

JESUS SETS US FREE TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT

YEAR: UNITE / FOCUS: LIVING IN FREEDOM
SERIES: GALATIANS

BIG TRUTH: JESUS SETS US FREE TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT

Romans 8:4, 14; John 16:13; Colossians 3:12

BIBLE VERSE: GALATIANS 5:16

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

BIG IDEAS

- When we walk by the Spirit, we will deny the desires of the flesh.
- Works of the flesh are evidence that we are slaves to sin.
- Fruit of the Spirit is evidence that we are set free in Christ.

BIBLE PASSAGE: GALATIANS 5:16-25

UNITE: LIVING IN FREEDOM

The Unite year is an exploration of what it means to be united in Christ as the family of God (Romans 12:5). When we are saved, we are brought into the family of God- seen throughout the Old Testament as “God’s People” and in the New Testament and today as the church (Exodus 6:7; Colossians 1:18). We are set free from our sin to walk in freedom in Christ (Galatians 5:1) and use our influence to call others to do the same.

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know...

- True freedom is only found in being a servant of Jesus
- We are set free not to do whatever we want, but to live for Christ



Every student should feel...

- Grateful for Christ who sets us free
- Convicted of the ways that they are ruled by the desires of their flesh
- Responsible to use their influence to make much of God alone



Every student should strive to...

- Read through the book of Galatians each week
- Memorize the Bible verse each week
- Deny the desires of their flesh to walk in step with the Spirit



Every student should want...

- See the ways that they are tempted to pursue self-salvation, and repent of these
- Live for the approval of God, not others
- Help others move out of slavery to sin toward freedom in Christ

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week’s Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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JESUS SETS US FREE TO SERVE OTHERS

BIBLE VERSE: GALATIANS 5:16

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

Believers are set free to bear the fruit of God’s Spirit.

“But I say, walk by the Spirit...”

- People are redeemed from their sin debt that they might live for God by obeying His commands. They can obey His commands by walking in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives inside of every believer beginning at the moment of saving faith and new life in Christ.
- When the Spirit indwells a person, that person is able to live in obedience to God’s law because the Spirit empowers them to obey God. God frees His people from their sin, and they are no longer enslaved by the sin nature they are born with. Because of this freedom, believers can bear fruit of the Spirit who is inside of them.

Walking by the Spirit means using the freedom we have to obey God.

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

- We will bear fruit of the Spirit living inside of us when we obey God. Believers do this by practicing an awareness of the Spirit daily. The works of the Spirit are those things that please God and reveal that we have been set free.
- The works of the flesh are the things that are in rebellion to God. They are the things that are of this world and the practices of our flesh natures. When we walk by the Spirit, the practice of our daily lives bears fruit that is in keeping with who God is and reveals that His Spirit lives inside of us.

When we walk by the Spirit, we will not fulfill the desires of our flesh natures.

“...and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”

- Because Jesus sets us free to live by the Spirit, when we walk in His Spirit, we do not fulfill the desires of our flesh. When we are living for God, we will not live for the flesh. This is because our focus will be on living for God and pleasing Him.
- Paul instructs believers in Galatia to use the Spirit inside of them to live in the freedom they have. A result of living in this freedom and being led by the Spirit is that we resist the temptation to follow the desires of our flesh.

JESUS SETS US FREE TO SERVE OTHERS

BIG IDEA #1: WHEN WE WALK BY THE SPIRIT, WE WILL DENY THE DESIRES OF THE FLESH.¹

[THIS]

The presence of God's Spirit in every believer serves as a guide and Helper for His children. The Holy Spirit is fully God and indwells every person who has saving faith in Jesus Christ. The Spirit works in a person to give them an awareness of God and to illuminate His Word to them. Because of the work of the Spirit inside of people, a believer becomes aware of the difference between the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit. Prior to saving faith in Jesus, this isn't how a person functioned. We all walked in darkness, meaning that our hearts were darkened to the things of God. We may have been aware that a higher power or something greater than us existed, but a true understanding of God isn't possible without the presence of the Spirit. Our lives prior to saving faith gratify our fleshly desires. We do the things that please our sin natures because it is what we know. We follow the ruler of this world because that is what is natural to us.

[THEREFORE]

What types of behaviors are natural to you in your sin? How are you more aware of these now after saving faith?

In Galatians 5:20-23, Paul lists the differences between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. When we have the presence of God's Spirit, we are aware of the works of our flesh. We also become more aware of the temptations that we struggle with and we can resist them more and more.

[THIS]

Denying the desires of our flesh is a lifelong task for the believer. It is impossible without the presence of the Spirit. It is not doable unless we diligently practice walking in the power of the Spirit. We do this by disciplining ourselves to be aware of His presence in us. When we do this and we are aware every day throughout our day of His presence, we can grow in our Christlikeness because we will resist the desires of our flesh. We will see them as sin and as detestable to God. They will no longer look like natural things to do. Our hearts will no longer desire to do them. We will want to do what pleases God because the Spirit will guide us to please God by obeying His Word. Because we have been set free from our sin nature, we are able to walk in the Spirit and deny the desires of our flesh. We can crucify those desires and live for Christ instead.

[THEREFORE]

How does the presence of the Spirit help you deny the desires of your flesh daily?

1 Corinthians 10:13 and James 4:7 show us that God enables us resist temptation by providing us with His Spirit. His Spirit gives us the power we need to deny our flesh. Because we have the presence of the Spirit, we do not have to give into our fleshly desires. We can resist them and choose to obey God instead.

How have you grown spiritually because you've denied your fleshly desires?

