

Study Guide - Week 1

Sermon Recap 🎬

In his sermon, Josh uses the story of Tom Hargrove, who was mistakenly kidnapped due to a misunderstanding, as a metaphor for Christians who may label themselves without showing evidence of their faith. He prompts listeners to consider if they have 'Proof of Life' as followers of Jesus, emphasizing that true discipleship should produce observable traits like love, joy, and self-control. Josh highlights the necessity of the Holy Spirit in cultivating these virtues and reassures that God's presence is accessible to those who genuinely seek it. He challenges everyone, whether seasoned believers or those on the fence, to examine their lives for evidence of faith and actively engage in their spiritual growth.

Ice Breaker

If you could have any animal as your personal assistant, which one would you choose and what ridiculous task would you have it do for you?

Discussion Questions

▼ Josh shared the story of Tom Hargrove to illustrate the importance of having proof of one's identity and existence, especially in relation to faith.

- What does it mean to have 'Proof of Life' in your faith?
- In what areas of your life can you identify evidence of your faith as a Jesus follower?

▼ Josh mentioned the label 'Christian' and expressed a preference for 'Jesus follower.' He emphasized that 'Jesus follower' reflects active faith and represents a commitment to live in a way that shows evidence of following Jesus.

- How does viewing yourself as a 'Jesus follower' change your approach to daily challenges or decisions?

Read Scripture

Acts 2:36-39 NIV

³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

Galatians 5:16-26 NLT

¹⁶ So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. ¹⁷ The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. ¹⁸ But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

¹⁹ When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

²² But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things!

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. ²⁵ Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, or provoke one another, or be jealous of one another.

Discussion Questions

▼ Josh explained that the Fruits of the Holy Spirit (found in Galatians 5:22-23) are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

- How can the fruits of the Holy Spirit serve as 'Proof of Life' for a Jesus Follower?
- Which of the fruits of the Spirit do you find easiest to exhibit, and which do you struggle with the most in your daily life?

▼ Josh pointed out that many people mistakenly view the Holy Spirit as just a force rather than a personal being.

- Have you believed this about the Holy Spirit?
- What might be some other misconceptions about the Holy Spirit that can lead to Him being 'forgotten' in a believer's life?
- In what ways can you deepen your relationship with the Holy Spirit this week?

▼ Josh encouraged the congregation to rely on the Holy Spirit for daily strength and guidance.

- How can we ensure that the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives is not something we overlook or forget?
- What practical steps can you take this week to become more aware of the Holy Spirit's work in your life?

Challenge

Pray the prayer of King David every day this week.

