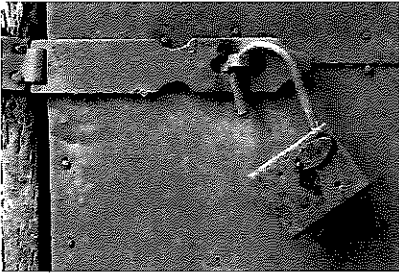


Walk in the Spirit



Topic

Fruit of the Spirit

Theme

Spiritual victory is achieved by walking in the Spirit.

Desired Learner Response

The learner will rely on the Holy Spirit for victory.

Materials

- Resources 1 and 14
- Glove and book

Scripture Focus

Galatians 5:16–26

Summary

The flesh, the sinful nature, stimulates the Christian to sin. It produces a variety of evil works. The Holy Spirit, Who dwells in the Christian, stimulates him or her to please God. The Spirit produces holy qualities in the Christian who cooperates with Him. No one can defeat the flesh by following a set of regulations, but he or she can enjoy victory by submitting to the Spirit.

Outline

I. Principle of Spiritual Victory (Gal. 5:16–18)

- A. Dynamic of walking in the Spirit (5:16)
- B. Internal struggle for control (5:17)
- C. Power for victory (5:18)

II. Production of Spiritual Victory (Gal. 5:19–23)

- A. Works of the flesh (5:19–21)
- B. Fruit of the Spirit (5:22, 23)

III. Practice of Spiritual Victory (Gal. 5:24–26)

- A. Remember who you are (5:24)
- B. Walk in the Spirit (5:25)
- C. Deny the flesh (5:26)

Memory Verses

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:24, 25).

GETTING STARTED

Use the following activities to alert the learners to the importance of walking in the Spirit.

Toeing the Line

Attach a six-foot line of masking tape to the floor. Ask a volunteer to walk along the tape without stepping off it. His toes and heels must always come down on the tape. After he attempts his walk, tell him to do so again, this time resting a hand on your shoulder. Explain that this lesson zeros in on the Spirit's help in our Christian walk.

Toddler Walking

ASK: What happens when a toddler walks without someone to guide him or her? (Q1)

ASK: What would happen if every person in a crowded corridor were walking like an unassisted toddler? (Q2)

Paul advised the Galatians that they were God's adult children. He exhorted them to walk in the Spirit, as God's adult children.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

When the Galatians trusted in Christ as their Savior, they received spiritual life from God's Holy Spirit. To enjoy spiritual victory on an ongoing basis, they needed to walk in the Spirit.

I. Principle of Spiritual Victory (Gal. 5:16–18)

A. Dynamic of walking in the Spirit (5:16)

"Victory" implies that opponents waged a battle and one emerged as the winner. That principle is true in war, in sports, and in the Christian life. Spiritual victory comes only by walking in the Spirit.

READ: Galatians 5:16.

Paul stated emphatically that believers who walk in the Spirit "shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (5:16). They will face an ongoing battle with their sinful nature but will be victorious in the long run.

To walk in the Spirit, the believer must choose to live by the Spirit's power, within the boundaries set by Scripture. In other words, the believer must choose to live in fellowship with Christ. That choice enlists the Spirit's help in counteracting the lust of the flesh.

The action of walking speaks of a routine, a daily habit of life. Walking in the Spirit necessitates an ongoing practice of surrender to the control of the Holy Spirit. This includes the commitment of thoughts, words, ambitions, attitudes, and

All unsaved persons walk "after the flesh" (Rom. 8:5) and are "of the flesh" (9:8).

actions to the Lord. As the Spirit extends His control over our lives, the flesh with its desires is progressively crowded out.

B. Internal struggle for control (5:17)

The Galatians were torn between Paul's teaching and that of the Judaizers'. What they were feeling was just what every Christian feels. The flesh pushes its desires, while the Spirit urges submission to God's values. No matter how long a person has been saved, or how mature he or she is in Christ, this titanic spiritual battle is always within the person (5:17).

READ: Galatians 5:17.

The flesh is a powerful enemy, for it is crafty, deceitful, and persistent. No amount of human effort or resolve can subdue the flesh. Because of its power, even the strongest human is unable to keep his or her lofty resolutions.

READ: Romans 6:6. **ASK:** Why is a believer no longer under the domination of the flesh? (Q3) *The believer's flesh has been crucified with Christ.*

READ: Romans 6:18. **ASK:** What happened when the Lord freed the believer from sin? *The believer became a servant of righteousness.* (Q4)

Believers are not obligated to obey the flesh. Feelings of hopelessness in saying no to the flesh come from a failure to tap into the power for victory over the flesh.

