

The Walking Dead

I know what you're thinking. Images of horror movies and the undead have probably crept into your mind. Just for fun, I Googled "The Walking Dead," the title of today's lesson. Did you know there's a TV series with the same name? This drama on AMC tells the story of a post-apocalyptic world ravaged by a zombie epidemic.

Thankfully, our fifth lesson in the "Fruit of the Spirit" has nothing to do with zombies. But we do need to talk about death – our own, in fact.

Here's the truth of it: *We* cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit. We cannot – with any consistency – live a life characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, or self-control.

You may be able to muster up a loving act now and again. I might work up enough will-power to control my fleshly desires in one instance today. But our lives will never abundantly exhibit the characteristics of Christ by our own strength and works. In today's lesson we will explore how a life full of the Spirit's fruit is possible.

Read Galatians 5:22-25. Are we told to produce the Fruit of the Spirit? (Circle one) Yes No

In lesson two, "What is Fruit?" we learned that "fruit" is the natural by-product of the Holy Spirit. Only the Spirit can produce these characteristics in our lives. As we allow Him to take control, His life will be manifested in ours.

Identify two things in the passage we should be doing.

Paul used the "active" voice in verse 24 when he wrote "have crucified the sinful nature." This signifies an act that a believer has done and must continue to do to herself.

What do you think "crucifying our sinful nature" looks like in everyday life?

Remember this is something we can do. We can choose to turn away from our sinful desires. Because of the presence of the Holy Spirit, we have the power to resist temptation and choose the way out God provides (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Before we take a closer look at the second thing we should be doing, read Romans 8:11-14. According to this passage, what “obligation” do we have as believers? Check all that apply.

- To follow our sinful nature and submit to its desires*
- To turn away from the deeds of our sinful nature*
- To submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit*

According to Romans 8:11, why do we have this obligation?

Paul reinforces this reasoning in Galatians 5:25. Since the Holy Spirit has given new life to our sin-dead souls, we are obligated to follow His lead. This is the second thing we should be doing. Depending on your translation, you may read “keep in step with,” “follow the Spirit’s leading,” or “let us walk by.” Here’s how *Strong’s Greek and Hebrew Dictionary* defines the Greek word *stoicheo*, that is translated in these various ways:

- 1) To proceed in a row as the march of a soldier, go in order; metaph. to go on prosperously, to turn out well
- 2) To walk; to direct one's life, to live

Considering the definition of “walk,” what does it mean to “walk by” or “keep in step with” the Spirit?

Read Galatians 2:20 below from the New Living Translation:

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

How does this verse help us understand what it means to “walk by the Spirit.”

On my own, I would produce nothing but sinful works. Even my “good fruit” would be rotten. My flesh is too weak and sinful and to produce the characteristics of Christ. Kathy must “die.” I have to get out of the way and let the Holy Spirit live Christ’s life through me. It’s the appropriate response to the One who saved my life. And my eternal hope.

Let’s talk: What is the hardest thing for you about following the Spirit? What helps you submit to His leadership?