

WALKING WITH THE SPIRIT

Knowing Him. Hearing His Voice. Following His Lead. Becoming Like Jesus.

(A study for small groups.¹)

Leader's Guide

Anchor Text: Galatians 5:16–25

Key Verse: Galatians 5:25

¹ Created for the small groups of Harvest Lakeshore

Study Vision

This eight-session study is designed to move young adults beyond merely knowing facts about the Holy Spirit toward a Scripture-shaped life of conscious dependence upon Him. The leader's task is not to create dramatic experiences, but to open the Bible, help participants observe what God has revealed, point them repeatedly to Christ, and call them to ordinary, Spirit-enabled obedience.

Controlling Idea

The Christian life is not merely believing truths about the Holy Spirit; it is learning to live every day in conscious dependence upon Him as He leads us through God's Word, points us to Christ, exposes sin, produces obedience, and transforms us into the likeness of Jesus.

Recommended Session Rhythm (60–75 minutes)

- OPEN (5–10 min): connect, pray, and introduce the central question.
- OBSERVE (15–20 min): read the primary text repeatedly and mark what is actually there.
- UNDERSTAND (15–20 min): discuss meaning, context, and the Spirit's work revealed in the passage.
- LISTEN (10–15 min): ask what truth must be believed, confessed, trusted, or obeyed.
- WALK (5–10 min): choose one concrete practice for the coming week and pray for one another.

Leader Guardrails

- Keep the Bible open. Do not let discussion about experiences replace observation of the text.
- Keep Christ central. The Spirit glorifies Jesus and produces the character of Jesus.
- Distinguish Scripture from impressions. Encourage humility rather than "God told me" certainty where Scripture has not spoken.
- Do not confuse conviction with condemnation. Conviction exposes sin and points believers to Christ and repentance.
- Do not turn spiritual disciplines into a righteousness project. We obey because we belong to Christ, not in order to earn belonging.
- Expect growth to be ordinary and progressive. Walking is daily, repeated, steady dependence.

Week	Theme	Primary Text	Discovery
1	Meet the Holy Spirit	John 14:15–26	Who is the Holy Spirit?
2	The Spirit Lives in You	John 14:16–23; Romans 8:9–17	What does it mean to be indwelt by Him?
3	The Spirit Points You to Jesus	John 15:26–27; 16:12–15	What is the Spirit trying to accomplish in me?
4	The Spirit Speaks Through the Word	John 14:25–26; 16:13–15; 2 Timothy 3:14–17	How do I recognize His voice?
5	Abide in Christ	John 15:1–11	How does dependence upon Christ produce spiritual life?
6	Walk by the Spirit	Galatians 5:16–18, 24–25	What does walking with Him actually look like?
7	Recognize the Battle and the Fruit	Galatians 5:17–23	How can I tell whether I am following the flesh or Spirit?
8	A Life Led by the Spirit	Romans 8:5–14; Galatians 5:25	How do I develop a lifelong pattern of listening and obeying?

SESSION 1: MEET THE HOLY SPIRIT

Primary Text: **John 14:15–26**

Big Idea: The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force or merely an experience; He is the divine Helper who comes to dwell with Christ's people and lead them into a life centered on Jesus.

Leader Preparation

Read the primary passage several times before consulting these notes. Pray that the Spirit would make Christ clear in the text and expose where you personally need to believe or obey before leading others.

Supporting Scriptures

- Matthew 28:19
- 1 Corinthians 2:10–12
- Ephesians 4:30
- Romans 8:26–27
- Acts 5:3–4

Teaching Emphases

- Begin by asking what comes to mind when the group hears “Holy Spirit.” Let answers surface without immediately correcting them.
- Scripture gives us far more than a mysterious or sensational picture. The Spirit has intellect, emotion and will; He teaches, testifies, leads, convicts, speaks and intercedes.
- Explain Helper/Paraclete as one called alongside to help, encourage, advocate, counsel and strengthen. Avoid making the Spirit sound like a tool we employ; He pleads God's cause in us.
- Stress intimacy and permanence: “with you forever,” “dwells with you and will be in you,” and God making His home with His people.
- Keep the session Christ-centered: the Spirit's ministry does not compete with Jesus; He makes Christ present and precious to His people.

