

Fall 2025 Small Group Outline and Schedule

This Fall semester our small groups will focus on the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5. To grow more and more into the image of God is the goal of everyone who calls themselves a Christian. Hopefully our study together will aid us in that effort. After an introductory lesson, we will work our way through each of the 9 fruit, one lesson at a time. Our goal is that we might understand each of these fruit, while seeing how Jesus models them and gives us the power to live them.

Lessons:

- (1) The Fruit of the Spirit
- (2) Love
- (3) Joy
- (4) Peace
- (5) Patience
- (6) Kindness
- (7) Goodness
- (8) Faithfulness
- (9) Gentleness
- (10) Self Control

Fall 2025 Small Group Schedule:

Our hope is that groups will be vehicles of discipleship. That is, places of study, but also places of fellowship, service, and mission. Accordingly, you'll notice that while small groups are scheduled to meet 14 weeks through the end of the year, there's only 10 weeks worth of material. This is not an accident. Four "flex weeks" have been built into our group schedules. The idea is that for 4 of the 14 weeks (roughly once a month), each group will not gather to study, but either to serve together or fellowship together. Which weeks and what that looks like will be up to the individual groups. For one of those weeks, each group is encouraged to assist with services at Martin-Boyd Christian Home.

Aug. 24	Small groups begin
Aug. 31	Small groups meet
Sept. 7	Small groups meet
Sept. 14	Singing night
Sept. 21	Small groups meet
Sept. 28	Small groups meet
Oct. 5	75th Anniversary Event
Oct. 12	Small groups meet
Oct. 19	Small groups meet
Oct. 26	Small groups meet
Nov. 2	Small groups meet
Nov. 9	Small groups meet
Nov. 16	Small groups meet
Nov. 23	Small groups meet
Nov. 30	Small groups meet
Dec. 7	Small groups conclude for 2025

Small Group Discussion Guide

This group guide is meant as a help, not a constraint. Each discussion leader will have their own style and each meeting time will have its own needs. For example, if extra time for planning is needed, the lesson may need to tend on the shorter side. Consider beforehand how much time you might need for each section, making sure your group is moving along at an appropriate pace. The proposed times here are fluid, but each lesson should ideally move through 4 sections: (1) Introduction, (2) Text breakdown, (3) Application, and (4) Conclusion.

Introduction (5-10 min.)

The introduction consists of 3 parts.

Prayer - Begin each meeting time by checking in with each other, before going to God in prayer. This time will include sharing blessings, burdens, opportunities, and checking in on past commitments (see below).

Suggested Song - A suggested song has been provided for each of our lessons. This is optional and could work at the beginning or end of the lesson. But consider spending some time in praise together as a group.

Opening question - This “ice breaker” question is meant to get the group talking and introduce the topic for the day.

Discussion/Text breakdown (20-25 minutes)

Each lesson will be built around a text (or a few texts). Questions are aligned with the text they correspond to. Have someone read the text to begin each section (or break up the reading if it is longer). Lead the group through the questions (some may have a prompt). Do not feel overly constrained by the guide. You may not ask every question, or you may have some of your own.

Application (10-20 minutes)

While each leader may bring their own approach to the guide, be sure to leave adequate time for application. Small group study is uniquely suited to apply the words of Scripture together. This is where our learnings move from the mind to our hands, and should not be skipped over.

Conclusion (5-10 minutes)

The conclusion consists of two parts.

Commitment - Encourage each member of the group to consider how they will try to live out the lesson specifically this week. For those who are comfortable, this can be shared with the group for prayer, support, and accountability.

Prayer - Pray specifically that God would help the group to apply the lesson, incorporating any specific goals that were mentioned.

Lesson One: Fruit of the Spirit

Introduction:

Check-in/Prayer: Take prayer requests including blessings, burdens, and opportunities.

Suggested song: Sweet Sweet Spirit

Opening Question: What makes a good gardener?

Discussion:

Key Texts: Galatians 5:16-26, John 15:1-8

Intro:

1. What do you think of when you hear “fruit of the Spirit”?
2. What is the significance of bearing fruit as a Christian?
 - Is it optional?
 - How does it relate to our calling?
3. Is the fruit of the Spirit something that comes naturally?