Psalm 139:23-24 NIV

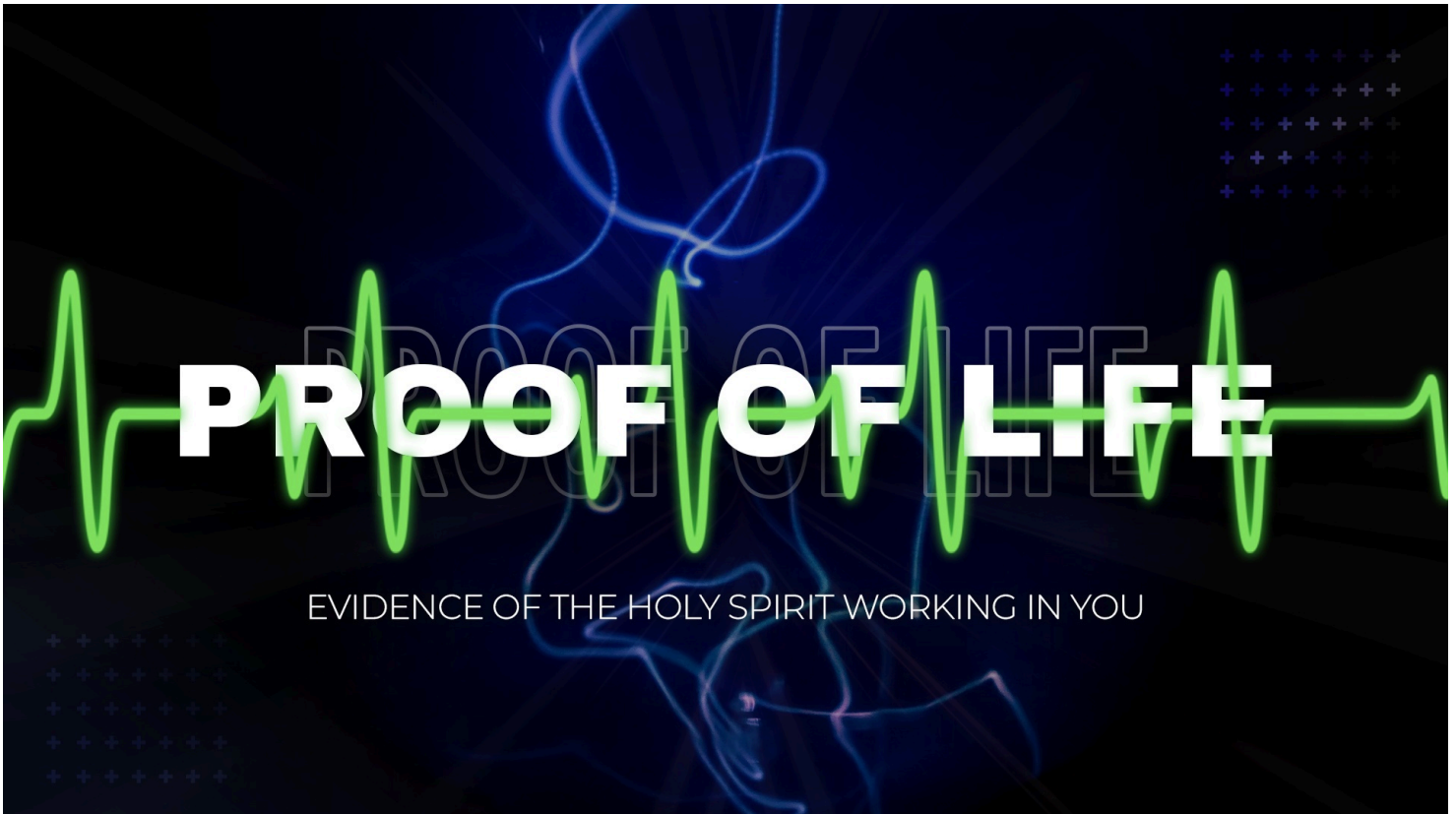
- ²³ Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
- ²⁴ Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

Prayer

- Ask for prayer requests from the group.
- Pray for clarity to understand and apply the message from the sermon this week.
- Ask God to strengthen your relationships and walk as Jesus followers.
- Seek guidance to recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in daily life.

Rewatch the sermon

Visit victorycc.life/watch for on-demand access to all of our sermons.



5 Day Reading Plan - Week 1

Day 1

Galatians 5

Paul reminds us that the Christian life is not meant to be lived in our own strength but through the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul contrasts the works of the flesh with the fruit of the Spirit, showing that only by walking in the Spirit can we overcome sin and live in true freedom (Galatians 5:16-18). The desires of the flesh lead to division, selfishness, and impurity, but the Holy Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). When we rely on the Spirit, our lives reflect Christ's character and bring unity rather than division. Living by the Spirit means surrendering daily, allowing God to shape our thoughts, actions, and attitudes. Are you trying to live in your own strength, or are you depending on the Holy Spirit to guide you? The Spirit leads us to freedom, not bondage, and empowers us to love and serve others selflessly. Let's crucify the desires of the flesh and keep in step with the Spirit, trusting Him to transform us from the inside out. When we do, we walk in the fullness of life God desires for us.

