

# Weekly Study Guide

The week of January 17, 2016

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## **RESTORE**

1. Ephesians 4:22-24.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ the old self.
- b. Be \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ the new self.

2. Galatians 5:16-25

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16).
- b. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, ... (Galatians 5:22).
- c. Let us \_\_\_\_\_ with the Spirit (Galatians 5:25).

## **SOUL TRAINING EXERCISES**

### **Option 1:**

Christian growth takes practice. Nobody runs a marathon on their first step out the door. Use these weekly "soul training exercises" to help you practice cooperating with the Holy Spirit so you can hear and walk by the Spirit's leading all throughout your life.

Each day this week, find a moment to reread the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 and ask God to make you fruitful. Ask yourself: Who do you think of as a person who has modeled one or more of these characteristics, and which characteristics of Christlikeness do you feel called to grow in?

### **Option 1 & 2:**

Regular habits of private Bible reading strengthen our relationship with God and teach us how to follow Jesus. In addition to the thematic exercise above, you can use this guide each week to lead you through relevant sections of the Bible.

### **MONDAY**

Mark 1:40-45

### **TUESDAY**

Mark 2:1-12

### **WEDNESDAY**

Mark 2:13-17

### **THURSDAY**

Mark 2:18-22

### **FRIDAY**

Mark 2:23-28

### **SATURDAY**

Mark 3:1-6

# Group Discussion

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## CONNECT

Who has taught you how to do something you couldn't do before?

## THIS WEEK'S LEARNING GOAL

We are learning to see Jesus as the model of the life we really want and to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to create a Christ-like life in us.

## LEARNING FROM THE BIBLE TOGETHER

When Jesus taught people about life and God, not everybody agreed with him. Sometimes he had to explain why people should take him seriously. A follower of Jesus, called Matthew, recorded a prayer and a teaching of Jesus that speak to this point. Read Matthew 11:25-29.

- Verses 25-26 are a prayer. What is Jesus thanking God for?
- How do you feel about Jesus saying that his teaching is most accessible to the simple-minded?
- Verse 27 is written in a rather unusual style. How would you describe or simplify the main point of this verse?
- In verse 28-29 Jesus invites people to take his "yoke." In Jesus' context, a yoke could be a symbol for a rabbi's teaching. How does Jesus describe his character and his teaching?
- Jesus says we should adopt his way and follow his teaching. From what other sources do we learn (intentionally or not) how to live our lives?
- Jesus' life is the model for our discipleship (or apprenticeship) to him. If you had to pick one thing about Jesus' life you would most like to learn in your life, what would it be?

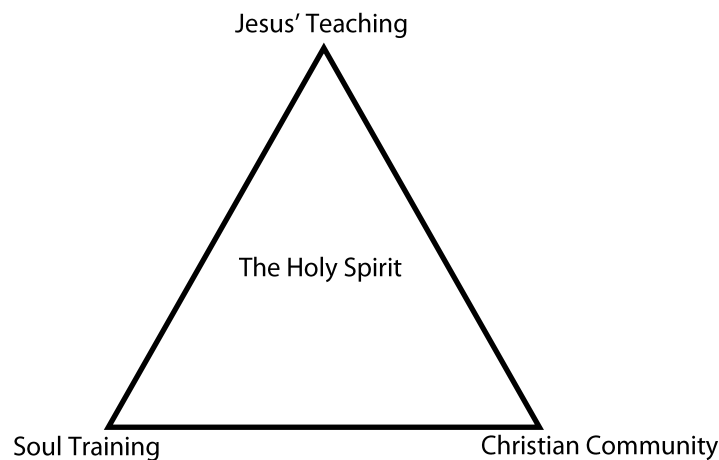
An early Christian leader named Paul wrote this next passage in a letter to the Christian community in an area called Galatia (modern day Turkey). He had been telling them that God's law wasn't what made them Christians, that they were free from the law. He explained to them in this passage how to use their freedom well. Read Galatians 5:13-26.

- According to verses 13-15, what is the main thing we should use our freedom for? (If you have time in your group, read also Jesus' own words in John 13:34-35.)
- According to verses 16-18, why might it sometimes seem like we are conflicted about our own choices or behaviors? Do you ever experience that kind of conflict?
- The high point of this passage is in verses 22-23. Why do you think Paul wrote an expanded list of characteristics like this instead of just leaving it with "love," as he put it in verses 13-14?
- Would it be helpful to think of this list as a shorthand description of the character of Jesus? Why or why not?

- Paul describes this list of characteristics as the “fruit” of the Spirit. Discuss that metaphor together. What does it suggest to you?
- Paul also uses another image to describe our cooperation with the Spirit in verses 16 and 25. What image is it? What does that image say to you?

In the messages that are part of this series we’ve been learning that Christian growth comes not only from trying harder and harder but also from the work of the Holy Spirit. We have learned to cooperate with the Holy Spirit’s work in three different ways: by learning the Biblical teaching of Jesus, by engaging in soul training exercises, and through Christian relationships.

- Which of these three ways have helped you grow in Christlikeness in the past?
- Which of these three ways has you underutilized in the past? What do you think will help you take better advantage of this opportunity to “keep in step with the Spirit”?



## **SOUL TRAINING EXERCISES**

As a group, recall last week’s soul training exercise. Did you learn or experience anything you’d like to share with your group? Now, look at the soul training exercises on the front of this study guide and get ready to practice them this week. Is there a particular time of day or some other specific commitment that would help you succeed in doing these exercises?

### **PRAY**

Share your prayer concerns with one another. In your prayers, ask God’s Spirit to lead your life and grow the fruit of the Spirit in you.