

The Holy Spirit, Teacher's Guide

Week 10: The Fruit of the Spirit and Sanctification

Galatians 5:16–26

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This lesson presents the Spirit's true ongoing work in the Christian: sanctification, the growth of Christlike character, the fruit of the Spirit. Doctrinally, the teacher must hold together the two truths this study has been building toward. First, the work is real and the Spirit's own: He dwells in the believer (Week 9), strengthens the inner man (Ephesians 3:16), and God works in His people "both to will and to work" (Philippians 2:13); the fruit is "of the Spirit," not of self-improvement. Second, the work is non-miraculous and word-wrought: the Spirit sanctifies through the truth He inspired (John 17:17), transforming by the renewal of the mind (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18), which is why Paul's commands are walking commands, "walk by the Spirit," "keep in step with the Spirit", daily, deliberate obedience along the path the word marks out. The lesson thereby answers two errors at once: the charismatic expectation of instantaneous, miraculous holiness (a "second work of grace"), and the secular assumption that character change is mere willpower. The Christian works out what God works in; the orchard grows where the branch abides.

The passage's structure should organize the class hour: the war (5:16–18), every Christian's inner battlefield, normalized and explained; the works of the flesh (5:19–21), with special attention to the relational sins that occupy most of the list and most of a congregation's actual danger, and Paul's sober warning about inheritance; the fruit (5:22–23), one ninefold character, grounded in believed truth and aimed at other people; and the crucifixion and the walk (5:24–26), the Christian's active role, decisive with the flesh, daily with the Spirit. Throughout, keep the comparison from the Group Discussion alive: the fruit is the Spirit's present signature, and a transformed character is harder to explain away than any claimed wonder.

Formationally, this is the week the study moves from the students' theology to their kitchens, workplaces, and tempers. The fruit list is famously comfortable until it is read as a mirror, and the works list is famously alarming until we skip the relational sins we practice. Insist on specificity: which fruit is the runt, which work is being protected as a personality trait, which nail needs driving. Send students home with one act of cultivation scheduled, and with the encouragement that the Husbandman is patient, the growing season is long, and "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion" (Philippians 1:6) in everyone who keeps walking.

Question 1

Student Question:

Paul commands, “walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16), and later, “keep in step with the Spirit” (5:25). What do these walking metaphors teach about how the Christian life actually works, and how does the Spirit lead a Christian’s steps today (John 17:17; Romans 12:2; Psalm 119:105)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Begin with the metaphor’s realism: walking is the Bible’s favorite figure for the whole manner of a life (Enoch “walked with God,” Genesis 5:24; “walk in a manner worthy,” Ephesians 4:1; “as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him,” Colossians 2:6). A walk is composed of single steps, none heroic, all directional; it is daily, repeatable, and slow; it requires staying on a path; and it can be resumed after a stumble. By choosing this figure, Paul tells us what the Spirit-led life is not: not a leap, not a trance, not an occasional summit experience, but ten thousand ordinary decisions taken in one direction. “Keep in step” (stoicheo, 5:25) sharpens it with a military cadence: marching in line, matching pace, the Spirit calling the cadence and the Christian matching his stride to it.

Then answer the question’s hinge: how does the Spirit lead the walker today? The class has spent nine weeks earning the answer, and it should now come quickly: through the word He inspired, applied by the renewed mind, with His strengthening help within. Jesus prayed, “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17), sanctification’s instrument named by the Sanctifier. Paul locates transformation at “the renewal of your mind” (Romans 12:2), and the psalmist supplies the walking image exactly: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105), a lamp for feet, note, lighting the next step, not the next decade. Being “led by the Spirit” (5:18) is therefore not inner impulses navigating by sensation (the previous weeks closed that door, recall Week 9’s twin texts, Ephesians 5:18 with Colossians 3:16); it is the believer following where the Spirit’s word points, with the indwelling Spirit strengthening the following (Ephesians 3:16; Philippians 2:13). Leading that contradicted or bypassed the word would be leading the Spirit disowns.

Unpack the promise attached: “walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh” (5:16). The grammar is emphatic, a strong negation: walking by the Spirit and gratifying the flesh cannot happen simultaneously, the way a man cannot walk north and south at once. This is the Bible’s strategy of displacement: the flesh is not defeated by staring at it but by walking away from it in another direction; evil is overcome with good (Romans 12:21); the soul, like nature, abhors a vacuum (Matthew 12:43–45’s swept-but-empty house as the warning). Practical translation: the man fighting lust primarily by gritting his teeth fails; the man who fills the hours with the word, prayer, service, and the brethren finds the old crop dying for lack of water.