- In what areas of your life are you relying on your own strength instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to guide you?
- Which fruit of the Spirit do you need to grow in most, and how can you actively surrender to the Spirit's work in that area?

- How does walking in the Spirit help you overcome division and live in unity with others?
- Ask God to help you walk in the Spirit daily, surrendering your own desires and allowing Him to produce His fruit in your life so that you can reflect Christ's love and unity.

Day 2

Romans 8

Paul reminds us that life in Christ is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul declares that there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus because the Spirit has set us free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:1-2). The Spirit empowers us to live according to God's will, transforming our minds and leading us away from the flesh (Romans 8:5-6). When we rely on the Spirit, we experience true peace and life, rather than fear and bondage. The Holy Spirit also testifies that we are God's children, giving us confidence in His love (Romans 8:14-16). Even in our weakness, the Spirit intercedes for us, guiding and strengthening us (Romans 8:26-27). Are you living by the Spirit's power, or are you still trying to do life on your own? God calls us to surrender daily, allowing His Spirit to lead, comfort, and empower us. When we walk by the Spirit, we are assured of victory, knowing that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:37-39). Let's trust the Spirit to lead us into the fullness of life that God has promised.

- In what areas of your life are you still relying on your own strength instead of surrendering to the Holy Spirit's power?
- How does knowing that the Holy Spirit intercedes for you in your weakness bring you comfort and confidence in your faith?
- What would it look like for you to fully live in the freedom and peace that the Spirit provides?
- Ask God to help you surrender daily to the Holy Spirit, trusting Him to guide, strengthen, and transform you so that you can walk in the fullness of life and peace He has promised.

Day 3

John 16

In John's Gospel, Jesus prepares His disciples for His departure by promising the coming of the Holy Spirit. He assures them that it is for their good that He goes away because the Spirit will come to guide, convict, and empower them (John 16:7-8). The Holy Spirit reveals truth, pointing us to Christ and helping us understand God's will (John 16:13). He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, leading people to repentance and faith. Even in times of sorrow or uncertainty, the Spirit brings comfort and peace, reminding us of God's presence. Jesus also says the Spirit will glorify Him, making Christ known to believers (John 16:14). Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to lead you into truth and transform your heart? Too often, we try to navigate life on our own when God has given us His Spirit as our helper. Let's trust in the Spirit's guidance, knowing He is always with us, pointing us toward Christ and strengthening us in our faith. When we listen to Him, we walk in wisdom, peace, and the fullness of God's promises.

- In what ways have you seen the Holy Spirit guiding you into truth and shaping your understanding of God's will?
- Are there areas in your life where you need to rely more on the Holy Spirit's conviction and guidance rather than your own wisdom?
- How can you be more intentional in listening to and following the Holy Spirit's leading each day?
- Ask God to help you be more sensitive to the Holy Spirit's voice, to trust His guidance, and to walk in the truth and peace that He provides.

Day 4

1 Corinthians 12

Paul reminds us that the Holy Spirit is the source of our spiritual gifts and unity in the body of Christ. Paul emphasizes that there are different gifts, but the same Spirit gives them for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:4-7). Each believer has been uniquely equipped by the Spirit to serve and strengthen the church. Just as a body has many parts working together, so the church is meant to function in unity, with each member playing an essential role (1 Corinthians 12:12). When we compare our gifts to others or fail to use them, we miss out on God's design for His church. The Holy Spirit empowers us not for personal gain but for building up the body of Christ in love and service. Are you using the gifts the Spirit has given you to bless others? Instead of striving for recognition, we should seek to glorify God by faithfully using our gifts. Let's embrace the Spirit's work in us, celebrating our unique roles while remaining united as one body in Christ. When we walk in the Spirit, we reflect God's love and power to the world.

- What spiritual gifts has the Holy Spirit given you, and how are you using them to serve and build up the body of Christ?
- Are there any areas where comparison or pride is keeping you from fully embracing your role in God's church?
- How can you better rely on the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide you in using your gifts for God's glory?
- Ask God to help you recognize, develop, and use the spiritual gifts He has given you, so that you may serve others with humility and love, bringing unity and glory to His name.

Day 5

Psalms 139

This Psalm beautifully reveals God's intimate knowledge of us and His constant presence through the Holy Spirit. David declares that there is nowhere we can go where God's Spirit is not with us (Psalm 139:7-10). Whether in the highest heavens or the deepest depths, the Spirit of God remains our guide and our comfort. This truth reminds us that we are never alone, even in our darkest moments. The Holy Spirit not only surrounds us but also searches our hearts, knowing our thoughts and desires (Psalm 139:1-2, 23-24). He lovingly leads us in the way of righteousness, shaping us to reflect God's holiness. Are you allowing the Spirit to search your heart and guide your steps? Too

often, we try to hide our struggles, but God sees and knows us completely. Instead of running, we can surrender to the Spirit's leading, trusting that He is working for our good. When we embrace His presence, we find peace, purpose, and the assurance that we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

- In what areas of your life are you resisting the Holy Spirit's guidance instead of surrendering to His leading?
- How does knowing that God's Spirit is always with you change the way you handle fear, loneliness, or uncertainty?
- What would it look like for you to invite the Holy Spirit to search your heart and transform you daily?
- Ask God to help you fully trust in His presence, inviting the Holy Spirit to search your heart, guide your steps, and shape you to reflect His love and holiness.



Want To Go Deeper?

Historical Context

Galatians 5:22-23 is a well-known passage in the New Testament that lists the "fruit of the Spirit." Understanding the historical background of this passage can provide deeper insight into its meaning and significance:

1. **Authorship and Audience:** The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians. The Galatian churches were located in the region of Galatia, which is in modern-day Turkey. Paul wrote this letter to address issues that had arisen in these early Christian communities, particularly concerning the influence of Judaizers—those who taught that Gentile Christians must adhere to Jewish law, including circumcision, to be truly saved.
2. **Purpose of the Letter:** Paul wrote to counteract the teachings of the Judaizers and to reaffirm the doctrine of justification by faith alone. He emphasized that salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ and not by works of the law. This context is crucial for understanding the contrast Paul makes between living by the flesh and living by the Spirit.
3. **The Fruit of the Spirit:** In Galatians 5:22-23, Paul lists the qualities that are produced in the life of a believer who is led by the Holy Spirit. These qualities—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—are contrasted with the "works of the flesh" mentioned earlier in the chapter (Galatians 5:19-21). The fruit of the Spirit represents the

character and virtues that should be evident in the life of someone who is living in accordance with the Spirit.

- 4. Cultural Context:** The Greco-Roman world, in which the Galatians lived, was characterized by a variety of religious and philosophical beliefs. The virtues listed by Paul would have stood in contrast to the often self-indulgent and morally lax lifestyle prevalent in the surrounding culture. By emphasizing these virtues, Paul was calling the Galatian Christians to live lives that were distinct and reflective of their new identity in Christ.
- 5. Theological Implications:** The passage underscores the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. It highlights the idea that true Christian living is not about adhering to a set of external rules but about an internal transformation that results in outward evidence of a changed life. This aligns with the sermon's emphasis on "proof of life" as evidence of being a true follower of Jesus.

Understanding these historical and cultural contexts helps to appreciate the depth of Paul's message to the Galatians and its relevance for Christians today.

Greek/Hebrew Word Study

pneuma

Original Word: **πνεῦμα**

Pronunciation: PNYOO-mah

Phonetic Spelling: (pnyoo'-mah)

Part of Speech: Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: pneuma

Definition: Spirit, wind, breath

Meaning: wind, breath, spirit.

Word Origin: Derived from the root verb πνέω (pneō), meaning "to breathe" or "to blow."

