

## INTRO

- What is your favourite fruit? Worst? Why?

**coun-ter-cul-ture** (noun): a way of life, values and attitudes that diverge from the prevailing social norm.

In our Fall teaching series, we look at the way of life Jesus calls us into and how to cultivate it, the result of which bears the fruit of God's transforming power at work in us.

## READ

Gal 5:16-25

*Qu: what is something that stands out to you immediately after reading this passage?*

## REFLECT &amp; RESPOND

**The War Within**

Paul paints a picture of competing and conflicting desires at work within us. Like 2 opposing operating systems, our flesh (that part of us that seeks independence and gratification apart from God) and the Spirit are not compatible—we choose daily which one we yield to and in doing so, give it power over our lives. The result of which is seen in its fruit in our lives.

*Qu: another way of describing the flesh is our coping strategies for life apart from God. What strategies do you default to in times of stress?*

Despite the dominant messages today to “follow your heart” or “be true to yourself,” this passage outlines the danger of blindly following those mantras. Following our heart and desires unchecked, whilst sounds like freedom, actually enslaves us.

*Qu: How could ‘follow your heart’/be true to yourself’ wisdom be a form of freedom that actually enslaves?*

**Winning the War**

To be clear, Jesus offers freedom to everyone who wants it (Gal 5:1,13). His is a freedom that empowers us to want and do what is true and good, and a freedom to follow the Spirit over the flesh and law. How?

**Step 1: Called to Freedom****Step 2: Crucify the Flesh****Step 3: Live by the Spirit**

We begin by remembering those who belong to Christ, have Christ's nature already within them. Then, we are to actively crucify the flesh—deny our sinful impulses. And we do this as we choose to live by the Spirit. But how exactly?

**We create the conditions for God's empowering & transforming presence to bear fruit in our lives through spiritual rhythms & practices.** We create the conditions, God bears the fruit—its a relational partnership. The metaphor of fruit suggests this process is organic, slow but steady growth. Fruit isn't a result of striving but of remaining connected to the vine/source.

*Qu: What ‘conditions’ (rhythms, habits, and practices) can you cultivate to create room for God's work in your life? Is there one practice you can put into place this week?*

Over the next 9wks, we explore more deeply the fruit God's Spirit seeks to grow in our lives and our role in that.

**RESPOND & PRAY**

- Pray for a fresh touch and infilling of God's Spirit in one another.
- Pray for a greater resolve in crucifying the flesh and yielding to the Spirit.
- Consider choosing prayer partners for the week ahead.