



# BIBLE STUDY BOOKLET

STUDIES 1-2

*Leaders Copy*



## During the week @ Grace Christian Church

When		What	Who		Where
Day	Time	Ministry	Leader/Contact	Phone No	Location
MON	6:30pm	Kawana/Wurtulla Bible Study - fortnightly	Tim Richards	5438 2201	Phil Rapply 55 Mandara Drive, Wurtulla
	7:00pm	Buderim Home Group	Colin Weston	5476 9648	9 Bairnsdale St East, Buderim
	7:00pm	Hinterland Home Group (Palmwoods)	Mark & Glorianne Porter	5445 0940	23 Rimmel Pl, Palmwoods
TUE	10:30am	New Mum's Bible Study	Jean Bowen-Jones	0402 746 533	church
	7:00pm	Chancellor Park Bible Study	Callum Lewis	0421 230 119	603/25 Chancellor Village Blvd, Chancellor Park
	7:00pm	Nambour-Burnside Grace Community Grp	Des Morris	5476 3892.	14 Sue Street, Burnside
WED	9:30am	Play Group (for children from birth to prep & their parents)	Nicola Timmers	5445 5552	church
	7:00pm	Bli Bli Home Group	John Baird	5448 4040	50 Gallery Drive, Bli Bli
	7:00pm	Caloundra Home Group	Roger Anderson	5491 9442	72/242 Parklands Blvd, Currimundi
THU	9:45am	Ladies Bible Study	Alison Sheldon	5477 1895	church
	10:30am	Chancellor Park Nursing Home service Held on the 2nd Thursday each month	Pr Clint Lombard	0478 578 152	Chancellor Park Nursing Home 94 University Way, Sippy Downs
	7:00pm	Diddillabah Home Group—Held on the 1st & 3rd Thursday each month	Cameron & Jane Blue	5442 3103	22 Brookfield Crt, Diddillabah
	7:30pm	Sippy Downs/Buderim Bible Study	Pr Clint Lombard	0478 578 152	church
FRI	4:00pm	Kids Friday Club (prep - year 6)	Callum Lewis	0421 230 119	church
	7:00pm	Grace Alive (year 7-12 & Young Adults)	Callum Lewis	0421 230 119	church

SERMON NOTES  
WEEK 1 - SPIRITUAL HORTICULTURE

## STUDY 1 – SPIRITUAL HORTICULTURE

Please read Galatians 6:16-26

- 1) In these verses Paul describes two forces that are opposing one another. What are they? And what does Paul mean by them?

Paul talks about the desires of the Spirit and the desires of the Flesh. He is talking about the internal struggle between God's Spirit (and our subsequent redeemed nature) and the remaining sinful nature that is still inclined to sin.

Following on from the previous question, please read Ephesians 4:20-24 & Colossians 3:8-11

- 2) What is significant about Paul using the expressions "Old Self" and "New Self" in these passages?

Paul is showing us, that through the work of the Holy Spirit, a Christian is an entirely new person. To use the words of John 3:3, a Christian is "born again". To use the words of 2 Corinthians 5:15, a Christian is a "new creation". A Christian isn't just the same person with some new beliefs, and the Holy Spirit living within, rather, the Bible describes a Christian as a brand new person, who has, and who should, leave their sinful past behind.

- 3) Can you spot the difference of "tense" between these two passages as Paul speaks about the Old and New Self? What does this difference teach us?

The passages are different in that Ephesians tells Christians TO put off and TO put on the two natures (present tense), whereas Colossians tells us that Christians have ALREADY put OFF and put ON the two natures (past tense).

The difference teaches us that we are to strive to become what we are. We are to ACT like new creatures because we ARE new creatures. We are to STRIVE for holiness, because we ARE holy.

We are to FIGHT sin, because sin has been BEATEN. We are to strive to become what we already are in Christ!

**4) Do you ever feel this internal struggle between the Spirit/New Self and the Flesh/Old Self? If appropriate share an example with the group?**

I think that most Christians are very aware of this internal struggle that is raging? Even the Apostle Paul was very aware of it. (See Romans 7:15 and 24)

As the leader, try to think of an example of this struggle in your own life to encourage the rest of the group to open up. One example from my own life of when I feel this struggle, is when someone verbally attacks me. I can feel the Flesh crying out "defend yourself - justify yourself - and then launch a counter attack - pointing out their faults". But I can simultaneously feel the Spirit saying - "respond with love, respond with patience, and honestly look at your heart to see if there is any truth in what they are saying."

**Please read Galatians 5:22-23.**

**5) What do you find most encouraging about the fact that the Holy Spirit WILL produce fruit in the life of every Christian?**

It's encouraging that God has given us a LITMUS TEST by which (over a period of time) we can measure the genuineness of our salvation. It's encouraging to realise that He CARES SO DEEPLY about us, that He has given us His Spirit to work in our hearts and lives. It's encouraging to realise that we WILL BE more loving, joyful, peaceful etc in 10 years time, than we are today. It's encouraging to realise that DESPITE OUR OWN WEAKNESSES AND DEFICIENCIES the Spirit within us will inevitably change us.