Note finally verse 18’s liberation: “if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” In Galatians’ argument, this contrasts the Spirit’s way with the law-system the Judaizers were peddling; the Spirit-led life is not lawless (it fulfills “the law of Christ,” 6:2) but it is not powered

by external code-keeping; it is powered from within, the law written on the heart (Jeremiah 31:33), love doing what mere rules never achieved (5:13–14). The walk is commanded, but the walker is also carried, and both truths must stay in the sentence.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Walking as the Bible's figure for a whole manner of life: daily, directional, resumable
- "Keep in step" (stoicheo): cadence, alignment, the Spirit's pace matched
- How the Spirit leads today: the word as instrument (John 17:17; Psalm 119:105), the indwelling as strength (Ephesians 3:16)
- Leading never contrary to or apart from the word: the settled boundary applied
- The displacement strategy: 5:16's emphatic promise, Romans 12:21, the swept-empty house
- Not under law (5:18): powered from within, fulfilling the law of Christ in love

Discussion Prompts

- Why is 'walk' a better description of the Christian life than 'leap' or 'experience,' and what does that change about your expectations?
- How would you explain being 'led by the Spirit' to someone who assumes it means following inner impressions?
- Where has the displacement strategy worked in your life, an old desire starved by a new pursuit?

Question 2

Student Question:

"The desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh... to keep you from doing the things you want to do" (5:17). Where is this war hottest in your life right now? Be specific with yourself: what does the flesh want in that arena, what does the Spirit's word want, and which side has been winning?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Normalize the war first, because verse 17 is one of the most pastorally important verses in Paul: "the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh... to keep you from doing the things you want to do." Many sincere Christians secretly conclude from their inner conflict that their conversion failed, surely a real Christian would not want what I sometimes want. Paul says the opposite: the war is the evidence of life. Before conversion there was no battle worth the name; the flesh ruled an undisputed field (Ephesians 2:1–3). The new convert discovers conflict precisely because a second claimant has moved in. Romans 7's anguished "I do not do what I want" and 1 Peter 2:11's "passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul" describe the same front line. A quiet conscience at total peace with sin is the alarming condition; the ache of the divided field is the sound of the Spirit contesting ground.

Define the combatant accurately, because “flesh” (sarx) here is not the body (the body is the Spirit’s temple, Week 9, and the resurrection’s material) but the old self-centered nature, human desire organized around self instead of God, as the works list will prove in a moment: half its sins (envy, rivalry, dissension) need no body at all. The flesh is the inner gravity that pulls every appetite, good in itself, past its God-given banks: hunger into gluttony, rest into sloth, sexual desire into immorality, self-respect into pride, justice into vengeance. That definition matters practically: the enemy is not desire as such but desire unbanked, and the war is fought at the banks.

Now run the question’s audit with real seriousness, and model the specificity it demands. “Where is the war hottest?” expects an arena: the marriage’s resentment ledger; the screen after midnight; the bottle or the prescription; the tongue at work; the ambition that has begun to eat Sundays; the spending that medicates; the brother not spoken to since spring. Then the two interrogations the question scripts: what does the flesh want there (name its actual promise: relief, esteem, escape, control, pleasure), and what does the Spirit’s word want there (name the actual texts: Ephesians 4:26–27, 31–32 for the resentment; Matthew 5:28–29 for the eyes; Ephesians 5:18 for the bottle; James 3 for the tongue; Matthew 6:33 for the ambition)? The flesh fights in vague twilight; dragging the conflict into named daylight is itself a tactical victory (Ephesians 5:11–13).

Close the block with the war’s winnable-ness, because Paul writes as a strategist, not a spectator. The promise of 5:16 stands (walking by the Spirit starves the flesh); God limits every temptation and builds the escape route into it (1 Corinthians 10:13); confession enlists allies (James 5:16); and the decisive engagement, crucifixion of the flesh, has, for those in Christ, already been signed at baptism (5:24; Romans 6:3–6, the old self crucified with Him, ahead in Question 7). No student should leave thinking stalemate is the ceiling. Ground is taken in this war, slowly, street by street, and the Commander has never lost a soldier who stayed in ranks (John 10:28–29; 1 John 5:4).

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The war as evidence of life: conflict began when the second claimant moved in
- Defining sarx: self-centered nature, not the body; desire pulled past its banks
- The audit’s discipline: name the arena, the flesh’s promise, the word’s command
- Vague twilight versus named daylight (Ephesians 5:11–13)
- The winnable war: 5:16’s promise, 1 Corinthians 10:13’s escape, confession’s allies
- Against both despair and complacency: contested ground, but a Commander who keeps His soldiers

Discussion Prompts

- Why is the presence of inner conflict actually better news than a conscience at peace with sin?

- What does the flesh actually promise you in your hottest arena, and has it ever kept the promise?
- Who knows about your front line, and if no one does, what does that secrecy cost you?

Question 3

Student Question:

Paul says “the works of the flesh are evident” and lists fifteen of them before adding “and things like these” (5:19–21). Looking at the list closely, it covers sins of passion (immorality, drunkenness), false religion (idolatry, sorcery), and, at greatest length, sins of relationship (enmity, strife, jealousy, rivalries, dissensions, envy). What does the list’s shape teach us about what the flesh does to a congregation, and why does Paul warn that those who practice such things “will not inherit the kingdom of God”?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Read the list aloud and let its shape teach, as the question directs. Fifteen named works, then the honest et cetera (“and things like these”). Sort them: sins of passion, sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality at the front, drunkenness and orgies at the rear; sins of false worship, idolatry and sorcery (pharmakeia, the drug-and-occult traffic of paganism); and then the long middle, eight relational sins, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, more than half the list. Paul’s emphasis lands where churches rarely aim their alarm. Galatian congregations were apparently in little danger of temple orgies; they were in real danger of “biting and devouring one another” (5:15), the verse immediately before our passage, and of becoming “conceited, provoking one another, envying one another” (5:26), the verse immediately after. The works list is bracketed by congregational warfare, which tells you exactly what the flesh does to a church: it factionalizes, ranks, resents, gossips, and splits. A congregation can keep its morality codes and be devoured from the inside by the middle of this list.