Bible Discovery Questions

1. Read John 14:15–26 slowly. List every name, pronoun, action, and promise connected to the Holy Spirit.
2. What do verses 16–17 teach about the Spirit's relationship to believers?
3. What does verse 26 say the Spirit does? Why does that require us to value Jesus' words?
4. What evidence in this passage shows that the Spirit is personal rather than an impersonal power?
5. How does Jesus connect love, obedience, and the Spirit's help?

Heart-Level Discussion

- Have I treated the Holy Spirit as a doctrine to affirm, an experience to chase, or a Person with whom I live in dependent relationship?
- Where do I most need the Helper's aid right now?

Walk This Week

Each morning this week, acknowledge the Spirit's presence and ask Him to help you see and obey Christ as you open Scripture.

Prayer Direction

Invite participants to pray from the passage itself: praise God for what the text reveals, confess where the flesh resists Him, ask for the Spirit's help, and commit the week's step of obedience to Christ.

SESSION 2: THE SPIRIT LIVES IN YOU

Primary Text: **John 14:16–23; Romans 8:9–17**

Big Idea: Every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit; we are not abandoned orphans but God’s children who live in His presence and depend on His power.

Leader Preparation

Read the primary passage several times before consulting these notes. Pray that the Spirit would make Christ clear in the text and expose where you personally need to believe or obey before leading others.

Supporting Scriptures

- 1 Corinthians 6:19–20
- Ephesians 1:13–14
- Galatians 4:4–7
- Matthew 28:20

Teaching Emphases

- Use Jesus’ promise, “I will not leave you as orphans,” to frame the emotional and theological center of the lesson.
- Stress the concept of permanence: believers become the dwelling place of God. The Spirit is not an occasional visitor reserved for unusually spiritual moments.
- Connect indwelling to adoption in Romans 8. The Spirit’s presence assures belonging and draws believers toward the Father rather than toward self-reliance.
- Clarify that awareness of the Spirit is not measured by emotional intensity. His presence is promised by Christ and evidenced through faith, obedience, conviction and growing Christlikeness.
- Invite the group to identify situations where they habitually act as though they are alone.

Bible Discovery Questions

1. In John 14, underline every phrase that describes nearness, permanence, dwelling, or home.
2. According to Romans 8:9–11, what distinguishes someone who belongs to Christ?
3. What does Romans 8:14–17 say the Spirit does in our relationship with the Father?
4. How should the Spirit’s indwelling change the way you think about loneliness, temptation, fear, and ordinary decisions?
5. What is the difference between remembering that the Spirit lives in you and actually living dependently upon Him?

Heart-Level Discussion

- Where am I living as though everything depends on me?
- What fear would look different if I consciously remembered, “God’s Spirit dwells in me”?

Walk This Week

Memorize Romans 8:14–16. When anxiety or loneliness surfaces, pray those truths back to God.

Prayer Direction

Invite participants to pray from the passage itself: praise God for what the text reveals, confess where the flesh resists Him, ask for the Spirit’s help, and commit the week’s step of obedience to Christ.

SESSION 3: THE SPIRIT POINTS YOU TO JESUS

Primary Text: **John 15:26–27; John 16:12–15**

Big Idea: The Holy Spirit’s ministry has a clear direction: He reveals truth, glorifies Jesus, and forms a Christ-centered people.

Leader Preparation

Read the primary passage several times before consulting these notes. Pray that the Spirit would make Christ clear in the text and expose where you personally need to believe or obey before leading others.

Supporting Scriptures

- John 14:26
- 2 Corinthians 3:18
- 1 Corinthians 12:3
- Ephesians 1:13–14

Teaching Emphases

- The Spirit puts the spotlight on Jesus. Use a spotlight illustration: stage lights are valuable because they illuminate what the audience is meant to see.
- Stress that the Spirit is not independent of the Father and Son. His ministry is Trinitarian and Christ-glorifying.
- The group should learn a major discernment question: “Where is this leading my attention and affection?” The Spirit consistently makes the person and work of Christ clearer.
- Connect transformation to beholding Christ. The goal is not fascination with the Spirit detached from Christ, but Christlikeness produced by the Spirit.
- Invite testimony: Where has Scripture recently made Jesus more beautiful, trustworthy, or necessary to you?

