LESSON OVERVIEW
Galatians 5 outlines nine Fruits of the Spirit—traits that emerge as we draw closer to Christ. These characteristics help us experience deeper unity with other Christians and help non-Christian friends discover how God is working in our lives. These fruits are evidence of our faith and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Everything we do leaves an impact in the world. It’s important to take time to stop and see if the “footprint” we’re leaving behind is one that honors God. This lesson will help your students discover how their choices shape the kind of fruit their lives produce.

LESSON OBJECTIVES
1. WHAT: Our lives will produce fruit based on our actions, choices, patterns, and lifestyle.
2. WHY: Living God’s way honors him and enables us to live the full life he’s planned for us.
3. HOW: Encourage your students to examine their lives and see how God is already producing good fruit, and help them consider ways to make wise choices that will open the door to continued growth.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE
Galatians 5:16-26

SECONDARY SCRIPTURE
John 13:35

TEACHING PREP
The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you’ll definitely want to refer to it as you lead your small group lesson.

LEADER TIP

LIVE
Read Galatians 5:16-26.

As Paul writes to Christians in Galatia, he encourages them to recognize the battle we all face between our sinful nature and the Holy Spirit. Paul outlines the Fruit of the Spirit in verses 22-23, and the context is especially important. In this chapter, he focuses on the freedom we experience by following Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. He contrasts our sinful nature in verses 16-21 with the Spirit’s work in verses 22-26. In a sense, Paul is offering us a choice: Which fruit do you want to see in your life?

As you walk through this lesson, some of your teenagers may see lots of evidence of the Fruit of the Spirit in their lives, while others may feel discouraged or pessimistic. Remind your students that we’re all works in progress. Some of us may be stronger naturally in a particular area—such as patience or joy—yet struggle in other areas, such as love or peace. Maintain an encouraging tone, with an emphasis on how God is currently working in your young people and how God will continue that work for the rest of their lives.

**THE BEFORE & AFTER (OPTIONAL)**

**Text Message Questions**

We've provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

- What “fruit” is growing in your life? Let’s find out tonight at small group.
- What are the Fruit of the Spirit? Text me back as many as you know. Hope to see you at small group tonight.

**Parent Email**

We've provided you with an email below that you can send to your parents following the lesson. Our hope is to encourage parents to continue the conversation at home. Feel free to edit and customize the email to fit your ministry needs.

Dear parents,

Our small groups wrapped up their two-week journey on Bearing Fruit in Christ. This week, our students examined the Fruits of the Spirit described in Galatians 5.
These traits are essential to healthy Christian living. These characteristics help us experience deeper unity with other Christians and help non-Christian friends discover how God is working in our lives. They are evidence of our faith.

This week, we encouraged our students to consider the outcome and results of their lives. Everything we do leaves an impact in the world. It’s important to take time to stop and see if the “footprint” we’re leaving behind is one that honors God.

Each of us is a work in progress. Some of us may be stronger naturally in a particular area—such as patience or joy—yet struggle in other areas, such as love or peace. God’s process of change and transformation is an ongoing experience in our lives.

I’d encourage you to find time this week to talk with your teenager about this small group lesson. As I do every week, I want to provide a few questions that can help fuel the conversation with your student:

- If your friends were looking to find characteristics in you that also describe God, what would some of those characteristics be?
- Jesus said love is one trait that defines Christians. How can the other Fruits of the Spirit serve as evidence to people that you are a follower of Jesus?
- Based on what Paul writes in Galatians 5, what role do your choices play in determining the kind of fruit your life will produce?

Thanks for your investment in your teenager’s life. Your prayers, time, and encouragement play a vital role in preparing your student for God’s work. You’re awesome!
2. LESSON GUIDE

GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]

As you begin your small group, welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then jump right into the lesson.

If you came up with an opening activity, movie clip, or game that worked well with your group, and you’d like to share it with other youth workers, please email us at ideas@simplyyouthministry.com.

TEACHING POINTS

The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen here are (1) Your life will produce fruit and (2) You decide what fruit is produced.

Remember: All throughout these lessons, it’s up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read Galatians 5:16-26 together as a group. Consider allowing one or more of the teenagers to read the text.

