

Follow Jesus.

We **journey** on a life-long adventure of spiritual transformation.

To review, our life-long spiritual journey will have ups and downs, but should have an overall upward trajectory indicative of real transformation. At the outset of the journey, God graciously gives us a new identity in Christ. This new identity is who we have already become in Christ (e.g., child of God, forgiven, etc.), even though we are not yet fully like Christ. Our new identity in Christ helps us become more like Christ by freeing us from our old identity and patterns of behavior, which were shaped by ungodly influences and experiences. In other words, our new identity in Christ removes barriers to spiritual transformation. But even if barriers are removed, where do we go from there? We need a destination and a guide. Our Guide is the Spirit of God, who is also graciously given to us by God at the outset of the journey. The destination, or goal, of the journey is Christ-like character.

“But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

2 Corinthians 3.16-18

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT = who I am becoming in Christ (Christ-like character).

Read Galatians 5.16-26.

- 1) Try to think of a recent real-life example where you exhibited each of the fruit listed. Different people in the group should share an example for each one until all are explained.

- 2) Can a Christian pick and choose from the list? Is the list meant to be a collective whole or different examples? How can a Christian know that the Spirit is living in them?

- 3) What fruits of your sinful nature remain? What fruits of the Spirit are needed to overcome these?

- 4) The cause and effect is worth restating because its so important: Is Paul saying that this list of attributes causes you to be spiritual, or that the Spirit in you causes you to exhibit these attributes? Why is this distinction important? Why do you think Paul ends this passage with 5.26?

- 5) How can we “keep in step with the Spirit” (5.25)? Stay tuned for next week!

Read John 15.1-17.

- 6) What or who is represented by the vine, gardener, branches and fruit?

- 7) What are the key(s) to bearing fruit?

Prayerfully consider whether you can say, “Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11.1). What do you need more of? What needs changed or removed that is in conflict with the Spirit transforming you into the image of Christ?