

# The Fruit of the Spirit

## Lesson One

The word "radiate" is written in a large, white, lowercase, sans-serif font. It is centered within a circular graphic composed of several concentric, light gray rings, creating a halo effect around the text.

### Settling In: About 10-20 minutes

- 1) Make a note to yourself who, if anyone, is missing from your home group this week:
- 2) Spend some time finding out how everyone is doing: make a note for prayer requests.
- 3) Introduce a time of conversational prayer. Make it clear that group members are not required to participate if they are not comfortable.

Or

- 4) After a more brief time of prayer...
  - a) Introduce a time of reflection on John 14:26  
"However, the helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything. He will remind you of everything that I have ever told you." (John 14:26, GWORD)
  - b) Thank the Holy Spirit for being present in your Home Group to reveal Jesus.
  - c) Lead out in prayers starting with "Holy Spirit remind us today of the teaching of Jesus about..."

This is only for your information...don't make a big deal of who is missing to the members who are present.

Conversational prayer means each member taking turns praying for various concerns with reasonably short and to-the-point prayers.

### Opener: About 10 minutes

- 1) What images come to your mind when you think of the word "immature"?
- 2) How can immaturity hurt a person?
- 3) Read Gal. 5:22-23: "By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things." (NRSV)
- 4) This is our main scripture text for this series on the Fruit of the Spirit.

Try to think of these studies as a "palette" to paint from when leading your Home Group. You don't have to use every question or even complete the lesson. Feel free to move the elements around or even drop them if you don't feel like they fit your group.

### Mini-teach: About 10 minutes

#### Focusing on Becoming

- 1) Most of us want to discover our purpose in life. God has an agenda for our lives. We often picture God's will for our lives as involving a role or achieving accomplishments.
- 2) We are often tempted to think of our future in terms of *doing* rather than *becoming*. But without *becoming* what we should we are unlikely to fulfil the potential of what we are called to *do*. Here's another way of putting it: It is possible to be promoted to opportunities and positions of leadership where our level of maturity cannot keep us.
- 3) Spiritual maturity is foundational. We make progress toward maturity all of our lives without ever reaching a point where we can say: "I've arrived; I'm all done growing."
- 4) The fruit of the Spirit is not a gift; at least not in the sense that it is suddenly bestowed upon you from heaven one day.
  - a) The fruit of the Spirit is grown, not given.
  - b) It is grown in the soil of our day-to-day challenges and choices.
  - c) But there is wonderful news: the Holy Spirit is at work in us to guide us

Read Dallas Willard's wonderful discussion on this topic in his book *Renovation of the Heart*, published by Navpress.

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and empower us to make the choices that lead to maturity and strong character.

- 5) God has given us a very clear model and goal for spiritual growth: Jesus Christ.
  - a) The fruit of the spirit is singular, in that it is a multifaceted description of the character of Jesus.
  - b) We are meant to grow through the Holy Spirit into the character of Jesus Christ "...until we become mature, until we measure up to Christ, who is the standard." (Eph. 4:13, GWORD)

### Discussion 1: *About 15 minutes*

- 1) According to Gal 5:13ff, what are we called to?
  - a) How does he qualify "freedom"?
  - b) How should we "use" our freedom?
- 2) In Gal 5:14, Paul refers to Jesus' teaching that the law (as applies to our human relationships) can be summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mk 12:31).
  - a) Note that the first characteristic of the Fruit of the Spirit is "love" (Gal 5:22).
  - b) Look through the rest of the characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit (...joy, peace, patience...). Discuss how these characteristics could help us understand what it means to "love your neighbour as yourself".
- 3) What is Paul talking about when he warns them against "biting and devouring each other"?
  - a) What will happen if they continue to bite and devour each other? Look at the sin list in Gal 5:19-21. How do some of these acts lead to the destruction of others?
  - b) What does Paul's stern warning in Gal 5:21 mean?

The "sinful nature" or "flesh" is the part of us tempts us to think and act selfishly and sinfully. Often these temptations are related to the misuse of the body.

It is important to read the verses of the Bible in context. In this passage, Paul is relating the Spirit-led life primarily to how we conduct our relationships. Therefore, as we discuss each of the characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit in turn we should keep in mind how our relationships should be affected.

### Discussion 2: *About 15 minutes*

#### What is our role in growing the fruit of the Spirit?

- 1) According to Gal 5:16, how are we to overcome the desires of the sinful nature?
  - a) Paul says, "Live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." (Gal 5:16 NIV). Gal 5:17 gives an explanation of why this is so...ask someone in the group to try to put it in their own words.
  - b) How can someone "live by the Spirit?" Some suggested answers:
    - i) We must prayerfully rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to help grow the Fruit of the Spirit in our day-to-day lives.
    - ii) We must use our "freedom" to resist the impulse of the sinful nature and follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit.
    - iii) We must use the "Sword of the Spirit" (Eph 6:17) to transform our minds and give direction to our choices.
    - iv) We must use occasions of temptation and trial as opportunities to

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make the right choices (Fruit of the Spirit) and resist the wrong choices (Acts of the Sinful Nature).

- 2) Paul references Jesus again in Gal 5:24: "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires." (NIV)
  - a) Look up and read Mt 16:24. Does this sound like a gradual process or a once and for all commitment?
  - b) What do you think this means in practical terms? In other words, what are we to do with this?
  - c) Does there appear to be any exceptions or compromises with Jesus' demand?
- 3) Notice how these verses tie together: "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law." (Gal 5:18, NIV) and "Against such things there is no law." (Gal 5:23, NIV)
  - a) The letter to the Galatians is a written reprimand and correction to a group of Christians who have reduced the way of God to a tick list of rules (laws) to be kept.
  - b) Why would the laws/rules not be relevant to those who are led by the Spirit?

To be "crucified with Christ" is a once and for all commitment that must be worked out everyday. See Gal 2:20.

Because the goal of the rules is more than fulfilled by those who are led by the Spirit. The righteous life of the Spirit greatly exceeds the level of righteousness demanded by the rules.

### Closer:

- The life that Jesus calls us to is far more than a set of religious rules. It is a living relationship with Jesus himself through the Holy Spirit.
- That relationship begins with a choice: to lay down our world of desires and take on the new life offered by Jesus.
- We must begin by surrendering our life to Jesus and asking his Holy Spirit to empower us to live for him.
- It's only then that we can see the Fruit of the Spirit produced in our own lives.

Have a suggestion to make this Home Group Guide better? Email us at: [contact@radiate-uk.com](mailto:contact@radiate-uk.com)

Recommended reading:

