

CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

– COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE –

Galatians Series: *Free in Christ* “The Fruit of the Spirit” - Galatians 5:22-23

FELLOWSHIP

Having played or coached in some kind of sports program most of my life, I've heard over and over again the clichés. *Give 110%. One game at a time. Defense wins championships. There is no "I" in TEAM.* We've all heard star athletes give post-game interviews where they string together one cliché after another instead of real analysis. Truthfully, all these ideas are steeped in some kind of reality, but have lost their impact due to overuse. Christians can also slip into the ease of disciplines becoming routines and then merely clichés. The phrase, “Walk in the Spirit,” is not a Pauline bumper sticker, but a theological truth that deciding whether or not to follow it will result in completely different life outcomes. As one of my coaches would say, “Trust the process, and the right results will follow.” This is also true for Paul as he exhorts the believer to *walk* and then experience the resulting *fruit*. The present imperative in the Greek, “to walk,” implies the on-going journey of faith. As Christians we are in a constant state of spiritual progress.

PRAY, READ, DISCUSS

Read **Galatians 5:22-23** out loud together as a group. Here is the NLT: ***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!***

Pastor Brian in his message pointed out that *fruit* presupposes life and that fruit of the Spirit reflects life of God within us. This dynamic is then organic and not manufactured. He cited the British preacher, Samuel Chadwick, who said, “The word “works” suggest the factory; the word “fruit” suggest the garden.”

- Think about Jesus' time here on earth. From Paul's list of the kinds of fruit the Holy Spirit produces, where from the Gospels can you remember Jesus exercising each one? Give as many examples as you can.
- Paul wasn't the first one to use the metaphor of *fruit* when describing a life yielded to God. Jesus employed this picture in describing the relationship we can have with God. Read as a group together John 15. Share your observations from the chapter regarding discipleship and how the connection with Jesus impacts our spiritual fruit.
- Just like in the garden, the fruit of the Spirit grows gradually. Sometimes we don't realize God has changed an area in our life until a challenge or situation confronts us. Share an experience where you knew the way you reacted was different than how you might have handled it in the past because of growing in Christ.
- It's an understatement to say that our culture needs more love. But, apart from Christ, society continues to fall farther and farther away from the benefits of the Judeo-Christian ethic and world-view. The fruit of the Spirit in our lives is a beacon of light to our neighbors that there is a better way. Read Matthew 5:16, and share any stories you might have had where someone came to Christ because they approached you, knowing there was something different about you.

PRAY

Some fruit grows differently than others or at different seasons. Sanctification is a process, but it's also intentional. What is an area to share in your smaller prayer groups that you'd like to see the Holy Spirit bring change?