Bible Discovery Questions

1. Circle the verbs describing the Spirit’s work in John 15:26 and John 16:12–15.
2. According to John 16:14, what is the Spirit’s great aim?
3. What does it mean that He guides into truth rather than creating a competing message?
4. How can you evaluate a spiritual experience, teaching, desire, or impression by asking whether it magnifies Christ?
5. Where are you tempted to focus more on spiritual gifts, feelings, or experiences than on Jesus Himself?

Heart-Level Discussion

- What occupies the spotlight of my life right now?
- Do my spiritual interests make me more impressed with experiences, with myself, or with Jesus?

Walk This Week

At the end of each day, write one sentence answering: “How did the Spirit point me toward Jesus today?”

Prayer Direction

Invite participants to pray from the passage itself: praise God for what the text reveals, confess where the flesh resists Him, ask for the Spirit’s help, and commit the week’s step of obedience to Christ.

SESSION 4: THE SPIRIT AND THE WORD

Primary Text: John 14:25–26; John 16:13–15; 2 Timothy 3:14–17

Big Idea: We learn to recognize the Spirit's leading by becoming people of the Word He inspired; the Spirit never leads us contrary to Scripture and uses truth to shape our minds and lives.

Leader Preparation

Read the primary passage several times before consulting these notes. Pray that the Spirit would make Christ clear in the text and expose where you personally need to believe or obey before leading others.

Supporting Scriptures

- 2 Peter 1:20–21
- Acts 17:10–12
- Psalm 25:4–5
- Psalm 119:9–18
- James 1:5

Teaching Emphases

- John 14:26 first assures the apostles that the Spirit would teach and remind them of Jesus' words. For believers today, the Spirit uses the apostolic Scriptures to teach, remind and illuminate truth.
- Important principle: *"The Spirit will always be consistent with what you see in the Scriptures."*
- Teach a practical discernment pathway: ask for wisdom; desire God's ways more than secret information; search Scripture; evaluate the resulting attitudes and actions; then make a wise decision trusting God.
- Warn gently against treating impressions as new revelation equal to Scripture. Encourage humility in language: "I sense," "I believe wisdom points this way," rather than claiming divine certainty where God has not spoken.
- Practice together with a real-life decision scenario.

Bible Discovery Questions

1. What does Jesus promise the Spirit will do for the apostles in John 14:26?
2. According to 2 Timothy 3:14–17, what is Scripture able to do in the believer's life?
3. Read Acts 17:11. What did the Bereans do with teaching they received?
4. Why is "I feel led" not enough by itself to establish God's will?
5. What habits would show that you truly value God's Word as the primary place to hear and test truth?

Heart-Level Discussion

- Do I want God to reveal His ways, or mainly to reveal the future I want?
- Where have feelings, culture, friends, or desires become louder than Scripture?

Walk This Week

Before checking social media each day, spend at least 15 minutes reading Scripture. Pray Psalm 119:18 before you read.

Prayer Direction

Invite participants to pray from the passage itself: praise God for what the text reveals, confess where the flesh resists Him, ask for the Spirit's help, and commit the week's step of obedience to Christ.

SESSION 5: ABIDE IN CHRIST

Primary Text: **John 15:1–11**

Big Idea: Spiritual fruit is not manufactured by self-improvement; it grows as believers remain dependent on Christ, receive His Word, pray, obey, and live from His love.

Leader Preparation

Read the primary passage several times before consulting these notes. Pray that the Spirit would make Christ clear in the text and expose where you personally need to believe or obey before leading others.

Supporting Scriptures

- Galatians 5:22–23
- Colossians 2:6–7
- Psalm 1:1–3
- 2 Corinthians 3:18

Teaching Emphases

- Connect John 15 directly to Galatians 5: fruit grows from divine life, not mere religious manufacture.
- Use the image of an apple tree: an apple tree does not strain to create apples; life in the tree produces fruit. The Christian life is not fundamentally self-improvement but abiding, walking, trusting and treasuring Christ.
- Avoid turning abiding into a new performance metric. Jesus' words "apart from me you can do nothing" invite dependence, not despair.
- Show how Word, prayer and obedience are relational means of abiding, not techniques for earning acceptance.
- Prepare the group for Galatians 5: the Spirit produces the character of Christ in people who belong to Christ.