Colossians 1:9-10 shows us that when we deny our fleshly desires and put on the fruit of the Spirit, we will grow spiritually. As we grow in our spiritual walk, we will look more and more like Christ, which is what is pleasing to God. This is possible because we have been set free to live like Jesus and to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

1. Galatians 5:17: *The desires of the flesh are against the desires of the Spirit. When we are led by the Spirit, we will not follow the desires of the flesh.*

JESUS SETS US FREE TO SERVE OTHERS

BIG IDEA #2: WORKS OF THE FLESH ARE EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE SLAVES TO SIN.²

[THIS]

In Galatians 5:17-21, Paul teaches that there is a distinction in the lives of those who are enslaved by their sin natures and those who have been set free. The people who are enslaved live a certain way. The works they do are evidence that they are living with darkened minds. They are following the ruler of this world and have not yet been awakened to the truth of God. Their lives reveal that they are set on fulfilling the desires of their sinful hearts that are in rebellion to God. In Galatians 5:17, Paul states specifically that the works of the flesh are in opposition to the works of the Spirit. This means that a person is producing works of the flesh consistently with the presence of the Holy Spirit in them. Paul also states that these people will not inherit the kingdom of God in eternity. This means that those people who consistently do the works of the flesh are not people who have repented and believed in Jesus as their Savior. They are still very much held captive by their sin natures.

[THEREFORE]

How does the pattern of our lives reveal the condition of our hearts?

In Galatians 5:16-21, Paul shows the difference between people who have saving faith and people who do not. A person who has a pattern of bearing the works of the flesh is a person who does not know God. A person who has a pattern of bearing the fruit of the Spirit is a person who has been freed from his or her sin nature.

[THIS]

In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul identifies a list of the works of the flesh. This list is not exhaustive, but it identifies some behaviors that are indicative of the sinful natures of mankind. These behaviors are what is natural to every person when they are following their sinful hearts and not obeying God's commands. We are all born with the propensity for these behaviors and are guilty of them in some way at some point. These are the behaviors that describe mankind's flesh nature, and every person has a flesh nature. These are the behaviors that are in opposition to the works of the Spirit. We are all born enslaved to these behaviors and will live lives exhibiting a pattern of this type of behavior if we do not experience saving faith. This is our sin, and we are all slaves to it until God awakens us to His truth and we find freedom in His Son.

[THEREFORE]

Why is it important to recognize the works of our sinful natures?

Mark 7:21-23 and 1 Peter 4:3 also give us a list of the works of the flesh. Understanding our brokenness as sinners is helpful in understanding the types of behaviors we are to put off and resist. We cannot resist out of our own power or in order to earn God's favor, but knowing where we are tempted is helpful in our pursuit of holiness.

What habits can you put on to help you resist these works of the flesh in your daily life?

2 Peter 1:5-8 is helpful to our spiritual growth and teaching us how to resist the works of the flesh. As we supplement our faith with virtue, knowledge, and self-control we will grow stronger in resisting the works of the flesh. We will recognize these at play in our lives more easily and we will choose God's commands over our fleshly desires instead.

2. Galatians 5:21: Those who do the works of the flesh reveal they are still enslaved by their sin natures.

JESUS SETS US FREE TO SERVE OTHERS

BIG IDEA #3: FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS EVIDENCE THAT WE ARE SET FREE IN CHRIST.³

[THIS]

In Galatians 5:22-25, Paul teaches that the fruit of the Spirit is opposite of the works of the flesh. Those who have the Spirit will bear the fruit of Him. Those with the Spirit have crucified the flesh and will die to themselves daily. This practice of dying to ourselves daily is part of denying our fleshly desires. In Galatians 5:25, Paul teaches that those who live by the Spirit keep in step with Him. This requires an intentional living by His guidance. It is an intentional pursuit. The fruit of the Spirit is possible when we are led by Him and walk in submission to God's commands. People who do this reveal that they are God's children. This means that they have saving faith in Jesus, and they have been set free from their sin natures. They are no longer slaves to their sin. People who have a pattern of bearing the fruit of the Spirit reveal they know Jesus and have been reconciled to God. They desire to please Him, and only people who have been redeemed by Him desire to please Him.

[THEREFORE]

Read Galatians 5:19-25. How is the fruit of the Spirit different from the works of the flesh?

These verses reveal a stark contrast between a person who knows Christ and a person who does not. The works of the flesh are the works of darkness, and the fruit of the Spirit are behaviors indicative of the light. Those who know Jesus bear the fruit of His Spirit.

[THIS]

Galatians 5:22-23 give us a list of the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit are evidence that a person knows God and has been redeemed by Him. A person who has been set free from their sin nature will have a pattern of behavior that bears this fruit. This doesn't mean that they will be perfect in these things. It means that they will grow in these things and their lives will be more and more defined by the fruit of the Spirit rather than the works of the flesh. This shows that a person is no longer enslaved by the darkness of this world or the ruler of the world. Instead, a person is being led by the Spirit. People who are submitted to the Lord are guided by His Spirit. They do His will just as Jesus did His Father's will when He lived on the earth. Bearing the fruit of the Spirit means that a person has trusted in Jesus and has been rescued from his or her sin debt.

[THEREFORE]

How can you encourage others to live a life that bears the fruit of the Spirit?

Luke 6:43-45 teaches us that God's people are known by the fruit that they bear. People who say that they know God will bear fruit that is indicative of having His Spirit. Only those who have saving faith have God's Spirit. Bearing the fruit of the Spirit reveals the presence of the Spirit inside of a person.

How does saving faith set us free to bear the fruit of the Spirit?

In John 8:32, Jesus teaches that the truth sets people free. When people understand the truth about who He is and how He brings salvation to the world, they are set free from their sin debt. Being set free means that they can bear the fruit of the Spirit because they have the Holy Spirit.

3. Galatians 5:22-23: The fruit of the Spirit is possible only with the presence of the Spirit and reveals that we are free from our sin natures.