

LifeGroup Leader Discussion Guide

Series: Animated: *Inside Out*

Date: June 14, 2026

Scripture: Galatians 5:15-21

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for your presence within us through the Holy Spirit. As we gather today, open our hearts to hear your voice and understand your truth. Help us honestly examine the areas where we struggle between following our own desires and surrendering to your Spirit. Give us wisdom as we discuss your Word, courage to be transparent, and grace toward one another. May this conversation lead us closer to Jesus and help us reflect His character in our homes, workplaces, and communities.

Transform us from the inside out, producing the fruit of your Spirit in our lives so that others may see You through us.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Leader Preparation

Main Theme

The Christian life is not primarily about behavior modification; it is about spiritual transformation. The Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out, producing a new character that reflects Jesus. The "works of the flesh" reveal what naturally comes from sinful human nature, while the fruit of the Spirit reveals what God produces in a surrendered life.

Key Passage

"So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature." — Galatians 5:16

Goal of the Discussion

Help group members:

- Recognize the internal battle every believer experiences.
 - Understand why rule-keeping alone cannot change the heart.
 - Identify areas where the flesh is still influencing their lives.
 - Learn practical ways to walk daily with the Holy Spirit.
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Discussion Questions & Leader Insights

1. What key idea or takeaway do you have from this week's sermon?

Leader Insight

This opening question helps everyone engage and reveals what stood out most to participants. Listen for recurring themes such as:

- The Spirit's transforming work.
- The battle between flesh and Spirit.
- The difference between outward behavior and inward change.
- The evidence of genuine spiritual growth.

Follow-Up Questions

- Why did that particular point resonate with you?
- How have you seen that truth play out in your own life?
- Was there anything that challenged or convicted you?

Transition

Paul now explains why this transformation can feel so difficult—because there is a battle happening within every believer.

2. Read Galatians 5:15-18. Paul uses intense words like "bite," "devour," and "consumed" to describe a community operating in the flesh. What does a modern family, workplace, or church look like when it falls into this trap?

Leader Insight

Paul's language paints a picture of relationships being destroyed by selfishness. The flesh not only affects individuals; it damages communities.

Possible Responses

In families:

- Constant criticism
- Unforgiveness
- Competition among siblings
- Emotional manipulation

In workplaces:

- Gossip
- Backstabbing
- Pride
- Power struggles

In churches:

- Division
- Cliques
- Judgmental attitudes
- Personal agendas

Key Teaching Point

When people are controlled by self-interest rather than the Spirit, relationships begin to deteriorate. The Spirit always moves people toward unity, humility, and love.

Follow-Up Question

- Have you ever seen a healthy community become unhealthy because people operated from selfish desires?

3. In verse 17 Paul describes a literal civil war happening inside every believer. How do you practically notice this tug-of-war between your "flesh" and the "Spirit" in your daily decision-making?

Leader Insight

This question normalizes spiritual struggle. Mature believers still experience temptation and internal conflict.

Possible Examples

- Choosing forgiveness versus holding a grudge.
- Speaking truth versus avoiding discomfort.
- Generosity versus selfishness.
- Patience versus anger.
- Purity versus temptation.

Key Teaching Point

The presence of struggle is not evidence of failure; it is often evidence that the Spirit is actively working. Before Christ, there was no internal battle because the flesh ruled uncontested.

Follow-Up Questions

- What situations trigger this struggle most often?
- What helps you become more aware of the Spirit's leading?

Leader Caution

Avoid allowing the discussion to become a confession session without redirecting people toward hope and growth.

4. Why do you think Paul contrasts being "led by the Spirit" with being "under the law" (verse 18)? Why can't rule-following fix our internal flesh problem?

Leader Insight

Many Christians unknowingly believe spiritual growth comes primarily through trying harder. Paul argues that transformation comes through surrendering to the Spirit, not merely obeying rules.

Key Concepts

The Law can:

- Reveal sin
- Set standards
- Expose our need for God

The Law cannot:

- Change desires
- Transform the heart

- Produce spiritual fruit

Illustration

A speed limit sign can tell a driver how fast to go, but it cannot make them want to obey. In the same way, God's commands reveal His standard, but only the Holy Spirit changes our hearts.

Follow-Up Questions

- Have you ever tried to overcome a sin simply through willpower?
- What was the result?
- How does dependence on the Spirit differ from self-effort?

Key Teaching Point

The Christian life is not "trying harder for God"; it is "walking closer with God."

5. Read Galatians 5:19-21. Look at the word "acts" (v. 19). How does viewing these behaviours as a product of human striving change the way you try to fight them?

Leader Insight

Paul deliberately calls these the "acts" or "works" of the flesh. These behaviors are what naturally emerge from our sinful nature.

Discussion Direction

Many people focus on stopping individual sins without addressing the deeper heart issue.

For example:

- Anger may reveal pride.
- Jealousy may reveal insecurity.
- Sexual sin may reveal unmet emotional needs or misplaced desires.
- Gossip may reveal a need for approval or control.

Key Teaching Point

Spiritual growth is not simply removing bad fruit; it is changing the root.

Follow-Up Questions

- Which "works of the flesh" seem especially common in our culture?