Bible Discovery Questions

1. Mark every occurrence of "abide/remain" and "fruit" in John 15:1–11.
2. What can the branch accomplish apart from the vine?
3. What connections does Jesus make between abiding, His words, prayer, obedience, love, joy, and fruit?
4. What is the difference between trying to look fruitful and actually remaining connected to the source of life?
5. Which habits help you remain attentive to Christ? Which habits consistently pull your attention away?

Heart-Level Discussion

- What am I doing that looks Christian but is powered mainly by self-reliance?
- What currently competes most strongly for my attention and affection for Christ?

Walk This Week

Practice a daily 20-minute abiding rhythm: Scripture, prayer, confession, and quiet reflection on Christ.

Prayer Direction

Invite participants to pray from the passage itself: praise God for what the text reveals, confess where the flesh resists Him, ask for the Spirit's help, and commit the week's step of obedience to Christ.

SESSION 6: WALK BY THE SPIRIT

Primary Text: **Galatians 5:16–18, 24–25**

Big Idea: Walking by the Spirit is a daily life of dependent movement—following His lead, refusing the flesh, and taking ordinary steps of obedience because we already belong to Christ.

Leader Preparation

Read the primary passage several times before consulting these notes. Pray that the Spirit would make Christ clear in the text and expose where you personally need to believe or obey before leading others.

Supporting Scriptures

- Romans 8:5–14
- Colossians 2:6–7
- Ephesians 5:15–18
- Galatians 2:20

Teaching Emphases

- Core truth: Christianity is not merely keeping rules; it is learning to walk with a Person.
- Explain that the four Spirit verbs picture relationship, movement, dependence and direction. Walking is deliberately ordinary—daily, repeated, steady.
- Emphasize the order: the Spirit gives life first; therefore believers keep in step. Christian obedience grows out of Christian identity, never the reverse.
- Use a marching/hiking images if helpful: not running ahead, lagging behind, or staring anxiously at our feet, but following the Leader and keeping our eyes on Christ.
- Make application concrete: forgiveness, refusing bitterness, opening Scripture, prayer, confession, kind speech and hidden obedience are Spirit-directed steps.

Bible Discovery Questions

1. Find the four Spirit-life pictures in Galatians 5: walk, led, live, and keep in step. What does each picture communicate?
2. According to verse 17, where is the conflict located? What competing desires do you see in yourself?
3. What has already happened to those who belong to Christ according to verse 24?
4. Why must identity in Christ come before our effort to obey?
5. Describe one ordinary situation tomorrow in which you could consciously “keep in step with the Spirit.”

Heart-Level Discussion

- Where am I trying to run my life without dependence on the Spirit?
- What would one Spirit-directed step look like in the next 24 hours?

Walk This Week

Choose one recurring situation this week. Before responding, pause and pray: “Spirit of God, help me see Christ, remember Your Word, and take the next obedient step.”

Prayer Direction

Invite participants to pray from the passage itself: praise God for what the text reveals, confess where the flesh resists Him, ask for the Spirit’s help, and commit the week’s step of obedience to Christ.

SESSION 7: RECOGNIZE THE BATTLE AND THE FRUIT

Primary Text: **Galatians 5:17–24**

Big Idea: The Christian life includes a real conflict between flesh and Spirit; the direction of our lives becomes visible in the works we practice and the Christlike fruit the Spirit produces.

Leader Preparation

Read the primary passage several times before consulting these notes. Pray that the Spirit would make Christ clear in the text and expose where you personally need to believe or obey before leading others.

Supporting Scriptures

- Matthew 7:16–20
- Romans 8:12–13
- Colossians 3:1–17
- James 4:1–10

Teaching Emphases

- Emphasize that the battlefield is first the heart, not merely hands, mouth, or eyes. Ask what the heart believes it must have to be secure, significant, comfortable, approved or in control.
- Use a compass/magnet illustration: the Spirit points toward Christ while competing loves pull the heart off course.
- Stress that the presence of conflict is not proof of spiritual death. Believers now experience opposing desires because the Spirit has given new life.
- Contrast manufactured works with cultivated fruit. Plastic flowers can imitate appearance but cannot reproduce life.
- Keep the fruit Christ-centered: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control together portray the character of Jesus.

Bible Discovery Questions

1. Sort the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19–21 into categories: sexual, religious, relational, social, and substance-related.
2. Why does Paul call one list “works” and the other “fruit”?
3. What does the singular “fruit” suggest about the Spirit’s work in forming a whole Christlike character?
4. Which fleshly desire tends to show up repeatedly in your life? What deeper desire may be underneath it?
5. Which aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is increasingly visible in you? Which needs particular attention?

