

SATURDAY MORNING

KEY QUESTION

At my core, am I good or bad?

SCRIPTURE: Galatians 5:19–21a, 22–25

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

IN LARGE GROUP

The amazing news this weekend is that God made our students to be awesome. But what happens when they don't feel that way? What about those times when they are down on themselves or they don't feel close to God anymore? How are they supposed to handle those feelings? In Galatians 5, we find a familiar passage about the fruits of the Spirit. However, these amazing attributes are not the goal; they are the by-products of a life of staying in step with the Spirit.

DURING SMALL GROUP

We want students to wrestle with the tension of this battle all day. Fight the temptation to let them off the hook by sharing the "answers" before tonight's session. We promise that tonight's discussion will be better if they spend the whole day wondering about this morning's problem.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Do you think middle schoolers today assume that being a Christian is all about following rules? If so, why?
2. Do you feel like you have to work hard to be a “good” Christian? Why or why not?
3. Can you think of a time when you didn’t feel like God had a plan for you? A time you wondered why it didn’t “feel” like God was close to you?
4. Read Galatians 5:22–25. Notice the two words here: “The acts of the flesh” and “the fruit of the Spirit.” What’s the difference? (Acts is a choice. Fruits are results.)
5. So, do we strive for the fruits of the Spirit? According to the Scripture, do we work toward them, or do they just happen?
6. If the fruits of the Spirit are results of another action, how do we experience them? (Walk or keep in step with the Spirit.)
7. Do you always experience and display the fruits of the Spirit? When you don’t, how do you respond? (Guilt, anger, frustration)
8. When do you feel the tension between acts of the flesh versus walking in the Spirit?
 - What side is winning for you? How do you know?
 - At their core, are people good or bad?

Leaders: Don’t have students answer out loud, but ask them to consider: At your core, are you good or bad? Remember not to resolve the tension for them! It’s best if they let these questions roll around in their minds and hearts all day.