C. Power for victory (5:18)

Every person is born with a sin nature, a powerful enemy to righteous living. How a person responds to his flesh will determine whether he gains victory over it. In Bible times, pagans simply indulged the flesh and sank into depravity. The Jews tried to counter the flesh by keeping the law. Paul testified in Romans 7 that trying to obey the law was frustrating because it was an impossible task. Even though he had the desire to obey God's standard, he did not have the inner spiritual power to do so consistently.

READ: Romans 7:7. **ASK:** What service did the law perform? (Q5) *It defined sin and pointed it out in a person's life.*

The Judaizers assumed that there were only two alternatives: living under the flesh's control or living under law. However, Paul advanced a third alternative that gives victory over the flesh in a way that the law never could. That alternative is for the believer to be "led of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:18).

READ: Galatians 5:18.

The Spirit of God exposes the flesh's deceit and guides the believer to victory over the flesh. But the believer must consciously submit to the Spirit. As the Spirit leads the believer in the ways of God, the believer needs to follow that leading. Only the Spirit can truly deliver from the lust of the flesh and allow a believer to live righteously. The law has no power over the flesh. It's like a camper shining a

flashlight on an oncoming bear in a dark forest. The flashlight helps the camper see the bear, but it is powerless to defeat it.

II. Production of Spiritual Victory (Gal. 5:19–23)

How can we tell if we are following the Spirit’s leading? How do we know if we are experiencing spiritual victory? Paul contrasted what the flesh produces in a person with what the Spirit produces. He wrote that the flesh produces evil qualities that God condemns, whereas the Spirit produces Christlike qualities that God commends.

A. Works of the flesh (5:19–21)

Paul listed several of the evil works the flesh produces. He wrote that these “works of the flesh are manifest,” or evident to all (5:19). Even the pagan moralists in the ancient world had lists of vices like Paul’s list. The pagans said that the vices were bad because they were contrary to human nature. Paul said that they were evil because they were produced by the sinful human nature. The pagan moralists taught that people could control such vices if they would just act more humanly. Paul taught that only the Spirit of God can give victory over the sins that inevitably arise in all people.

READ: Galatians 5:19–21. **ASK:** Describe the relationship a flesh-driven person has with God. (Q6) *The flesh-driven person is completely alienated from God.*

ASK: Describe the relationship a flesh-driven person has with other people. (Q7) *There is no basis for fellowship. Personal relationships are characterized by hatred, discord, jealousies, wrath, strife, rebellion, and ill will.*

Although a believer may fall into one or more of these sins, he does not persist in the works of the flesh. Constant practice of the works of the flesh indicates that a person is not genuinely saved. Paul repeated what he had told the Galatians before: “They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (5:21). Habitual practice of sinful deeds indicates that the Holy Spirit does not dwell in the person who leads a sinful life.

RESOURCE: Display resource 13 with the middle third covered. Point out that the pagans and the Jews were both defeated and in bondage. Neither of their methods in dealing with the flesh led to freedom.

B. Fruit of the Spirit (5:22, 23)

The flesh can produce only sinful actions and attitudes. By contrast, the Holy Spirit produces godly fruit in every believer. The Spirit’s fruit reflects God’s character.

The Judaizers insisted that only observance of the law could help a person become righteous. Therefore, Paul countered with a definitive statement in verse 23. After listing the fruit of the Spirit, he affirmed, “against such there is no law.” What the Spirit produces more than meets every righteous demand of the law. The Spirit produces holy character and conduct. He defeats the lusts of the flesh (5:16) in a way the law never could (3:21).

Dealing with the Flesh Paul addressed three ways to deal with the flesh			
	PAGANS	BELIEVERS	JEWS
METHOD	Act humanly	Submit to the Spirit	Keep the law
RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Works of the flesh ② Defeat ③ Bondage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Fruit of the Spirit ② Victory ③ Freedom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ① Works of the flesh ② Defeat ③ Bondage

The fruit of the Spirit falls into three general categories: (1) a relationship with God: love, joy, and peace; (2) a relationship with others: long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness; and (3) a relationship with ourselves: faith (faithfulness), meekness, and temperance (self-control).

Dealing with the Flesh Paul addressed three ways to deal with the flesh		
	PAGANS	BELIEVERS
METHOD	Act humanly	Submit to the Spirit
RESULTS	1 Works of the flesh 2 Defeat 3 Bondage	1 Fruit of the Spirit 2 Victory 3 Freedom

READ: Galatians 5:22, 23. **ASK:** Describe the relationship a Spirit-led believer has with God. (Q8) *The believer loves God and experiences peace and joy from God.*

ASK: Describe the relationship a Spirit-led believer has with other people. (Q9) *The believer loves others and treats them with long-suffering, gentleness, and goodness.*

RESOURCE: Display resource 13. Emphasize the truth that victory and freedom do not result from human effort but from submission to the Spirit.