Spirit and Flesh (Read Gal. 5:16-26)

1. Paul says to “walk by the Spirit.” What does this mean?
2. What stands out about the “works of the flesh” that Paul mentions?
3. What stands out about the fruit of the Spirit?
4. How do we “crucify the flesh with its passions and desires”?
5. How do we become more Spirit filled in order to produce the right fruit in our lives?

Vine and Branches (Read John 15:1-8)

1. Jesus uses the images of a vine and branches to describe spiritual growth... What does this say about Him and about us?
2. How might the analogy of gardening help us to understand the way of fruitfulness?
3. What does it mean to abide in Him?
4. What would we do if we believed this?

Application:

1. According to our texts, should we focus on our fruit, our connection to Christ, or both?
2. What would this difference look like practically?
3. How could we practically abide in Christ in our day to day lives?
4. How could we keep these fruit before our minds daily?

Conclusion:

Commit: How can you seek the fruit of the Spirit this week? (If comfortable, share with the group for prayer).

Prayer: Close in prayer for God to help the group apply the lesson to their lives.

Lesson Two: Love

Introduction:

Check-in/Prayer: Take prayer requests including blessings, burdens, and opportunities.

Suggested song: A Common Love

Opening Question: What comes to mind when you think of a great “love story?”

Discussion:

Key Texts: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 1 John 4:7-21

Our culture and Scripture conceive of love differently...

1. What is our culture's definition of love? (Is it primarily about feelings or commitments?)
2. What is the goal of love, according to our culture?
3. How do we view love differently in various types of relationships? (Are some more honorable than others?)

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

1. Paul says that other gifts, without love, are useless...
 - Why is this the case?
 - What does this say about God's desire for our lives?
 - How might this challenge our approach to our spiritual lives?
2. How is love greater than all other gifts and other virtues (faith, hope)?
3. Consider the qualities of love in v. 4-7
 - Which of these qualities is most challenging (to our culture and to us)?
 - Which of these would make the biggest difference in our lives?

Jesus and the Gospel

1. How did Jesus demonstrate love?
2. How was Jesus able to live a life of sacrificial love?
3. How does Jesus/the gospel empower us to live it? (Consider 1 John 4:19)

Application:

1. How would a commitment to love challenge our priorities and actions (In our homes, at church, at work, in our communities)?
2. How could we abide in Christ's love regularly?
3. What is a habit of love we could all apply to our lives?

Conclusion:

Commit: How can you live out the call to love this week? (If comfortable, share with the group for prayer).

Prayer: Close in prayer for God to help the group apply the lesson to their lives.

Lesson Three: Joy

Introduction:

Check-in/Prayer: Take prayer requests including blessings, burdens, and opportunities.

Suggested song: The Steadfast Love of the Lord

Opening Question: What things in the world bring you the most joy?

Discussion:

Key Texts: Romans 5:3-5, James 1:2-4, 1 Pet. 1:3-9, Heb. 12:1-2

Joy/happiness can have various meanings (Pleasure, thrill, flourishing, contentment, etc.)

1. What do we typically mean when we speak of joy in our culture?
2. Is joy typically understood as lasting or moment to moment?
3. Is joy a natural reaction, or can it be a choice?
4. What might keep us from joy?

The New Testament writers repeatedly express, and call for, joy in difficult circumstances. (Read Rom. 5:3-5, James 1:2-4, 1 Pet. 1:3-9)

1. What stories come to mind of finding joy in hard moments? (Consider Acts 16:16-25) What stands out in them?
2. What reason do these passages give for finding joy in suffering?
3. How does the gospel bring a joy that transcends circumstances?
4. What does it mean to be joyful in difficult circumstances? What does it not mean?

Jesus and the Gospel:

1. How did Jesus demonstrate joy in a variety of circumstances?
2. How was Jesus able to live (and die) joyfully? (Consider Hebrews 12:1-2)
3. How does the gospel produce joy within us?

Application:

1. How can I cultivate joyfulness? (Reflection/worship, thankfulness, celebration, community)
2. How could celebration better be incorporated into our faith?
3. How could we do a better job of sharing good news from our own lives?
4. What are ways to establish good habits of thanksgiving?
5. How can we spread joy to others?

