

Small Group Study

Our Vision

To know God and enjoy Him forever.

Our Mission

To build a Christian community by making fully devoted disciples of non-religious and nominally religious people

Discussion

Freedom in Christ: Living by the Spirit's Power

Scripture

Have a volunteer read the following scripture: Galatians 5:16-25

Introduction

Very soon after we become a Christian we make a rather startling discovery. We discover that there is a battle going on. It is a spiritual battle that takes place within our very own heart.

We are saved; we've trusted the Lord as our Savior. But now we find that as a believer we have some enemies.

The Bible teaches that the child of God has three main enemies: the devil, the world, and the flesh.

First, there is the devil. He is out to steal, kill, and destroy us, and his tactics are primarily temptation, deception, and accusation.

Second, the world. Paul is not talking about the material physical world, but rather a philosophy of thought, a system that is organized against Christ and headed up by the devil himself.

Third, there is the flesh. When Paul speaks of the flesh he's not talking about our physical body so much as he is talking about our old sin nature. All of us are born with a propensity to sin because we live in a fallen world. As someone once said, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

Every born again believer has two natures -- the old nature which is dominated by the flesh, and the new nature, which is controlled by the Holy Spirit. That is what Jesus was explaining to Nicodemus when He said, "Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit" (John 3:6).

Paul goes on to point out here in verse 17 that these two natures "are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish." The new nature rebels against the old nature. They are in constant conflict with each other. It's this very problem that Paul discusses in Romans 7 when he writes "I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to



Ice Breaker

Use ONE of the questions to help people open up and to focus your meeting. It is very helpful to go around in a circle with the leader going first. (Remember if you have new members or guests you should take time to introduce everyone.)

1. What was the highlight of your week?
2. Tell us of a time when you got into trouble. What happened?
3. What is one of the best parties or celebrations you've ever been to?

do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate. ...When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway" (Rom. 7:15, 19, NLT).

Questions

1. Can you relate to Paul's frustration with himself? Tell us about a time when you felt like Paul did?
2. When we repent of our sins and by faith receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior we are born of the Spirit. We become a new creation in Christ. We become a new person with a new nature. However, we still have that old nature of the flesh, we are not going to get rid of that old nature in this life. This creates conflict. The flesh wars against the Spirit, and the Spirit wars against the flesh.

There is a great old hymn entitled "Come Thou Fount" by Robert Robinson.

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.

In the last stanza are these words:

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;

As a child of God we have a new nature that loves the Lord and longs to obey Him and worship Him and serve Him. But we also have a nature that is prone to wander, prone to rebel, prone to leave the God we love.

Beginning in verse 19 though Paul shows us the difference between a life that is dominated by the old flesh nature and a life that is lived under the control of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Which of the fruit of the "flesh" can you relate to? Which of the fruit of the Spirit are you growing in? How does one diminish in the one and grow in the other?

3. What does it mean to continually live a Spirit-filled life?
4. Is there a correlation between a Christian's behavior and his/her salvation status? What kind of characteristics would you expect a Christian to demonstrate?
5. What steps would one take to get right with God if they are stuck in patterns of sin rather than obedience?

God bless,
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