**Learn in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Who is the Holy Spirit?**

But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! ([Galatians 5:22–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga5.22-23))

*In His most famous sermon (*[*Matthew 5–7*](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt5-7)*), Jesus taught us to love our enemies, give to the needy, and put God’s kingdom first in our lives. As His words outlined the high expectations of those in His kingdom, it doesn’t take us long to recognize a problem—our behavior. We simply can’t perfectly meet this standard on our own. It’s not in us to naturally love those who mistreat us. We often are too selfish to be generous. And we spend a lot of time building the kingdom of our own life, rather than God’s kingdom*.

*So, why did Jesus command us to live a life He knew full well we can’t live on our own? The key is that Jesus never asked us to live the Christian life on our own. In fact, Jesus spent significant time teaching about His indispensable gift for living the Christian life: the Holy Spirit. Jesus told His followers it was good for them for Him to go away because the presence of Holy Spirit would be coming into their life. God in the flesh was a wonderful gift, but God living inside of us is even better. When God lives inside us, He can empower us, help us grow, and equip us in a unique way. Let’s look closer at how the Holy Spirit helps us grow*.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|

|  |
| --- |
| *First time leading* Learn *for Adults? Check out the* [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

 |

*To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:* [*BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads*](http://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What are some things in your own life that you know you need help to accomplish? |

If we claim we have a relationship with God, then we’re required to live our life as Jesus did ([1 John 2:6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Jn2.6)). What we must discover early in our journey with Jesus is that no one lives *for* God *without* God. We must humbly recognize our dependence on the Holy Spirit in us and the strength He gives us for life.

As followers of Jesus, we’re all on a lifelong journey of becoming more like Him. Today we’ll look at the key to success in this journey. As we’ve already noted, it isn’t us; instead it’s who we have within us. It’s God’s own Spirit living in us that transforms us as we grow.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, think about your answer to this question: What’s one spiritual fruit or character trait that you’ve seen the Holy Spirit grow in someone else’s life? Did it happen quickly or slowly over time?



|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What’s one spiritual fruit that you’ve seen the Holy Spirit grow in someone else’s life? Did it happen quickly or slowly over time? |

**Consider What the Bible Says**

When writing to the young churches in the region of Galatia, Paul taught how we can know the Holy Spirit is helping us become like Jesus and live like Him. This list of what he called the “fruit of the Spirit” is essential for us as we follow Jesus.

Just as the fruit of every tree shows it’s healthy, the fruit of every Christian does the same. When our life is observed by others, what fruit do they see? If they see the fruit of the Spirit, we are indeed becoming like Jesus. Let’s read what Paul shared.

**The Holy Spirit Grows Our Character**

Read [Galatians 5:22–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga5.22-23).

All healthy fruit trees produce the fruit they’re supposed to. Apple trees produce apples; orange trees produce oranges. Healthy and growing Christians produce the fruit of the Spirit, which consists of nine character traits perfectly expressed in the life and ministry of Jesus.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What about this list of spiritual fruit do you find most surprising or interesting? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Which of these nine spiritual fruit challenges you most? |

**The Holy Spirit Produces One Fruit**

Paul listed nine outcomes of the fruit of the Spirit growing in our life. Yet, he chose to call this product of the Holy Spirit a single fruit, not nine separate fruits. This may feel like a minor point, but it has a big takeaway.

The fruit of the Spirit is not a pick-and-choose situation. Because there’s only one fruit, if we are open to the Holy Spirit’s growth, all of these character traits should be increasing. That doesn’t mean it’s impossible to be stronger at some than others. It just means that all character traits—the product of the Holy Spirit’s involvement in our life—should be growing in those who are becoming more like Jesus.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What might the growth of one character trait but not another trait say about someone’s spiritual development? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What might it look like to depend on the Holy Spirit to develop this fruit rather than trying to do it through our own efforts? |

**The Holy Spirit Draws Others to Us**

The passage from Galatians we read is taken from one of several letters written to early believers by the apostles. Because the apostles traveled to different churches, they often wrote letters while they were away. These letters would instruct, correct, and encourage the believers in how to live out their faith. In contrast, the Book of Acts is a historical account of the Early Church. Therefore, by looking at it as well, we’re able to get a glimpse of how some of the first Christians actually demonstrated these things in their own life.

Read [Acts 9:36–38](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac9.36-38).

When an early believer named Tabitha (also known as Dorcas) died, her character and actions in life came into focus. She lived a life of love expressed through her care for the poor and her kindness toward all those around her. How do we know the Holy Spirit was working in her? Because who she was on the inside was becoming increasingly evident on the outside.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Who is someone in your life that reminds you of Tabitha? What fruit of the Spirit do you most commonly see in their actions? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What are the biggest barriers to allowing the Holy Spirit to grow fruit in our life? |

**The Holy Spirit Works through Us**

Read [Acts 9:39–42](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac9.39-42).

The Holy Spirit clearly worked in and through Peter. Praying and calling for someone to come back from the dead is definitely a Jesus-like thing! In a dramatic example like this, the Holy Spirit is easier to recognize. But we should learn that when the Holy Spirit helps us love, have joy, or be patient, those works of the Spirit will also bring life to those around us in powerful and unexpected ways—just as it did through Tabitha’s life.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What are some ways the Holy Spirit at work in others has directly affected you? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Opportunities to bring life to others through the fruit of the Spirit are all around us. What might help you live with a heightened awareness of those opportunities on a daily basis? |

**Did You Know?**

|  |
| --- |
| In the first century, it was not uncommon to find Jews who went by two names: a Greek name and a Hebrew name. They did this to better assimilate and operate in both the Gentile/Greek and Jewish social worlds. In the Greek-speaking world, the apostle Paul went by the name Paul. However, when he was with the Jews in Jerusalem, he would have been called Saul. And Tabitha, living near the port city of Joppa, would have used her Greek name Dorcas in order to operate her assumed textile business at maximum efficiency. |

**Reflect**

**The Holy Spirit Helps Me Grow**

A lack of dependence on the Holy Spirit will stunt the growth of any Christian. Not depending on the Spirit allows the bad habits and sinful ways of our old life before salvation to continue to produce bad fruit that is harmful not only to us, but also to others. Our witness as a Christian is hindered.