Note “evident” (5:19): the flesh’s works need no subtle diagnosis; they are public, recognizable, undisguised by good intentions. And note the present-tense warning: “those who practice (prassontes, habitually do) such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (5:21). Weigh the warning honestly with the class, because it is addressed to Christians, brethren Paul has just called to freedom (5:13). It is not the stumble that forfeits the inheritance but the practice, the work of the flesh adopted as a way of walking. This text therefore stands with Hebrews 10:26–31 and 2 Peter 2:20–22 against any doctrine of unconditional security: heirs can disinherit themselves, and Paul says he warned them before and warns them again, which is what love does. At the same time, guard the tender conscience: the Christian at war with his sin (Question 2) is the opposite of the one practicing it in peace; conviction that drives to confession is the Spirit winning, not the inheritance failing (1 John 1:9).

Spend the block's remaining weight where Paul spends his: the relational eight. Define them so they cannot hide: enmity, the settled hostility that precedes any act; strife, the appetite for the quarrel itself; jealousy, the burn at another's blessing; fits of anger (thumoi), the explosions a family learns to walk around; rivalries (eritheiai), the self-promoting factionalism of office and congregation alike; dissensions and divisions, disagreement hardened into standing apart; envy, displeasure at another's good so corrosive that it cannot even enjoy what it has. Every one of these can wear a churchgoing face. Every one has split congregations that would have excommunicated a drunkard while platforming a divider. Proverbs 6:16–19 should be read here: among the seven things the Lord hates, the climax is “one who sows discord among brothers.”

Why “will not inherit the kingdom”? Because the works of the flesh are the kingdom's opposite in substance, not merely in rule-breaking. The kingdom is “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14:17); a person practicing enmity, strife, and envy is not being excluded from something he wants; he is refusing the very thing the kingdom is. Heaven would be torment to an unrepentant divider. That framing turns the warning from arbitrary penalty into sober diagnosis, and it sets up the fruit list perfectly: what the Spirit grows is kingdom character, the family resemblance of the realm the saints will inherit.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The list's shape: passion, false worship, and the dominant relational middle
- Bracketed by congregational warfare (5:15, 26): what the flesh does to a church
- “Practice” versus stumble: the habitual walk that forfeits inheritance (5:21)
- Against unconditional security, with protection for the tender conscience (1 John 1:9)
- Defining the relational eight so they cannot pose as personality
- The kingdom as the works' substantive opposite (Romans 14:17): exclusion as diagnosis

Discussion Prompts

- Why do you think churches sound louder alarms over the passion sins than the relational ones Paul lists at greater length?
- What is the difference between falling into a sin and practicing it, and why does the difference matter for the warning of 5:21?
- Which of the relational eight most threatens this congregation's peace, and what would starving it look like?

Question 4

Student Question:

It is easy to read the works-of-the-flesh list and check off the sins we have avoided while skimming past the ones we practice, especially the relational ones: strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, envy. Which item on Paul's list have you been treating as a personality trait rather than a sin to crucify? What would repentance look like there this week?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Name the dodge the question names, because everyone in the room has used it: reading the works list as a checklist for self-congratulation, no sorcery, no orgies, passing grade, while the sins we practice daily ride past unexamined under the alias of temperament. “I’m just a passionate person” (fits of anger). “I’m competitive; it’s how I’m wired” (rivalries). “I just tell it like it is” (strife). “I have strong convictions” (dissensions). “I hold people accountable” (enmity wearing a badge). “It’s not envy; I just don’t think she deserves it.” The flesh’s most effective camouflage is the personality plea, because it converts a sin to be crucified into a self to be accepted, and modern culture supplies the slogan: that’s just who I am. Paul’s list strips the aliases: these are works of the flesh, full stop, sharing a paragraph with sorcery and orgies, and carrying the same inheritance warning.

Give the class the diagnostic for telling temperament from sin, because the distinction is real and the question turns on it. Temperament is morally neutral wiring: introvert or extrovert, quick or deliberate, intense or easygoing, gifts of creation, variously useful in the kingdom (consider Peter and John, both apostles, opposite wirings). The works of the flesh are not wiring but harvest: they damage people, grieve the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30–31, where bitterness, wrath, anger, and slander are what grieves Him), and appear on God’s named lists. The test questions: Does this trait leave wounds that others must bandage? Would I accept this behavior from someone else toward my own family? Does Scripture name it? Am I calling it personality precisely because repenting of it would cost me? An intense temperament can be sanctified into zeal (Romans 12:11); a fit of anger cannot be sanctified into anything; it must die.