Conclusion:

Commit: How can you practice joy this week? (If comfortable, share with the group for prayer).

Prayer: Close in prayer for God to help the group apply the lesson to their lives.

Lesson Four: Peace

Introduction:

Check-in/Prayer: Take prayer requests including blessings, burdens, and opportunities.

Suggested songs: Instrument of Peace

Opening Question: Where do you go to find peace?

Discussion:

Key Texts: Rom. 5:1-2, Philippians 4:4-7, Eph. 2:13-18, Matthew 5:9, Heb. 12:24, Rom. 12:18

General (Understanding peace)

1. What all do we mean when we speak of peace? (World peace, inner peace, disturbing the peace, etc.)
2. How does the world try to pursue peace? What are the obstacles?

Peace from God

1. Can we have peace with ourselves and others without having peace with God?
2. What does it mean to have peace with God? (Rom. 5:1-2)
3. What does it mean to have the peace of God in your life? (Phil. 4:4-7)
4. How does the gospel and faith provide this? (See Eph. 2:13-18)

Making Peace (Read Matt. 5:9, Heb. 12:14, Rom. 12:18)

1. What does it mean to be a peacemaker?
2. How can we be peacemakers within the church?
3. How can we live at peace with a world that isn't at peace with God? (Rom. 12:18)
4. Does making peace mean tolerance, or is challenge also needed? How so?

Jesus and the Gospel:

1. How did Jesus model peace?
2. How was Jesus able to live peacefully?
3. How does the gospel produce peace within us?

Application:

1. What stories (from Scripture, history, or experience) illustrate the need to make peace?
2. Can you think of examples where Christians have been instrumental in bringing peace?
3. How can you practically seek peace in your inner being?
4. How can you practically seek peace with others?

Conclusion:

Commit: How can you seek peace this week? (If comfortable, share with the group for prayer).

Prayer: Close in prayer for God to help the group apply the lesson to their lives.

Lesson Five: Patience

Introduction:

Check-in/Prayer: Take prayer requests including blessings, burdens, and opportunities.

Suggested song: Be Still My Soul

Opening Question: When do you find it hardest to be patient?

Discussion:

Key Texts: Hebrews 6:13-15, James 5:7-12, 1 Thessalonians 5:14

Introduction:

1. What does it mean to be patient? (What different aspects are represented in these verses?)
2. How does the idea of being “long tempered” help us to grasp the heart of patience?
3. What is the significance of patience? How does it aid us in a good life?

Read Hebrews 6:13-15

1. (Consider Abraham) How did Abraham display patience in the latter part of his life?
2. Why did God make him wait for the promise?
3. What did his waiting produce in him?
4. What other stories of patience stand out to you (either from Scripture or someone you knew?)

Patience with God and others: (Read James 5:7-12, 1 Thessalonians 5:14)

1. When and why is it hard for us to be patient toward God?
2. How is trust key to patience toward God?
3. When and why is it so hard to be patient toward other people?
4. How is our willingness to forgive an indication of patience?

God, Jesus, and the Gospel:

5. How has God modeled patience toward us?
6. How did Jesus model patience toward God and others?
7. How was he able to practice patience throughout his life?
8. How does the gospel empower us to be patient (with God and others)?

Application:

1. What would it look like to show more patience with God?
2. When might we need to practice patience with others?
3. What habits could help us to cultivate patience with God and others?

Conclusion:

Commit: How can you practice patience this week? (If comfortable, share with the group for prayer).

Prayer: Close in prayer for God to help the group apply the lesson to their lives.

Lesson 6: Kindness

Introduction:

Check-in/Prayer: Take prayer requests including blessings, burdens, and opportunities.

Suggested song: Make me a servant

Opening Question: Who is someone who showed great kindness to you? What did they do?

Discussion:

Key Texts: (1 Sam. 20:14-17, 24:16-22, 2 Sam. 9:1-13, Ephesians 4:32, Luke 6:35, Col. 3:12, Rom. 2:4)

General

1. What do we mean in our culture when we call someone kind?
2. Is kindness the same as being nice? If not, how is it different?
3. What keeps us from showing kindness? When (and with whom) is it hard?