Heart-Level Discussion

- What good thing has quietly become an ultimate thing for me?
- When people spend time with me, which list are they increasingly tasting?

Walk This Week

Ask a mature Christian who knows you well: “Where do you see the fruit of the Spirit growing in me, and where do you think I need to grow?”

Prayer Direction

Invite participants to pray from the passage itself: praise God for what the text reveals, confess where the flesh resists Him, ask for the Spirit’s help, and commit the week’s step of obedience to Christ.

SESSION 8: A LIFE LED BY THE SPIRIT

Primary Text: **Romans 8:5–14; Galatians 5:25**

Big Idea: A Spirit-led life is a lifelong pattern of setting the mind on God's truth, putting sin to death, trusting Christ, obeying the Spirit's direction, and walking with God in community and mission.

Leader Preparation

Read the primary passage several times before consulting these notes. Pray that the Spirit would make Christ clear in the text and expose where you personally need to believe or obey before leading others.

Supporting Scriptures

- Psalm 25:4–5
- James 1:5
- Acts 17:11
- Ephesians 5:15–21
- Hebrews 10:24–25

Teaching Emphases

- Bring the whole study together: Person, indwelling, Christ-centered ministry, Word, abiding, walking, battle, fruit and lifelong direction.
- Practical guidance: ask for wisdom; desire God's ways; be a Berean; evaluate actions and attitudes by the fruit; make a decision trusting the Spirit to guide.
- Clarify that being led by the Spirit is active dependence, not passivity. Romans 8 joins the Spirit's power with believers putting sinful deeds to death.
- Invite participants to build a simple Rule of Life—not to earn favor but to create rhythms that keep them near the Word, Christ's people, prayer and mission.
- End with testimony and prayer. Ask each participant to name one way the Spirit has made Christ clearer or obedience more concrete during the study.

Bible Discovery Questions

1. Contrast the mind set on the flesh and the mind set on the Spirit in Romans 8:5–8.
2. What does Romans 8:12–14 say Spirit-led people actively do?
3. Review Galatians 5:25. What have you learned in this study about “keeping in step”?
4. How can Scripture, prayer, Christian community, confession, service, rest, and mission help cultivate attentiveness to the Spirit?
5. What is one area in which you need to stop waiting for secret guidance and begin obeying what God has already made clear?

Heart-Level Discussion

- What rhythms help me stay attentive to Christ and His Word?
- What change do I want to carry forward after this study ends?

Walk This Week

Write and begin a personal Rule of Life for walking in the Spirit: daily, weekly, and monthly rhythms of Word, prayer, community, confession, service, rest, and mission.

Prayer Direction

Invite participants to pray from the passage itself: praise God for what the text reveals, confess where the flesh resists Him, ask for the Spirit's help, and commit the week's step of obedience to Christ.

Appendix A: A Biblical Discernment Grid

When someone says, “I feel led,” slow down and test the direction without quenching a genuine desire to follow God.

- What does Scripture actually say about this?
- Does this direction honor and magnify Jesus Christ?
- Am I asking for wisdom, or demanding secret information?
- What desires, fears, ambitions, relationships, or pressures may be influencing me?
- Would this action require me to disobey a clear command of Scripture?
- What kind of fruit is this direction likely to cultivate?
- What do wise, mature believers who know me and know Scripture see?
- Can I move forward prayerfully and humbly without claiming divine certainty God has not given?

Appendix B: Flesh or Spirit? Heart Check

- What am I wanting right now?
- Why do I want it so badly?
- What am I afraid will happen if I do not get it?
- Am I looking to something besides Christ for identity, security, approval, pleasure, or control?
- What does God’s Word say?
- What response would display the fruit of the Spirit?
- What is the next obedient step?

Appendix C: Sample Rule of Life

A Rule of Life is not a way to earn God’s favor. It is a simple plan for arranging ordinary rhythms so that we remain attentive to Christ and responsive to His Spirit.

Rhythm	Examples	My Plan
Daily	Scripture, prayer, confession, gratitude, intentional obedience	
Weekly	Corporate worship, Christian community, Sabbath/rest, service	
Monthly	Extended prayer/reflection, hospitality, mission/service, evaluate fruit	