Then walk the question’s demand: what would repentance look like there this week? Sketch it for the most common aliases. Fits of anger: confession to the household that absorbs them (James 5:16), the Ephesians 4:26–27 sundown rule adopted, the practiced withdrawal-and-prayer before the boil (Proverbs 16:32; 29:11). Strife and rivalry: deliberately losing the next argument that does not matter (2 Timothy 2:24, the Lord’s servant “must not be quarrelsome”); promoting a rival’s good work to others (Philippians 2:3, “count others more significant”). Envy: the discipline of thanksgiving for the other’s blessing, by name, in prayer, until the burn cools (Romans 12:15’s “rejoice with those who rejoice” as warfare, not etiquette). Dissensions: the overdue conversation of Matthew 5:23–24, the apology that surrenders the right to have been right. Note that each repentance is behavioral and visible, what Scripture calls “fruit in keeping with repentance” (Luke 3:8), not merely a resolved feeling.

End with grace’s realism. The personality plea contains a half-truth: these patterns are deeply worn, often inherited, often decades old, and their owners have usually despaired of change. The gospel neither accepts the plea nor mocks the despair; it crucifies and replaces. The same Paul who lists fits of anger watched God transform him from a man “breathing threats and murder” (Acts 9:1) into the author of the love chapter; the Sons of Thunder wanted fire from heaven (Luke 9:54) and one of them became the apostle of love. “And such were some of you” (1 Corinthians 6:11) is the Bible’s standing rebuttal to that’s-just-who-I-am: in Christ, who you

were is not who you must remain, and the Spirit has been changing exactly these traits, in exactly ordinary people, for twenty centuries.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The personality plea: the flesh's camouflage, converting sins to selves
- Temperament versus sin: wiring versus harvest, with the four test questions
- Ephesians 4:30–31: the relational sins as what grieves the Spirit
- Repentance sketched per alias: anger, strife, envy, dissension, each with visible fruit (Luke 3:8)
- “Such were some of you” (1 Corinthians 6:11): biography is not destiny in Christ
- Grace for worn patterns: neither accepting the plea nor mocking the despair

Discussion Prompts

- Which item on Paul's list has lived in your house under an alias, and what is its real name?
- Why is ‘that's just who I am’ both partly true and totally insufficient for a Christian?
- What visible ‘fruit in keeping with repentance’ would convince your family the trait is actually dying?

Question 5

Student Question:

The fruit of the Spirit begins with “love, joy, peace,” and Scripture grounds each in truth the Spirit revealed: God's love poured into our hearts (Romans 5:5), joy in believing (Romans 15:13), peace with God through justification (Romans 5:1). How does each of these graces grow from believed truth rather than from circumstances, and what does that teach about how the Spirit produces them?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Set the first triad on its true foundation, because the question's premise is the block's doctrine: love, joy, and peace are not temperaments or weather; they are graces grown from believed truth. Trace each. Love: “God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us” (Romans 5:5), and the apostle of love derives ours from His: “we love because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19); the Christian's love is responsive, fed by contemplating the cross (1 John 4:9–11), not generated by trying harder to feel warmly. Joy: “may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing” (Romans 15:13), in believing, joy's supply line is faith in what God has said and done; hence Peter's converts “rejoice with joy that is inexpressible” over a salvation they believed without seeing (1 Peter 1:8–9), and Paul sings at midnight in stocks (Acts 16:25) because his joy drew on nothing Philippi could confiscate. Peace: “since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1), peace with God as settled fact, which then guards hearts as felt tranquility when prayer hands over the anxieties (Philippians 4:6–7; Isaiah 26:3, the mind stayed on Him).

Draw the doctrinal conclusion explicitly, because it is this study's signature move: if love grows from the cross believed, joy from the promises believed, and peace from justification believed, then the Spirit produces this triad through the truth He revealed, exactly as Jesus prayed ("sanctify them in the truth," John 17:17) and exactly as the renewal-of-mind texts describe (Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18). The fruit of the Spirit is the harvest of the word of the Spirit, dwelling richly (Colossians 3:16). This is why a Christian cannot expect the triad while neglecting the truth that feeds it, prayerless, wordless weeks produce loveless, joyless, anxious Christians, not because the Spirit failed but because the supply line was cut.

Contrast the world's counterfeits to sharpen each grace. The world's love is reciprocal and conditional (Matthew 5:46, even tax collectors manage it); the Spirit's love reaches enemies because it flows from the One who died for His (Romans 5:8, 10). The world's happiness is circumstantial, well named from 'hap,' chance; the Spirit's joy coexists with sorrow ("sorrowful, yet always rejoicing," 2 Corinthians 6:10) because its object is fixed. The world's peace is the gap between crises, managed by avoidance or sedation; the Spirit's peace "surpasses understanding" (Philippians 4:7), meaning it shows up where understanding says it shouldn't, in the hospital corridor, at the graveside, the peace Jesus bequeathed, "not as the world gives" (John 14:27).

Make the cultivation practical, since graces fed by truth are cultivated by feeding. For love: scheduled contemplation of the cross (the Lord's Supper taken thoughtfully is weekly love-cultivation by design) and prayer for the unlovable by name. For joy: the discipline of rehearsing salvation's facts when feelings disagree, psalm-singing's actual function (Ephesians 5:19), and gratitude lists that count what cannot be lost. For peace: Philippians 4:6-7 practiced as written, every anxiety converted into a specific prayer with thanksgiving, and the mind's diet policed (4:8), because a mind marinating in outrage media and catastrophizing cannot expect the Spirit's tranquility. Ask the class which member of the triad is thinnest in them, then trace backward: which truth has gone unrehearsed?