Understanding kindness (Read Eph. 4:32, Luke 6:35, Col. 3:12, Rom. 2:4)

1. What aspects of kindness do you see in these passages?
2. Kindness often means going beyond what is expected of you. When are we called to this?
3. What other Biblical ideas can help inform our understanding of kindness? (Compassion, mercy, generosity, etc.)

David and Mephibosheth (Read 1 Sam. 20:14-17, 24:16-22; 2 Sam. 9:1-7)
(Consider also the good samaritan, Luke 10)

1. Why did David feel compelled to care for Mephibosheth?
2. What does this story teach us about kindness?
3. How did David go above and beyond what might be expected of him?

Jesus and the Gospel:

1. How did Jesus demonstrate kindness?
2. How was Jesus able to show kindness to an undeserving and unbelieving people?
3. How does the gospel produce kindness within us?

Application:

1. Who around us is most in need of kindness?
2. How could you practice random acts of kindness?
3. What would it look like to practice kindness? (at home, work, school, neighborhood, etc.)
4. How can I cultivate a kind heart?

Conclusion:

Commit: How can you practice kindness this week? (If comfortable, share with the group).

Prayer: Close in prayer for God to help the group apply the lesson to their lives.

Lesson 7: Goodness

Introduction:

Check-in/Prayer: Take prayer requests including blessings, burdens, and opportunities.

Suggested song: God Is So Good

Opening Question: What is your favorite good vs. evil story?

Discussion:

Key Texts: (Genesis 1, Romans 12:2, Rom. 12:9, Mark 10:18, Acts 10:38, Psalm 23:6)

General

1. What do we generally mean when we call something good? (A good meal, a good person)
2. How is goodness similar and different from kindness?
3. Is goodness something you are, something you do, or both? What's the difference?
4. How is goodness determined in our society?
5. If something is good for me, does that make it good? What do we mean by "the common good?"

Understanding goodness in the Bible

1. In Genesis 1 (v. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, and 31) God repeatedly calls his creation good. What does He mean by this?
2. What is the opposite of goodness? (See Rom. 12:9) How does this illustrate its meaning and our calling?
3. Jesus said that only God is good (Mark 10:18) How is God good? How is God alone good?
4. How is goodness connected to righteousness?
5. What would it mean for goodness to always follow us? (Psalm 23:6)

Jesus and the Gospel:

1. In what ways did Jesus "go around doing good"? (See Acts 10:38)
2. How was Jesus able to be and do good in a world full of evil?
3. How does the gospel produce goodness within us?

Application:

1. How can we be made good as God is good?
2. How can we discern what is good in every situation? (Rom. 12:2)
3. How can we promote what is good (at home, work, and in our community)?
4. How can we do good to others?

Conclusion:

Commit: How can you practice goodness this week? (If comfortable, share with the group).

Prayer: Close in prayer for God to help the group apply the lesson to their lives.

Lesson 8: Faithfulness

Introduction:

Check-in/Prayer: Take prayer requests including blessings, burdens, and opportunities.

Suggested song: Faithful Love

Opening Question: Who is someone you consider faithful? How have they demonstrated this?

Discussion:

Key Texts: (Genesis 12-25, Deuteronomy 7:9, Luke 16:10-12)

General

1. What do we mean when we speak of faithfulness?
2. Is faithfulness valued in our culture? How so?
3. What other values or desires keep us from faithfulness?

Faithfulness of God (Read Deuteronomy 7:9)

1. What stories come to mind when you think of the faithfulness of God? (Consider Abraham)
2. How did God display his faithfulness in the life of Abraham? (Gen. 12-25)
3. Why do we doubt His faithfulness and how does this inhibit our faithfulness?
4. How does this story challenge us when we are tempted to question God's faithfulness?

God is faithful, and we are called to be faithful...

1. What is the benefit of faithfulness and the cost of unfaithfulness? (Both in personal relationships and our relationship with God)
2. What characters from Scripture do you think demonstrated great faithfulness?
3. What can we learn from these examples?