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: This week, we’re wrapping up our series talking about fruit—not the kind of fruit you can grow in your backyard or buy at the grocery store. We’ve been looking at fruit of our spiritual lives—the outward demonstrations of inward change.

BEARING FRUIT IN CHRIST

Week 2:
What Fruit is Growing in My Life?
1. Your life will produce fruit

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** When we use that word “fruit,” we’re talking about the results, effects, and consequences of our actions, choices, and lifestyles. Your friends, family members, classmates, teammates, and co-workers are watching and noticing the “fruit” in your life. Here in Galatians 5, we read about two categories of fruit: things produced by living a sinful lifestyle and things produced by living a Christ-like lifestyle.

**ASK:**
- Read the list of “sinful fruit” in Galatians 5:19-21. Which of these things are you surprised to see included in this list, and why?
- Read the list of Christ-like fruit in Galatians 5:22-23. What other “fruit” might you see in the life of a mature, growing Christian? Why do you think Paul only lists nine specific fruits in these verses?
- If your friends were looking to find characteristics in you that also describe God, what would some of those characteristics be?

**Video Clip [optional]**

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Jesus told his disciples in John 13:35 that the world would know they were his followers because of the love they displayed for each other. Our actions reveal how much we care about the people around us, as we see in this scene from the movie Forrest Gump (rated PG-13). The title character, played by Tom Hanks, is caught in a gunfight and retreats from the battlefield. But then he returns and attempts to rescue some of his fellow soldiers.

Start the clip at 0:50:45 on the DVD, as Forrest is running away from the battlefield. Stop the clip at 0:52:15 on the DVD, as Forrest is rescuing his fellow soldiers; be sure to stop the disc before he finds Lt. Dan.

**ASK:**
- What motivated Forrest to risk his safety to help the other soldiers?
- You may never face a battlefield, but what are some ways you have sacrificially demonstrated your love for other Christians or for your non-Christian friends?
- Jesus said love is one trait that will define Christians. How can the other Fruits of the Spirit serve as evidence to your friends that you’re a follower of Jesus?
2. You decide what fruit is produced

**ASK:**
- Based on what Paul writes in this passage, what role do your choices play in determining the kind of fruit your life will produce?
- Think of a time when someone gave you feedback on the kind of fruit your life is producing—what was that feedback? Was it true? Why or why not?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Our choices set the stage for God’s work in our lives. Spiritual change comes through the Holy Spirit working in us. That’s why Paul says “the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit” in verse 22. If we choose to pursue a sinful lifestyle, we create the setting for our sinful nature to produce sinful fruit. But if we choose to pursue a Christ-like lifestyle, we create the right atmosphere for the Holy Spirit to produce Christ-like fruit.

**ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION [OPTIONAL]**

**ASK:**
- Self-control is one of the Fruits of the Spirit. When you read the list of “sinful fruits” in Galatians 5:19-21, how do these fruits develop? How can you start producing the Fruits of the Spirit when you’ve already been producing “sinful fruits”?

- In verse 21, Paul says people who live “that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.” Why does he make this statement? If we experience salvation through believing in Jesus, does our behavior affect whether we spend eternity with God, or is Paul saying something else? Explain.

- Paul encourages his readers in verse 16 to “let the Holy Spirit guide your lives.” And in verse 25, he says to “follow the Spirit’s leading in every part of our lives.” How does this happen? How do you discover where the Spirit is leading and let the Spirit guide you?

- In our previous lesson, we talked about the importance of being rooted in Jesus and how this relationship with him will produce fruit in our lives. How does that idea relate to bearing the nine specific fruit Paul identifies in Galatians 5?
APPLICATION
Pair up with another person in the group for these questions.

ASK:

• Look again at Galatians 5:22-23. Which one of these Fruits of the Spirit is strongest and most evident in your life right now? How has it gotten so strong or evident?

• Which one is weakest and least evident in your life right now? Why do you think it’s weak or less evident?

• Choose one of the nine characteristics listed in Galatians 5. What are some practical ways you can promote this kind of growth in your life?

Bring everyone back together for discussion on the question about steps for developing the Fruit of the Spirit. If your teenagers struggled with practical ideas, talk about it as a group.

SUMMARY

End your small group lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves (Galatians 5:16).