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The triad's foundations: Romans 5:5 (love), Romans 15:13 (joy in believing), Romans 5:1 (peace by justification)
- Fruit as harvest of the word: John 17:17 and the renewal texts applied to character
- Counterfeits contrasted: reciprocal love, circumstantial happiness, gap-between-crises peace
- Joy with sorrow (2 Corinthians 6:10) and peace past understanding (Philippians 4:7)
- Cut supply lines: wordless weeks producing anxious, joyless Christians
- Cultivation by feeding: the Supper, psalm-singing, gratitude, Philippians 4:6-8 as practice

Discussion Prompts

- Why can the Spirit's joy survive circumstances that would kill the world's happiness?

- Which truth, the cross, the promises, or your justification, have you rehearsed least lately, and which grace has thinned accordingly?
- How does the Lord's Supper function as weekly cultivation of love, and what would taking it that way change?

Question 6

Student Question:

Patience, kindness, goodness: the middle triad of the fruit faces outward, toward people who are difficult, needy, or undeserving. Think of the person who tests your patience most. What would it look like, concretely, this week, for the Spirit's patience, kindness, and goodness to reach that person through you?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Orient the class to the middle triad's direction: love, joy, peace are Godward and inward; patience, kindness, goodness face outward, and specifically toward people at their least convenient. Patience (*makrothumia*) is literally long-temper, the long fuse, the grace God shows sinners ("the Lord is... patient toward you," 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 2:4, His patience meant to lead to repentance) now reproduced toward the people who try us. Kindness (*chrestotes*) is usefulness-in-gentleness, the disposition that makes someone easy to approach and good to deal with, the very word Jesus uses of His yoke ("my yoke is easy," *chrestos*, Matthew 11:30) and Paul of God's kindness that appeared to save us (Titus 3:4-5). Goodness (*agathosune*) is kindness with its sleeves rolled up, active generosity that does the helpful thing, including, when needed, the firm thing (goodness can rebuke; kindness sets its tone). All three are first God's character toward us, then the family resemblance in us, the logic of Ephesians 4:32-5:1: "be kind to one another... as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children."

Now serve the question's exercise without letting anyone escape into generality: the person who tests your patience most. Have students fix the face privately: the spouse whose habits have not changed in twenty years; the parent whose decline repeats every conversation; the child who is taking the long way home; the coworker who claims credit; the brother at services whose opinions arrive at volume. Then make the triad concrete toward that person, grace by grace. Patience: the decision, made in advance, not to answer the provocation tonight (Proverbs 19:11, "good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense"); the tenth explanation given as evenly as the first; the timeline surrendered (love "bears all things... endures all things," 1 Corinthians 13:7). Kindness: the tone deliberately warmed; the small unearned courtesy, coffee brought, the door held, the text sent for no reason, aimed precisely at the undeserving, because that aim is the grace's signature (Luke 6:35, "he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil"). Goodness: the concrete helpful act that costs something, the errand run, the repair made, the need met before it is voiced, Galatians 6:10 applied inside the very week: "as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone."

Forewarn the class about the triad's economics, because here is where most attempts die: these graces are typically spent on people who do not repay, often do not notice, and sometimes get worse before they get better. That is not the system failing; that is the system, the imitation of a God who "makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good" (Matthew 5:44-48) and whose patience toward us has run for decades without our deserving a day of it. The payoff text is the farmer's: "let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9, the very next paragraph), and the audience that always notices is the One being imitated (Matthew 6:4).

Close by reversing the mirror for honesty's sake: every student is also somebody's patience-tester. The measure-for-measure texts apply (Matthew 7:2, 12); the patience we require is being required of others by us, usually at home. Remembering that we live entirely off God's long fuse (1 Timothy 1:16, Paul as the showcase of Christ's "perfect patience") keeps the triad from curdling into condescension: we extend to our difficult person what is being extended, hourly, to us.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The outward triad defined: long-temper, approachable usefulness, active generosity
- First God's character, then ours: 2 Peter 3:9; Titus 3:4-5; Ephesians 4:32-5:1
- The fixed face: grace made concrete toward one named person
- The triad's economics: spent on the unrepaying, modeled on Matthew 5:44-48
- Galatians 6:9-10: weariness expected, harvest promised, opportunity commanded
- The reversed mirror: we are someone's patience-tester, living off God's long fuse (1 Timothy 1:16)

Discussion Prompts

- Whose face came to mind, and which of the three graces does that relationship most lack from your side?
- Why is kindness aimed at the undeserving the signature of God's kind of kindness?
- What keeps you going in doing good when the difficult person does not change, and what does Galatians 6:9 add?