- What underlying heart issues might be driving those behaviors?
 - How does the Spirit address the root rather than just the symptom?
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6. Paul gives a heavy warning in verse 21. What is the difference between a believer who occasionally stumbles into these sins versus someone whose life is characterized by "doing" (practicing) them?

Leader Insight

This can be a sensitive question. The focus should be on the difference between occasional failure and a settled pattern of unrepentant living.

Clarification

Paul is not teaching that Christians never sin. Scripture consistently teaches that believers still struggle and sometimes fail.

The warning is directed toward people whose lives are habitually controlled by the flesh and who show no evidence of repentance or desire for God's rule.

Helpful Distinction

Occasional Stumbling

- Conviction follows.
- Repentance occurs.
- The person seeks God's help.
- There is a desire to change.

Practicing Sin

- Sin is embraced and justified.
- No repentance.
- No desire for transformation.
- The pattern becomes a lifestyle.

Follow-Up Questions

- Why is repentance such an important mark of genuine faith?
- How can we help one another pursue holiness without becoming judgmental?

Key Teaching Point

The issue is not perfection versus imperfection. The issue is direction. Is a person's life moving toward Christ or away from Him?

7. Read Galatians 5:22–23. Why is the metaphor of "fruit" so important here? What is the core difference between trying to work your way into being patient versus allowing the Spirit to produce the fruit of patience in you?

Leader Insight

Paul intentionally uses the word *fruit* rather than *results*, *achievements*, or *performance*. Fruit is something that grows naturally from a healthy connection to its source. An apple tree doesn't strain to produce apples; apples are the natural outcome of a healthy tree.

The Christian life is not primarily behavior modification but spiritual transformation. While effort matters, the source of growth is the Holy Spirit working within us. Trying harder can produce temporary self-control, but Spirit-produced patience flows from a changed heart.

Discussion Prompts

- Can you think of a time when you tried to "force" a spiritual quality in your life?
- How is dependence on the Spirit different from simply trying harder?
- What practices help you stay connected to Christ so His fruit can grow in you?

Key Takeaway

Spiritual fruit is evidence of God's work in us, not merely our willpower at work.

8. Read Galatians 5:24–26. What does it look like practically to "crucify the flesh with its passions and desires" every morning? How do we stop feeding those old desires?

Leader Insight

"Crucifying the flesh" is not a one-time event but an ongoing choice to surrender selfish desires and submit to Christ. Paul is describing a daily posture of saying "yes" to God's Spirit and "no" to sinful impulses.

This involves intentionally choosing habits that strengthen our relationship with God and avoiding patterns that fuel temptation.

Discussion Prompts

- What are some practical ways to surrender your day to God each morning?
- What habits tend to feed unhealthy desires in our lives?
- What spiritual disciplines help weaken the pull of the flesh?

Possible Applications

- Daily prayer of surrender
- Time in Scripture before other influences
- Accountability relationships
- Limiting environments or media that trigger temptation
- Replacing unhealthy habits with godly ones

Key Takeaway

We starve the flesh by refusing to feed it and strengthen the Spirit by intentionally pursuing God.

9. The phrase "keep in step" is a military term meaning to march in a straight line or stay in sync. How can we tell when we have drifted out of step with the Holy Spirit?

Leader Insight

The image is one of soldiers marching together under a leader's direction. Keeping in step requires attentiveness, responsiveness, and consistency.

Often we drift gradually rather than suddenly. Warning signs may include prayerlessness, neglect of Scripture, increased irritability, loss of joy, spiritual apathy, or rationalizing sinful behavior.

The Holy Spirit often alerts us through conviction, Scripture, wise counsel, and a growing sense of unrest when we are moving away from God's direction.

Discussion Prompts

- What are your personal warning signs that you've drifted spiritually?
- How does the Holy Spirit usually get your attention?
- Why is it easier to drift than to remain in step?

Key Takeaway

Spiritual drift happens slowly, but staying in step requires daily attentiveness to God's leading.

10. Verse 26 highlights conceit, provoking, and envying. How does a lack of daily alignment with the Spirit directly feed our tendency to compare ourselves to others?

Leader Insight

Comparison thrives when our identity is disconnected from Christ. When we forget who we are in Him, we begin measuring ourselves against other people.

Paul identifies three common outcomes:

- **Conceit** – believing we are better than others.
- **Provoking** – competing or seeking to prove ourselves.
- **Envy** – resenting the success or blessings of others.

Walking with the Spirit shifts our focus from comparison to contentment. The Spirit reminds us that our worth comes from God's love, not our performance or status.

Discussion Prompts

- Why is comparison so common today?
- How do social media and modern culture fuel envy or conceit?
- What truths about your identity in Christ help combat comparison?

Key Takeaway

The more secure we are in Christ, the less we need to compare ourselves to others.

Closing Challenge

Ask group members:

"What is one area this week where you need to be more intentional about following the Spirit rather than your flesh?"

Invite each person to identify one practical step they can take during the coming week.

Examples:

- Begin each day with prayer.

- Pause before responding in anger.
- Seek reconciliation with someone.
- Spend time in Scripture before social media.
- Ask a trusted friend for accountability.