

LESSON 52

The Fruit of the Spirit

GALATIANS 5:1 – 6:1



BIBLE TRUTH

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT MARKS THE LIVES OF CHRISTIANS

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW **5 MIN**

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY **10 MIN**

Read Galatians 5:1—6:1 from the Scriptures or read story 130, “The Fruit of the Spirit,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 **10 MIN**

A Real Fruitcake

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a basket
- ✓ a bunch of bananas
- ✓ a Bible

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

There Is a War Going On

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ ten ping-pong balls
- ✓ sleeve of plastic disposable drinking cups
- ✓ black indelible marker
- ✓ table
- ✓ Bible

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

7. ACTIVITY TIME **10 MIN**

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 52—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

LESSON SNAPSHOT

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Memorize Galatians 5:19–23

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Christ has set us free from the law to love—Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians to correct problems in that local church. After Paul first brought the gospel, men who were “false brothers” (Galatians 2:4) distorted it. They claimed that a person must be circumcised in order to be saved. In this passage, Paul reclaims the purity of the gospel by explaining that those who are believers in Christ are free from the law. It doesn’t matter whether or not you are circumcised (Galatians 5:6). In other words, God accepts us not because of anything we do but only because of what Jesus did.

Paul anticipates that our freedom in Christ might lead us to believe we can do what we want without consequence; if I am not bound by the law it is OK to sin. Paul warns against this kind of attitude when he says, “Do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh” (Galatians 5:13). We are free from the condemnation of failing to keep the law, but we should use that freedom to keep the law without fear. Jesus said the whole law could be summed up in two commands. First, to love God and then to love our brother (Matthew 22:37–40). Paul picks up on that and directs the Galatians to use their freedom as an opportunity to love one another (Galatians 5:13–14).

Christ has given us his Spirit to help us in our fight against remaining sin—After directing us to use our freedom to love, Paul recognizes that our flesh (or sinful nature) fights against God’s purpose in loving our neighbor. The desires of the flesh are in opposition to the desires of the Holy Spirit (which come to the new nature as a result of our conversion). We must fight the sinful nature because its desires seek to entice us and drag us away (James 1:14). Each day we have choices to make. The Spirit within us gives us power to overcome remaining sin inside us and live righteously for God. For every sinful temptation, we find within us the opposite holy desire. We are no longer bound to sin, but instead can put sin down and follow the way of the Spirit. So we cultivate godly desires from the Spirit and “put to death” sinful desires from the flesh. Our sinful desires are obvious, and so is the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. What a joy to know that if we “walk by the Spirit” we will battle successfully and not “gratify” the sinful desires of our flesh (Galatians 5:16).

We can help each other in our fight against sin—Although the desires of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit are obvious, we need others in our lives to help us obey. Rather than

becoming prideful in our accomplishments, we are called to humbly serve those who have stumbled. We are to restore them gently and be careful so that we do not stumble ourselves (Galatians 6:1). None of us is perfect. We are all sinners and continue to sin. Therefore, none of us perfectly walks in step with the Spirit. We all have areas where we stumble, and often we are blind to those areas. We need to help each other see these areas of compromise. What is difficult for us to see is usually easy for others to see. When we restore each other humbly, in a spirit of gentleness, bearing one another's burdens, we fulfill the law of Christ in loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Notice that Paul doesn't call the fruit of the Spirit the fruit of the good man. The truth is that apart from Christ, none of us is good, and the only way we can demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit is if we have been given a new nature by God through the gospel of Christ. That is why Paul says in Galatians 5:24, "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

The gospel is the doorway to Christ, and he is our only help. Apart from the sacrificial death of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, all our efforts fall short, and we would at best be doing good works with mixed, self-honoring motives. The Spirit of God is the one who changes our desires from sinful to truly righteous.

A parallel text to Galatians 5 is 2 Peter 1:2-7. Peter first acknowledges that it is only by grace, through our knowledge of Christ that we can achieve godliness by his power. Yet, once we have that salvation we are called to "make every effort" to live godly lives. Then Peter gives a list that includes fruit of the Spirit. Basically Peter is saying the same thing Paul is saying. Use your freedom and power in Christ to strive to keep in step with the Spirit of God and live a godly life of love.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW **5 MIN**

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY **10 MIN**

Read Galatians 5:1—6:1 from the Scriptures or read story 130, "The Fruit of the Spirit," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 **10 MIN**

A Real Fruitcake

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a basket
- ✓ a bunch of bananas
- ✓ a Bible

This skit is a humorous way to introduce today's Bible passage.

Use this skit as is or just ad-lib a similar interaction with another teacher or helper. Sam carries a basket of bananas; Mary carries a Bible with Galatians 5:22–23 marked.

SAM: (*entering with a basket of fruit*) Hey, Mary, how's it going?

MARY: Fine, Sam. How are you?

SAM: I am doing just splendid, fine, wonderful, and couldn't be better!