Question 7

Student Question:

The fruit is singular and the list climaxes with "self-control," while the works of the flesh are plural and chaotic. Paul adds that "those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (5:24). What do the singular fruit, the crucified flesh, and Romans 8:13 ("by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body") teach about the Christian's active role in sanctification?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Work the grammar the question highlights, because Paul chose it: “the works (plural) of the flesh” versus “the fruit (singular) of the Spirit.” The flesh produces disconnected deeds, a chaos of competing appetites (lust and pride and envy pull in different directions, which is why the fleshly life feels fragmented); the Spirit grows one organic character, nine facets of a single Christlikeness, ripening together. You cannot pick the cluster apart, claiming joy while declining patience, any more than an apple can be sweet but not round on demand; where one grace is genuinely growing, the others are coming with it, because all nine describe one Person being formed in us (Galatians 4:19, “until Christ is formed in you”). And the list’s climax, self-control (egkrateia), answers the flesh’s signature, loss of control (fits, drunkenness, sensuality): the Spirit’s final fruit is mastery of the self that once mastered us, which is why Paul preached it to Felix alongside righteousness and judgment (Acts 24:25) and why an elder must have it (Titus 1:8).

Now take up verse 24’s startling tense: “those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” Aorist, accomplished: the crucifixion has happened, and Paul locates it where Romans locates it, at baptism into Christ’s death: “our old self was crucified with him... we were buried therefore with him by baptism into death” (Romans 6:3–6). At conversion, the believer signed the flesh’s death warrant; he renounced its rule and nailed it up. But crucifixion, as the introduction’s question notes, is a slow death: the nailed thing is doomed but not yet still, and it screams for relief. Hence the matching present-tense command, the question’s third text: “if by the Spirit you put to death (present, ongoing) the deeds of the body, you will live” (Romans 8:13). Decisive renunciation once; daily executions thereafter. Colossians says both in two chapters: you died (3:3), therefore put to death (3:5). The Christian’s role is to refuse the crucified thing every reprieve.

This yields the doctrine of sanctification’s partnership, and the teacher should state it with both clauses at full strength. God’s part is real: the fruit is “of the Spirit”; God works in you “both to will and to work” (Philippians 2:13); the inner man is strengthened with power through His Spirit (Ephesians 3:16). The Christian’s part is real: walk, keep in step, crucify, put to death, sow (6:7–8), “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12), the imperative that stands one verse before God’s working. Neither clause cancels the other; Paul holds them in one sentence, and so must we. Against quietism (“let go and let God”): the verbs are ours to do. Against self-help moralism: the power and the growth are His (“God gave the growth,” 1 Corinthians 3:6–7). The farmer’s life is the picture: he cannot make one seed sprout, and yet no crop comes if he will not plow, plant, water, and weed (2 Timothy 2:6).

Apply with the sowing principle that closes Paul’s thought in the chapter’s sequel: “whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:7–8). Every hour, dollar, click, and conversation is seed in one field or the other; character is the compounding interest of ten thousand small deposits. Have students audit a single ordinary day, where did the discretionary time and attention actually fall?, and identify one recurring

sowing to the flesh to convert into a sowing to the Spirit. Sanctification rarely turns on dramatic moments; it turns on what we plant on Tuesdays.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Singular fruit versus plural works: one Christlike character versus fragmenting appetites
- Self-control as climax: the Spirit's answer to the flesh's loss of control (Acts 24:25)
- Verse 24's accomplished crucifixion located at baptism (Romans 6:3-6)
- The ongoing execution: Romans 8:13; Colossians 3:3 with 3:5, no reprieves granted
- The partnership stated whole: Philippians 2:12-13, against quietism and against moralism
- Sowing and reaping (6:7-8): character as compounded daily deposits

Discussion Prompts

- Why does it matter that the fruit is singular, and what does that say about claiming some graces while declining others?
- What died at your baptism, and in what sense does it still need killing on Tuesdays?
- Looking at yesterday honestly, which field received most of your seed?

Question 8

Student Question:

Crucifixion is slow, deliberate, and final; Paul says the flesh must be crucified, not negotiated with. What passion or desire have you been negotiating with, feeding it just enough to keep it alive? What would it mean to drive the nail this week: the account deleted, the bottle emptied, the relationship ended, the apology made?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Let the question's central image do its work first: negotiating with a passion is feeding it just enough to keep it alive, the diet version of a sin, the managed vice, the pet on a leash. The drinker who switches to weekends; the wandering eye that keeps one app; the grudge taken out and polished monthly; the gossip rationed to one trusted ear; the purchase pattern trimmed but not killed. Scripture's diagnosis of negotiation is unsparing: sin crouches at the door, "its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7), and fed sin grows, desire conceives and "gives birth" and matures toward death (James 1:14-15). The flesh does not honor treaties; every concession is a beachhead. Paul's word in our text is crucifixion precisely because crucifixion is the un-negotiable death: deliberate (nails are chosen and driven), public (a crucified thing is renounced before witnesses), and final (nobody crucifies a thing he plans to revive).

Honor the question's allusion to the Lord's own surgery texts, because Jesus taught this severity first: "if your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away... if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off" (Matthew 5:29-30), hyperbole in the letter, deadly serious in the principle:

whatever feeds the sin gets amputated, however valuable, however normal, however much it screams. The drive of the principle is access: sin lives on supply lines, and repentance that leaves the supply lines intact is planning a relapse. Hence the question's brutal specifics, and the teacher should not soften them: the account deleted (not just unfollowed), the bottle emptied (not just cabined), the relationship ended (not tapered), the apology made (not intended). Proverbs supplies the test of seriousness: "can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned?" (Proverbs 6:27).