This is why Paul wrote so persuasively and passionately about our need for the transforming work of the Holy Spirit to be present in our life. The love of our Heavenly Father was on perfect display in everything Jesus did. It can be seen in the everyday example of Tabitha as well as the dramatic miracle the Holy Spirit did through Peter. But the question is: Can it be seen in us?

It absolutely can! Your life can powerfully attest to the radical love of God, but not without the Holy Spirit. Our growth of the fruit of the Spirit directly corresponds to our dependence on the Holy Spirit. More dependence equals more growth.

**Listen to God**

Let’s pause and listen to what God might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Respond to the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal*.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your own dependence on the Holy Spirit for growth? Are you satisfied with your growth as a Christian? Why or why not? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What are the greatest challenges in your life right now to becoming even more like Jesus? How can you turn to the Holy Spirit for help? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Take a moment to think about your life last week. Through your actions, what did those around you observe? Which fruit of the Spirit would have been obvious to them? Which fruit were obviously missing? |

**Activate**

Living for God and becoming like Jesus isn’t impossible unless we attempt it without the Holy Spirit’s help. We need to take steps to heighten our awareness of where we are lacking and develop new habits that foster dependence on Him.

**Challenge**

Look again at the list of the fruit of the Spirit in [Galatians 5:22–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga5.22-23). Take a few moments and ask God if there’s any part of the fruit you’re struggling to grow in. Then ask Him to create opportunities for you to grow in that area and to impact the life of others this week. Think about who, specifically, God wants you to impact. Is it people in your home, at work, at school, or on your team? Finally, ask God to help you think of simple, practical ways you can show and share love, joy, patience, and the other fruit with those around you this week. Make a plan for what you’re going to do and when you’re going to do it. Close by asking God for His Holy Spirit’s help and strength!

**Prayer Requests**

|  |
| --- |
| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to spend time in God’s Word with the personal devotions.

**What We Believe**

|  |
| --- |
| **The Holy Spirit Helps Me Grow**Salvation is not the end of a Christian’s spiritual growth. Although we are declared holy or sanctified at salvation, we can still experience so much spiritual growth. As the believer submits to the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, they are progressively transformed toward a divine nature, like that of Christ. |
| **The Significance of This Doctrine**This doctrine is important because too many Christians stop growing spiritually after salvation, or even after entry into a Spirit-filled life at Baptism. But God’s design for each believer is that the fruit of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:22–23](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga5.22-23)), and the character traits of a Christlike life, will be more obvious each day. |

**Learn on Your Own**

|  |
| --- |
| *Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1: The Holy Spirit Helps Me Grow**

Read [Acts 9:36–42](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac9.36-42).

Look back over Learn in Community and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. Plan how to complete the Activate component if you haven’t already done so. If time permits, reread the Scripture too.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What is God saying to you about the role of the Holy Spirit in your growth as a Christian? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 2: We Must Be Guided by the Spirit**

Read [Galatians 5:16–18](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga5.16-18).

Paul instructed the churches in Galatia to let the Holy Spirit guide their lives. This means living with the desires of God’s Spirit as our motivation, rather than the desires of our old sinful life. Paul was saying that our passions and desires will be motivated by one of two things—either by God’s Spirit or by our old sinful nature.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Why does it matter so much that a Christian’s life is guided by God’s Spirit? How might this impact our witness to others? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**How does the concept of being guided by the Holy Spirit change your perspective on how you’re living your life? What are some ways you could get more in step with the Spirit in your life? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 3: Living by the Spirit**

Read [Galatians 5:22–26](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ga5.22-26).

Paul said we should crucify our sinful desires and leave them on the cross of Jesus. Only then will we be able to live by the Spirit. In other words, the Spirit who lives in us gives us new spiritual life in Jesus. This means our life should clearly show that God’s Spirit is in charge—not us. What we do, what we say, how we live, and what we desire should all be clearly directed by the Spirit.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Why do you think it’s so important that our old sinful passions and desires be put to death? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What is likely to happen in someone’s life who is trying to walk in the Spirit, but is still holding onto some sinful ways? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 4: God’s Spirit Helps Us to Glorify Jesus**

Read [John 16:12–15](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Jn16.12-15).

Jesus said the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. As the Holy Spirit helps us grow, we can understand God’s truth at a deeper level. Just as the Holy Spirit points to Jesus and glorifies Him, so will we.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**Who is someone you know whose life brings glory to Jesus by how they live? What is it about their life that stands out to you? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**What’s an example of how the Holy Spirit is helping you to glorify Jesus in your own life? How has the Holy Spirit been helping you grow lately? |

**Learn on Your Own**

**Day 5: We Are the Temple of the Holy Spirit**

Read [1 Corinthians 6:18–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co6.18-20).

In [1 Corinthians 6](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co6), Paul was strongly directing believers away from sexual sin. After all, Paul argued, we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we shouldn’t use our body for sinful purposes any longer because the dwelling place of God’s Spirit must be holy.

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**As you think about your own body being the dwelling place of God’s Spirit (this is true of every Christian!), how does that compel you to live differently? |

|  |
| --- |
| **QUESTION**The Holy Spirit also helps us to overcome temptation. Are you currently facing temptations that are causing struggles in your walk with God? How can you turn to the Holy Spirit for help? |