

CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

– COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE –

Galatians Series: *Free in Christ* “The Spirit & The Flesh” - Galatians 5:16-21

FELLOWSHIP

Most of my life feels like a series of events with a routine of places that I have to travel back and forth from every day. In southern California that means a daily crisscrossing between not just neighborhoods, but cities. Sometimes when I find myself traveling between counties, e.g. one of my sons' baseball games takes me to Riverside or somewhere in Los Angeles, the GPS settings on my iPhone can feel like a life saver. Recently Apple added choices of transit services and walking alongside of driving for directions. Honestly these buttons at first seemed like a nuisance, getting in the way of my thumbing as I would change search locations. But Apple knows that majority of the world, including iPhone users, live in urban settings and they walk, a lot. Those who have lived in the city can understand that directions to a new location within just three to ten blocks can save a lot of frustration. Businesses rely on foot traffic and the app that leads them there is invaluable. Paul uses the word “walk” in a metaphoric way to describe the Christian life. Really a better translation would even be “keep on walking.” To someone in the first century, this analogy makes all the sense in the world, as their life journey was probably on foot. A few other translations try to help readers understand this: “Live by the Spirit” (NRSV) or “Let the Holy Spirit guide your lives.” (NLT) For the Christian, it is clear that we have something better than a GPS app for direction in life, the believer has a companion and guide in God.”

PRAY, READ, DISCUSS

Read **Galatians 5:16-21** out loud together and prayerfully discuss all the personal applications that we can make from this: *I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

- God is not a personal guru, a life force, or even an app. So, how does God influence your life? What areas of your life do you feel him the strongest, and where does he feel the weakest?
- Read again the laundry list of the works of the flesh. How do the intentions of these behaviors contrast with John 13:34-35 and Galatians 6:2? How can the community of believers help each other with their struggles and personal weaknesses in the flesh?
- Paul seems to equate the battle between the Spirit and the flesh, as a battle between the Spirit and Law. Why is the Law and the flesh synonymous for Paul? Wouldn't the Law be considered a good thing?
- Paul states in verse 21, *Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.* Paul tacks on this intimidating warning at the end of this dirty laundry list. What if a Christian falls into one of these sins? How can they recover? Why might this verse be used to argue that someone could lose their salvation? What other verses from Scripture would help to contextualize your answer?

PRAY

As you break into smaller groups to pray, let Galatians 6:2 be part of your motivation this week.