Equip the nail-driving with Scripture's practical mechanics, because resolve without method usually fails by Friday. Flee: some enemies are outrun, not outfought, Joseph's sprint (Genesis 39:12), "flee youthful passions" (2 Timothy 2:22), flee immorality, idolatry, love of money (1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:14; 1 Timothy 6:10–11). Starve: the supply-line audit, no provision for the flesh (Romans 13:14), which today means concrete media, schedule, and geography decisions. Replace: displacement again, the vacated house must be tenanted (Matthew 12:43–45), put on as you put off (Colossians 3:5–14), pursue righteousness with the same energy that fled. Enlist: confession to a trusted brother (James 5:16), because secrecy is the negotiation's last refuge, and a sin dragged into the light loses its best weapon (1 John 1:7; Ephesians 5:11–13). Pray: watch and pray, the Lord said, because "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

Close with crucifixion's other side, because this question, taken alone, could end in grim moralism, and the gospel never does. The flesh is crucified to make room for a resurrection: "you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3); those who lose their life for His sake find it (Matthew 16:25). Every nail driven this week is not loss but planting, the kernel falling into the earth to bear much fruit (John 12:24), and the Christ who calls for the death of the passion is the same Christ who supplies the strength for the dying (Philippians 4:13) and the joy on the far side of it. Students should leave sobered about the nail and certain about the harvest.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Negotiation diagnosed: the managed vice, fed enough to live; Genesis 4:7 and James 1:14–15
- Crucifixion's character: deliberate, public, final, the un-negotiable death
- The Lord's amputation principle: access severed, supply lines cut (Matthew 5:29–30; Romans 13:14)
- The mechanics: flee, starve, replace, enlist, pray, each with its texts
- Secrecy as the negotiation's refuge; confession as the light that disarms (James 5:16; 1 John 1:7)
- Crucifixion unto resurrection: loss as planting (John 12:24; Matthew 16:25)

Discussion Prompts

- What does your negotiated sin's treaty actually say, what have you agreed to keep feeding it?
- Which supply line, access, schedule, secrecy, would hurt most to cut, and is that not the one to cut first?
- What has every previous negotiation with this desire actually purchased, and what might one driven nail purchase instead?

Question 9

Student Question:

Some teach that sanctification comes through a miraculous "second work of grace," an instantaneous experience that perfects the believer. From this passage and the study so far, how does the Spirit actually sanctify the Christian, through what means (John 17:17; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 3:16; Philippians 2:12-13), at what pace (2 Peter 1:5-8; 3:18), and how would you answer both the perfectionist who claims sinlessness and the defeatist who claims change is impossible (1 John 1:8-9; 1 Corinthians 10:13)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Frame the doctrine under review fairly before answering it. "Second work of grace" theology, rooted in the holiness movement and carried into pentecostalism, teaches that after conversion a believer should seek a subsequent, instantaneous, miraculous experience (entire sanctification, or Spirit baptism as a second blessing) that eradicates the sinful nature or perfects the believer in love. The appeal is real: who would not want holiness in a moment instead of a long war? But the class has spent ten weeks assembling the answer, and this question gathers it. The means of sanctification: the word of truth (John 17:17; "you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth," 1 Peter 1:22), beheld and transforming (2 Corinthians 3:18), with the indwelling Spirit strengthening (Ephesians 3:16) and God working in the working believer (Philippians 2:12-13). The pace: growth language saturates the New Testament, "grow up in every way" (Ephesians 4:15), "grow in grace" (2 Peter 3:18), the supplemented faith of 2 Peter 1:5-8 where qualities are added "in increasing measure," newborns longing for milk "that by it you may grow" (1 Peter 2:2), and fruit itself is a season word: no orchard ripens overnight. Scripture knows decisive moments (baptism, the crucifixion of the old self) and ongoing process (the daily putting to death, the renewed mind); it nowhere offers a second miraculous shortcut, and the very epistles written to Spirit-indwelt Christians keep commanding effort, which would be senseless if a single experience could eradicate the need.

Answer the perfectionist with John: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8), written to Christians, present tense, with the remedy in the next verse, ongoing confession to a faithful Forgiver (1:9), and the advocacy of Christ for believers who do sin (2:1). Paul, decades into his apostleship, disclaims arrival: "not that I am already perfect, but I press on" (Philippians 3:12-14). The claim of sinlessness this side of glory contradicts the apostles' own self-testimony and sets the claimant up either for self-deception

(redefining sin downward until the claim holds) or for despair when reality breaks through. Note the pastoral wreckage this doctrine leaves: sincere souls who sought the experience, felt something, claimed perfection, and then met their own temper on Tuesday, concluding either that they lied or that grace failed.

Answer the defeatist with the same Scriptures' other edge. "Change is impossible" is equally unbiblical: "such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified" (1 Corinthians 6:11); God's power "has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3); every temptation comes with a built-in escape (1 Corinthians 10:13); and "he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion" (Philippians 1:6). The defeatist usually suffers not from God's inability but from misdiagnosed expectations (he sought a feeling of victory rather than a walk of obedience), cut supply lines (no word, no prayer, no brethren), or unfought negotiation (Question 8). Slow is not stuck: ask the class to compare themselves not with last month but with their first year in Christ, growth measured in seasons is still growth, and the orchard's pace is the design, not the defect.