MARY: Wow, that's pretty good. What has you feeling so wonderful?

SAM: (*showing the fruit*) I just picked up some very special fruit.

MARY: That looks really tasty. But what's the big deal with carrying around the fruit?

SAM: This is no ordinary fruit. Take a closer look and guess what kind of fruit it is.

MARY: (*peering at the fruit*) Well, all I see is a bunch of bananas.

SAM: I don't mean its name. What kind of fruit is it?

MARY: (*confused*) Fruit you can eat?

SAM: Of course you can eat it. That's not what I mean. This is my fruit of the Spirit.

MARY: (*turning to the class and giving them a look of confusion*) Your fruit of the Spirit? What do you mean?

- SAM:** Well, the other day I got into an argument with a guy at work, and I said some pretty nasty things to him. He sent me an email that said I should think twice about what I said, and that as a Christian I should get the fruit of the Spirit in my life. So now I have my very own fruit of the Spirit!
- MARY:** Sam, I think you are confused. This isn't the fruit of the Spirit; this is just fruit.
- SAM:** Now wait just a minute. I went to the grocery store and asked the produce manager where the fruit of the Spirit is, and he pointed to the produce section. I decided to pray about which fruit I should have in my life. I spun around three times with my eyes closed (*demonstrating*), then filled my basket with the first fruit that I came to. I would offer you a piece, but you need to get your own fruit of the Spirit.
- MARY:** Sam, where did you get that spinning around stuff?
- SAM:** Well, how else was I going to figure out which fruit of the Spirit was for me?
- MARY:** Did you try looking in the Bible?
- SAM:** The Bible? Why look in the Bible for fruit?
- MARY:** (*opening her Bible to Galatians 5:22–23*) Here Sam, read this.
- SAM:** (*reading out loud*) “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” (*looking up from the Bible*) Well, so I got it a little mixed up.
- MARY:** A little mixed up? Why Sam, you got it all wrong.
- SAM:** I didn't get it all wrong. What are the third and fifth fruits listed?
- MARY:** (*looking at the verses and counting out loud*) Let's see, three is peace and five is kindness.
- SAM:** (*smiling smugly*) You are correct. (*handing her a banana*) Here is a PIECE of fruit. That's KINDNESS if I ever saw it. So there Miss Know-It-All! And I LOVE and ENJOY them very much. You need PATIENCE to eat them because you have to take the skin off first. They bruise easily so you need to be GENTLE and not drop them. You buy them in bunches so you need SELF-CONTROL not to eat them all. And last I heard, there was NO LAW AGAINST eating bananas! (*Exits.*)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 **10 MIN**

There Is a War Going On

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ ten ping-pong balls

- ✓ sleeve of plastic disposable drinking cups
- ✓ black indelible marker
- ✓ table
- ✓ Bible

Before class, use the marker to write the different fruit of the Spirit on the cups. On the ping-pong balls write the words sin, flesh, and rebellion.

Use this object lesson to illustrate the battle that rages in the life of the believer between the Spirit and the flesh (Galatians 5:16–25).

Ask for three volunteers to participate in the game. Two will stack cups and one will throw ping-pong balls. When you say go, the cup stackers will begin building a pyramid with the cups. When the cup stackers start on the second level, give the signal for the ball thrower to start throwing the balls. Allow the exercise to go on for a bit, then interview the participants to draw them out on how difficult it was to stack against the onslaught of sins.

Have the volunteers return to their seats and talk about the battle described in Galatians 5:16–25. Explain to the class that in the gospel, Christ has set us free from sin (Galatians 5:1) and that the Spirit sets us free from the sinful work of the flesh. (Optional: read aloud Romans 8:2–11.) Then place one of the ping-pong balls on the table and say “The Spirit of God, working in us through the gospel (slam the Bible down, crushing the ping-pong ball) sets us free from the power of sin at work in our lives.” Hold up the crushed ping-pong ball and say “Although sin remains, its power over us has been crushed by the Spirit.” Remember to review the gospel. In closing, exhort the children to live according to the Spirit.

WORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the WORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME **10 MIN**

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 52—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What do you think is written on the fruit in your picture?**
(the fruit of the Spirit)
- **Do the fruit of the Spirit grow on a tree?**
(No, they do not.)
- **Where do the fruit of the Spirit grow?**
(The fruit of the Spirit grow in the hearts of Christians as they live for God.)
- **What special book did God give us to help us follow God's Spirit and live for him?**
(the Bible)

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **15 MIN**

Memorize Galatians 5:19–23

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

You will be surprised at how quickly the class can memorize this passage. Write it on the board and go over it with the class. One by one, erase the fruit of the Spirit. You will end up memorizing it with the class. If you want, divide the class into teams. Give the teams ten minutes to practice and then see which half of the class does the best at reciting the passage together. You can do this in addition to the normal Bible memory.

LESSON 52 - THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

