". How would you describe this one way?



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Note: "Legalism is any attempt to gain acceptance or forgiveness from God through our own works or merits".

3. According to this passage, what is the **ONLY** way that any one will ever be 'justified' before God?
4. If we believe we can be made right with God through the law, what happens to the grace of God in our lives and what does that mean for the sacrifice Jesus made? (v21).

### Read Galatians 3:1-9

5. In verses 2-5, Paul asks the following rhetorical questions (See below). Discuss each of the following. What is the answer Paul is expecting and why?
  - Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?
  - Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?
  - Does he who supplies the Spirit to you do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith?
6. In verses 6-9, Paul uses the example of Abraham to illustrate that righteousness does not come by works of the law. What led God to declare that Abraham was righteous? Who are the true children of Abraham? Why do you think this is important?

### Read Galatians 3:10-14

7. In verses 10-12, Paul explains that it's not possible to rely on/live by the law and live by faith simultaneously. In your own words, why are these two ways of living incompatible with each other?
8. Through Jesus death, He accomplished two amazing things for us:
  - a) Redeemed us from a curse. Describe the curse Jesus rescued us from.
  - b) Made a way for us to receive a blessing. Compare this blessing/promise to the curse.

What does this reveal to you?

### Apply

9. What are some ways you've noticed 'legalism' seep into your life or community?  
Where do you think it comes from?
10. What are steps you can take to cooperate with the Spirit to drive out legalism and live by faith?

### Prayer

Ask the Spirit to reveal any legalism in your life, if things are revealed, confess them to God and ask for His freedom.

Pray for your life group/discipleship group and also for our congregation, that the Spirit will transform us and set us free from all legalism, and lead us into life.



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## Study 2: Flesh Vs Spirit (Gal 5:16-26)

### Talk about

Share your best/worst gardening (growing plants) story.

What do you think leads to successful gardening?

### Introduction

Up to this point, Paul argues in this letter that we are saved (justified) by faith (our response) based on the promises of God (God's gift), represented by the Gospel of Jesus. We are not saved by 'works of the Law' (our response) based on the Mosaic Law (God's gift), represented by circumcision.

The natural question then is: "If being a Christian means being free from the legal and moral obligations set out in the mosaic law, how should we live? How do we be 'holy'? Won't this freedom from law mean that we become even more sinful?"

This study of Gal 5 seeks to address these questions. By 'walking by the Spirit', a believer is able to grow in holiness and at the same time, avoid legalism.

**Scripture: Read Gal 5:16-26**

### Observation

1. What words/phrases/ideas/concepts are repeated throughout the passage?
2. Which phrases are commands/instructions?
3. What do you think is the main contrast in this passage? (Locate the "But").
4. What images or metaphors does Paul use?

### Interpretation

5. What do you think is the main command of the whole passage? (v16, v25)
6. What outcome is:
  - a. Avoided by obeying the main command (v16, v19-21)?
  - b. Promised from obeying this main command? (v16, v22-23)
7. The fruit of the Spirit is a sample description of what 'walking by the Spirit' will result in. It is not a "to do" list to legalistically follow.  
What comes to mind when you think about 'fruit' and 'growing fruit' and how does this encourage us in our 'pursuit of holiness' without us falling into legalism?



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8. What encouragement do you get knowing that:
  - a. The phrase “and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” is not a command, but a result (promise) of ‘walking in the Spirit’ (v16);
  - b. The Spirit restrains the desires of the flesh (v17)
  - c. The ‘flesh crucified’ is something that has happened in the past (v24); and
  - d. Paul assumes the Galatians are already ‘living by the Spirit’ (ie. made alive by the Spirit, given life by the Spirit (cf. Gal 3:2-5), when he encourages them to ‘keep in step with the Spirit’.
  
9. What comes to mind when you think about ‘walking by/with someone’, and ‘keeping in step with someone’? How does this encourage us in our holiness?

### Application:

10. What are some practical ways that you personally want to commit to in response to the encouragement to ‘walk in the Spirit’ and ‘keep in step with the Spirit’?

### Prayer:

Thank God for the Holy Spirit who:

- Restrains the desires of the flesh in our struggle against sin;
- Promises that ‘we will not gratify the desires of the flesh’ and will produce the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ in our lives – as we walk in the Spirit, and keep in step with Him.

Ask the Spirit to help you live out your commitment to ‘walk in the Spirit’.