Jesus and the Gospel:

1. How did Jesus demonstrate faithfulness?
2. How was Jesus able to live faithfully, even when it was costly?
3. How does the gospel teach and empower us to walk with faithfulness?

Application:

1. Can you think of someone who showed great faithfulness to you? What did that look like?
2. What does faithfulness look like in different types of relationships? (Including with God and people)
3. How can I cultivate faithfulness?

Conclusion:

Commit: How can you practice faithfulness this week? (If comfortable, share with the group).

Prayer: Close in prayer for God to help the group apply the lesson to their lives.

Lesson 9: Gentleness

Introduction:

Check-in/Prayer: Take prayer requests including blessings, burdens, and opportunities.

Suggested song: I Am A Sheep (And The Lord is my Shepherd)

Opening Question: When has gentleness been most needed in your life?

Discussion:

Key Texts: (1 Kings 12:1-15, Proverbs 15:1, Numbers 12:3, 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 2 Corinthians 10:1)

General

1. What do we mean when we speak of gentleness?
2. The word Paul uses can also be translated “meek.” How does this connect to gentleness?
3. Are gentleness and meekness seen as a positive or negative things in our culture? How would you respond to someone who sees them negatively?

Rehoboam’s Harshness (1 Kings 12:1-15)

1. Why do you think some (like Rehoboam) are tempted to lead harshly?
2. What does this story teach us about the danger of harshness?
3. How are we tempted to follow in Rehoboam’s footsteps?

Examples of Gentleness

1. Moses is described as being meek (Numbers 12:3) How does he demonstrate what meekness and gentleness should look like?
2. How does Paul describe his ministry in verses like 1 Thessalonians 2:7 and 2 Cor. 10:1?
3. What is the value of gentleness? (Consider Proverbs 15:1)

Jesus and the Gospel:

4. Jesus described himself as “gentle and humble in heart.” Where do you see this?
5. How does the gentleness of Jesus bring you confidence?
6. How does the gospel produce gentleness within us?

Application:

1. Can we exercise authority while still being gentle? How so?
2. Can you think of someone who was gentle with you? What did that look like?
3. What would it look like to practice gentleness? (at home, work, school, neighborhood, etc.)
4. How can I cultivate gentleness?

Conclusion:

Commit: How can you practice gentleness this week? (If comfortable, share with the group).

Prayer: Close in prayer for God to help the group apply the lesson to their lives.

Lesson 10: Self Control

Introduction:

Check-in/Prayer: Take prayer requests including blessings, burdens, and opportunities.

Suggested song: Lord, Take Control

Opening Question: When is a time you had to deny yourself in order to achieve some greater end?

Discussion:

Key Texts: (2 Samuel 11:1-27, Titus 2:11-12, 1 Cor. 9:24-27, Prov. 25:28)

General

1. What do we mean when we speak of self-control? What all does this apply to?
2. How is a lack of self control most evident in our culture?
3. When is it hardest to exercise self-control?
4. What is the importance of self-control? How could it change our lives for the better? (Read Prov. 25:28)
5. How is self-control connected to the other fruit (as well as the works of the flesh)?

David and Bathsheba: Read 2 Sam. 11:1-27 (summarize parts if needed)

1. What does this story teach us about self-control?
2. Does the battle for self-control only happen in the moment? How did David put himself under pressure before he even saw Bathsheba?
3. What should David have done when he did see Bathsheba?
4. What could he have done to prevent himself from spiraling downward?
5. What other stories from Scripture provide example (positive or negative) of self-control? What do we learn from them? (Consider Sampson, Daniel, or Joseph)

Jesus and the Gospel:

1. When did Jesus demonstrate self-control?
2. How was Jesus able to remain in control at all times?
3. How does the gospel produce self-control within us? (Titus 2:11-12)

Application:

1. In what areas is self-control most needed in our lives?
2. Is self-control simply about resolve in the moment, or is it more complex? What other elements are necessary to practice self-control?
3. How might Jesus's prayer to "lead us not into temptation" connect to this?
4. How can I cultivate self-control?

Conclusion:

Commit: How can you practice self control this week? (If comfortable, share with the group).

Prayer: Close in prayer for God to help the group apply the lesson to their lives.