III. Practice of Spiritual Victory (Gal. 5:24–26)

Paul’s discussion of spiritual victory raises some practical questions, such as, how does this work in everyday life? Galatians 5:24–26 answers this question.

A. Remember who you are (5:24)

READ: Galatians 5:24. **ASK:** What must we do before we can live with the Holy Spirit as our guide? (Q10) *Recognize that our flesh has been crucified with Christ and that we are not obligated to obey it.*

The Galatians needed to embrace their identification with Christ. As Paul testified in Galatians 2:20, when a person puts his faith in Christ, he or she is crucified with Christ. As a result, the believer faces temptations in Christ’s power. “Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

In Christ, the flesh with its affections and lusts has already been crucified. The Christian is no longer in bondage to the sinful nature. He or she is now free to live in the Spirit. The believer is liberated to live out the godly character that the Spirit is developing in him or her. Spiritual victory comes when we understand our identification with Christ and cooperate with the Holy Spirit in His ministry of glorifying Christ in us.

B. Walk in the Spirit (5:25)

READ: Galatians 5:25.

Paul exhorted: “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (5:16). After contrasting the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit, he returned to his earlier exhortation. In verse 25, he wrote: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

ASK: How does a believer say yes to the Spirit? (Q11) *By reading, studying, and applying God’s Word. By expressing our faith in God through prayer.*

The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures in guiding the believer. The faithful believer follows the Spirit’s leading by obeying God’s Word. As the believer obeys God’s Word, he or she becomes Christlike (John 16:13; 2 Cor. 3:18; James 1:23–25).

The Greek word for walk in Galatians 5:16 is the usual word for walking. The word in verse 25 describes a more specific kind of walking. Drawn from military life, it means “to keep in line” or “to carefully follow a standard.” When Paul exhorted, “Walk in the Spirit,” he meant to walk in line with the standards set by the Holy Spirit.

This concept is especially significant in the context of Paul’s overall argument in Galatians. The Judaizers were trying to regulate the Galatians’ lives by the Jewish law. They were measuring their actions by Jewish regulations. However, Paul said in Galatians 4:9 that those regulations were “weak and beggarly elements” that led to bondage.

C. Deny the flesh (5:26)

Those who walk after the flesh are concerned only with pleasing themselves. The flesh craves attention, admiration, esteem, power, and possessions. These fleshly cravings become powerful, almost as if the person can’t help but act on them. That’s the result of continuing to respond to the flesh instead of relying on the Spirit.

READ: Galatians 5:26. **ASK:** What sins occur prominently when believers fail to walk in the Spirit? (Q12) *Bringing glory to self by making others look worse than they are; envying those who appear to be stronger believers than they do.*

ASK: What harm can these sins inflict on a fellowship of believers? (Q13) *They cause divisions, competition, and an unhealthy focus on actions rather than heart.*

MAKING IT PERSONAL

The Powerless Glove

Show the learners a glove and a book. Command the glove to pick up the book. Of course, the glove is powerless to obey. Place your hand in the glove, issue the same command, and pick up the glove. Explain that each of us is powerless to obey God until the Holy Spirit dwells in us and we rely on Him for wisdom, direction, and strength.

The Spirit’s Tug

As we read the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19–21), the Holy Spirit will convict us of any presence of those works in our lives. On your own, read through the list while paying attention to the Spirit’s tug on your heart. (Q14)

The Spirit will also convict us of the absence of His fruit in our lives. Read Galatians 5:22 and 23 several times while listening to the Spirit’s promptings about which fruit needs to be more evident in your life. (Q15)

ASK: Which of the following ways will you crucify the flesh and follow the Spirit’s leading in the coming weeks? (Q16)

- Take precautions to avoid temptation.
- End harmful relationships.
- Confess sin to God and those affected by it.

- Spend time meditating on God's Word.
- Pray daily about areas of temptation.
- Meditate on the consequences of following the flesh (Gal. 5:19–21).
- Make a plan to put the fruit of the Spirit into practice (Gal. 5:22, 23).

Summary and Memory Verses

Use resource 1 to record a summary for this lesson: Rely on the Holy Spirit for victory over the flesh.

Encourage your learners to memorize Galatians 5:24 and 25. Give them an opportunity to say the verses in class next week.

Living by Faith	
1.	8.
2.	9.
3.	10.
4.	11.
5.	12.
6.	13.
7.	

FAITH & FREEDOM