Give the class the conversational shape for both errors, since both sit in their world: charismatic friends taught to seek the second blessing, and weary Christians who have quietly given up. To the seeker of instant holiness: honest common ground first (you want to be like Christ, so does Scripture, 1 Thessalonians 4:3), then the texts on means and pace, then the gentle question, "if a single experience perfects, why do the epistles, written to Spirit-filled believers, keep saying grow, add, press on, put to death?" To the defeatist: 1 Corinthians 6:11's "such were some of you" and a practical restart, one supply line reopened, one brother enlisted, one besetting sin named. And to both, the same reassurance: the Husbandman is not pacing the orchard in frustration; He prunes because He expects fruit (John 15:2), and the slow ripening of a soul is precisely the kind of work an indwelling, patient, word-wielding Spirit does.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The second-blessing doctrine described fairly: its claim, appeal, and pastoral wreckage
- Means: sanctified through the word, strengthened by the indwelling Spirit (John 17:17; Ephesians 3:16; Philippians 2:12-13)
- Pace: growth vocabulary throughout, decisive moments plus lifelong process (2 Peter 1:5-8; 3:18)
- Answering perfectionism: 1 John 1:8-2:1; Philippians 3:12-14
- Answering defeatism: 1 Corinthians 6:11; 10:13; Philippians 1:6, slow is not stuck
- The diagnostic question for the epistles: why grow, add, press on, if an experience perfects?
- Conversational gentleness toward both the seeker and the weary

Discussion Prompts

- Why do the constant commands of the epistles argue against an instantaneous perfecting experience?

- Which danger is nearer your own heart, claiming more holiness than you have, or expecting less change than God promises?
- How would you restart a discouraged Christian who says he has prayed for change and nothing happened?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole passage, the war, the two lists, the walking commands. The Spirit who dwells in you intends a harvest that your family, your congregation, and your neighbors can pick and eat. Name one specific way Jesus is forming you through this truth, and one act of deliberate cultivation, something planted, pulled, watered, or crucified, that you will carry out this week.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Gather the passage into its single picture: a battlefield that is also an orchard. The war is real (5:17), the works list names the enemy's crop, the fruit list names the Spirit's, the crucifixion clears the ground, and the walk is the long cultivation. The capstone's controlling image, fruit your family, congregation, and neighbors can pick and eat, restores the doctrine's purpose: the fruit of the Spirit is not grown for the tree's decoration but for other people's nourishment. Nobody eats fruit but the orchard's visitors: the spouse tastes the patience or its absence; the children eat the kindness or the anger; the congregation feeds on the faithfulness; the neighbor samples the goodness. "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit" (John 15:8), and by this the watching world runs out of arguments, because, as Paul dryly notes, "against such things there is no law" (5:23): no critic has yet drafted legislation against patience and kindness. A transformed character is the apologetic that cannot be debunked, the Group Discussion's point completed.

Walk back through the week's stations to harvest the formation, station by station: the walk (is your picture of the Christian life now steps rather than leaps, word-lit rather than impression-led?); the war (the named arena, and the honest scoreboard); the works (the alias stripped from the personality-trait sin); the first triad (the unrehearsed truth and its thinned grace); the middle triad (the fixed face, and the grace chosen for it); the crucifixion (the negotiation ended, the nail named); the means and pace (expectations recalibrated from lightning to seasons). One of these stations is each student's assignment; the capstone asks which, and for the two named deliverables: the way Jesus is forming, and the act of cultivation, planted, pulled, watered, or crucified, scheduled this week.

Offer sample answers at the right altitude, concrete enough to be checkable: "Planted: a fifteen-minute morning reading, because I learned the fruit grows from the word, and my supply line was cut." "Pulled: I named my anger a work of the flesh, not a personality trait; I am confessing it to my family tonight and adopting the sundown rule." "Watered: my patience with my

mother; I will answer the repeated question this week as evenly the tenth time as the first, and pray for her by name before each visit." "Crucified: the account is deleted, my brother knows, and he will ask." Encourage students to attach each act to a person where possible, fruit being for eating, and to a time, cultivation being a calendar word.

Then set the final two weeks in view, because the study now ascends to its warmest truths. The Christian walking by the Spirit still stumbles into hours when he does not know what to pray, when the war goes badly, when words fail at a bedside; next week meets the Spirit who "helps us in our weakness" and "intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (Romans 8:26), the study's centerpiece of comfort. And the final week gathers everything, the Person, the word, the indwelling, the fruit, the help, into a single way of living in step with the Spirit today. The orchard has a Helper in residence; the last lessons introduce His tenderest work.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The single picture: battlefield and orchard, with fruit grown for others' eating
- "Against such things there is no law": character as the undebunkable apologetic
- The seven stations walked back: each student's assignment located
- Checkable cultivation: planted, pulled, watered, crucified, with persons and times attached
- John 15:8: fruit-bearing as the Father's glory and the disciple's mark
- Bridge to Week 11: the Helper for the hours when the walker fails

Discussion Prompts

- Who eats the fruit of your tree, and what have they been tasting lately?
- Which station of this week's passage held your assignment, and what is your scheduled act of cultivation?
- How does it change your evangelism to realize your character is your neighbor's first Bible?