Corresponding Hebrew Word: **רוח (ruach)**: Often translated as "spirit," "wind," or "breath," similar to "pneuma" in Greek.

Usage: The term "pneuma" is used in the New Testament to denote various concepts related to spirit and breath. It can refer to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, as well as the human spirit, demonic spirits, or even the general concept of wind or breath. In a theological context, "pneuma" often signifies the immaterial, life-giving force or presence of God. It is a key term in discussions of spiritual life, regeneration, and divine inspiration.

Cultural and Historical Background: In the Greco-Roman world, "pneuma" was understood as a vital force or essence, often associated with life and consciousness. In Jewish thought, the concept of spirit (ruach in Hebrew) was integral to understanding God's interaction with the world, particularly in creation and prophecy. The New Testament writers, influenced by both Jewish and Hellenistic thought, used "pneuma" to articulate the presence and work of God in the life of believers and the church.

ruach

Original Word: רוח

Pronunciation: roo'-akh

Phonetic Spelling: (roo'-akh)

Part of Speech: Noun Feminine

Transliteration: ruwach

Definition: Spirit, wind, breath

Meaning: wind, breath, exhalation, life, anger, unsubstantiality, a region of the sky, spirit

Word Origin: Derived from the root רוּחַ (ruach), which means to breathe or blow.

Corresponding Greek Word: **πνεῦμα (pneuma)**: Often used in the New Testament to denote spirit, wind, or breath, similar to "ruach" in the Old Testament.

Usage: The Hebrew word "ruach" is a multifaceted term that primarily denotes "spirit," "wind," or "breath." In the Old Testament, it is used to describe the Spirit of God, human spirit, and natural phenomena like wind. It conveys the idea of life, power, and divine presence. "Ruach" is often associated with God's creative and sustaining power, as well as His presence and influence in the world and in individuals.

Cultural and Historical Background: In ancient Hebrew culture, "ruach" was understood as a vital force or life-giving breath. It was seen as an essential element of life, akin to the breath that animates living beings. The concept of "ruach" as spirit also reflects the Hebrew understanding of God's immanence and transcendence, where God's Spirit is both present in creation and beyond it. The term is deeply embedded in the Hebrew worldview, which sees the physical and spiritual realms as interconnected.

Deeper Application

1. Internal Transformation Leading to External Evidence: The sermon emphasizes the need for "proof of life" as evidence of being a true follower of Jesus. This proof is not merely about outward actions but stems from an internal transformation brought about by the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23 serves as a benchmark for this transformation. Believers are encouraged to reflect on whether these qualities are evident in their lives, indicating the Spirit's active work within them.

2. Active Participation with the Holy Spirit: The sermon challenges believers to actively align their lives with the Holy Spirit. This involves a moment-by-moment decision to stay in step with the Spirit, as mentioned in the sermon. It's about surrendering personal agendas and allowing the Spirit to guide thoughts, actions, and decisions. This active participation is crucial for the Spirit to produce His fruit in our lives.

3. Reflecting Christ in Everyday Life: The sermon calls for believers to live in such a way that they are "accused" of being followers of Jesus. This means that in everyday interactions—whether at work, home, or in social settings—believers should exhibit the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control that are the hallmarks of a Spirit-filled life. This reflection of Christ in daily life serves as a powerful testimony to others.

4. The Role of Community and Accountability: Engaging with a community of believers can provide support and accountability in living out the fruit of the Spirit. The sermon suggests examining one's life for evidence of being a Jesus follower, and this can be enriched by being part of a community that encourages growth and holds each other accountable to the standards of Christ-like living.

5. Continuous Growth and Dependence on God: The sermon acknowledges that believers cannot produce the fruit of the Spirit on their own. It requires continuous dependence on God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. This dependence is cultivated through prayer, reading Scripture, and seeking God's guidance in all aspects of life. The prayer from Psalm 139:23-24, as suggested in the sermon, is a practical tool for inviting God to search and refine our hearts.