



TIC Connect Group Discussion Guide

26 May - 1 June 2019 | Galatians 5:16-26

The Message. Our sinful nature and the continuous works of the Spirit in our lives cause a constant struggle in our heart. When we walk, live, and are led by the Spirit, we can win over the struggle and produce the true fruit of the Spirit.

Context. “Paul identifies a Christian conflict in which the combatants are called ‘the flesh’ and ‘the Spirit.’ By ‘the flesh’ Paul means what we are by nature and inheritance, our fallen condition. By ‘the Spirit’ he seems to mean the Holy Spirit himself, who renews and regenerates us, first giving us a new nature and then remaining to dwell in us. More simply, we may say that ‘the flesh’ stands for what we are by natural birth, ‘the Spirit’ what we become by new birth. These two, the flesh and the Spirit, are in sharp opposition to each other” (Stott).

Observation & Meaning

1. What is the difference between the desires of the flesh (5:16), the works of the flesh (5:19) and the flesh (5:24) itself? How does this inform us on how we sin?
2. What does happen to the flesh, the desires of the flesh, and the works of the flesh when we become Christians (a) in theory and (b) in practice? How does this inform us about what is going on inside every Christian?
3. What must we do to the flesh (5:24)?
 - a. Why is crucifixion an apt description of what we must do the flesh?
 - b. Who does the crucifixion? What does it mean for us?
4. What do “walk by the Spirit” (5:16), “led by the Spirit” (5:18), “live by the Spirit” (5:25a), and “keep in step with the Spirit” (5:25b) mean?
5. What are the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23)?
 - a. Why is “fruit of the Spirit” stated in the singular form (5:22)?
 - b. Why is the product of the Spirit called “fruit” (5:22) while of the flesh called “works” (5:19)?
 - c. Why some qualities may not be as apparent as the others in one’s life?
 - d. Can non-believers show the fruit of the Spirit?

Application

ECF. “Don’t simply try to change your behavior or your feelings. Ask yourself: Why am I gratifying my sinful nature in this way? How am I looking to get myself security or satisfaction or significance, rather than allowing Jesus to give it to me?” (Keller)

6. “... to keep you from doing the things you want to do” (5:17). How real is this experience for you? Why is that?
7. Which works of the flesh are evident in our culture or context now (5:19-21)?
8. How do we know that we are producing the fruit of the Spirit and not only modifying our behavior?

Christ-Centeredness

9. How do “walk by the Spirit” (5:16), “led by the Spirit” (5:18), “live by the Spirit” (5:25a), and “keep in step with the Spirit” (5:25b) help us in our struggle with sin?

Insight

Sorcery (5:20). “Sorcery (translated *witchcraft* in the NIV) is the service and worship of occult and spiritual powers apart from the true God. It also has another dimension, revealed by the word for sorcery in the original language Paul uses: *pharmakeia*, from which we get our word for ‘pharmacy.’ Morris defines sorcery as ‘the use of any kind of drugs, potions, or spells.’ In the ancient world, the taking of drugs (especially hallucinogens) was always associated with the occult, and the Bible’s association with drug taking and sorcery points out that drugs open up doors to the occult that are better left closed. William Barclay wrote, ‘this literally means the use of drugs ... it came to be very specially connected with the use of drugs for sorcery, of which the ancient world was full.’ The Holy Spirit never led anyone into sorcery or getting high on drugs.” (Guzik)

Resources

- Guzik, David. *Galatians*. Enduring Word Commentary. Enduring Word Media, 2012.
- Keller, Timothy. *Gospel Matters: The Good Book Guide to Galatians*. UK: The Good Book Company, 2013.
- Stott, John. *Reading Galatians with John Stott*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2017.