**6) What part must we play in the Spiritual Horticulture of our hearts and lives? What words in our passage are significant?**

We are to "walk" in the Spirit. And we are to "keep in step" with the Spirit.

We must listen to the Spirit guiding us - through reading and meditating on Scripture. We must listen to the Spirit warning us - to flee from particular sins. We must listen to the Spirit convicting us - that we have sinned and need to repent.

Of course there are many other things we must do as we play our part in maturing as Christians that don't come through in Galatians 5. We must pray, we must serve, we must fellowship etc...

Make sure that everyone in the group understands that we can't just sit back and wait for the Holy Spirit to change us. We must make sure that we "keep in step" with the Spirit.

**7) As we can see from the above questions there is a biblical tension between two truths. On one hand, the Bible clearly teaches that the Spirit gives a Christian the power to grow in godliness and assures us that we WILL grow, but on the other hand, the Bible also teaches that human effort is required. Which do you find you need to remind yourself of?**

Some people will naturally focus more on what God does in maturing them as a Christian, while others will more naturally focus on what they must do in order to mature as a Christian.

The idea here is to get people thinking about which way they lean, so that they give some thought to correcting any imbalance.

**8) In Galatians 5:22-23 Paul writes about the Fruit of the Spirit, while in 1 Corinthians 12 he writes about the Gifts of the Spirit. Discuss the difference between Fruit and Gifts considering the following:**

**a) What is the Spirit's purpose in giving each?**

The Spirit's purpose in enabling Christians to bear Spiritual Fruit is to make us more and more like Jesus. It is an inevitable part of our sanctification process as the Old Self grows weaker and the New Self grows stronger.

The Spirit's purpose in giving Christians Spiritual Gifts is to equip us for service in His Kingdom, so that we can serve and build up others.

**b) How many of each does the Spirit give?**

It is significant that Paul uses the term "Fruit" of the Spirit rather than "Fruits of the Spirit". He sees each of the 9 character traits mentioned as being one collective demonstration of the Spirit's presence.

Of course, some of the Fruit will come more naturally to us than others, but the Spirit's intention is that a Christian increasingly bears more of this 9 dimensional fruit.

When it comes to Spiritual Gifts however, the Bible makes it clear that some gifts are given to one person, while different gifts are given to another. See 1 Cor 12:4-6.

**c) Are both a measure of Christian health and maturity? See 1 Corinthians 3:1-3 and 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.**

No! Spiritual Fruit is a clear mark of Christian maturity. As a person grows in Christ, they will inevitably bear more and more of this fruit. Spiritual Gifts on the other hand are NOT a mark of Christian maturity. For example, the Corinthian Church seemed to be full of Spiritual Gifts, but lacking in Spiritual Fruit, and therefore lacking in Christian maturity.

**9) Which do you think you spend more time reflecting on in your life, Spiritual Fruit or Spiritual Gifts? Why? Could there be an unhealthy balance?**



Encourage people to think honestly about this and share with the group.

**10) These questions are for personal reflection.**

**a) Can you look back over your Christian life and see progress in bearing Spiritual Fruit?**

**b) If you have the courage, ask your spouse or a trusted friend or family member if they can see the Holy Spirit at work in the garden of your life.**

# PRAYER POINTS

SERMON NOTES  
WEEK 2 - LANDSCAPING LOVE

## STUDY 2 – LANDSCAPING LOVE

- 1) **Quickly recapping on last week's sermon and study, how would you define "spiritual fruit" and whose responsibility is it to produce spiritual fruit in a believer's life?**

Spiritual fruit is the outward evidence that Holy Spirit is internally working in a believer's life, leading them to become more and more like Jesus. Even though the Bible says that the Spirit will inevitably produce spiritual fruit in the life of a believer, it also teaches that it is OUR responsibility to walk in the Spirit and keep in step with the Spirit. In other words, the Spirit and the Christian both engage in the work of Spiritual Horticulture together.

This week, we are going to be thinking about the first of the nine fruits of the Spirit: Love.

**Please read Matthew 22:34-40.**

This passage shows us that our first love must be God, and flowing out of that, our second love must be others.

- 2) **When it comes to loving God:**

- a) **What do you think it means to love God with all your heart?**

Loving God with all our heart means that He is our greatest affection, He is the treasure above all treasures, He is the one we desire to be with more than any other etc... See Mat 6:21 and Mat 13:44.

- b) **What do you think it means to love God with all your soul?**

When the Bible speaks about our soul it is referring to our eternal, inner being. It is referring to the core that makes you, you, and me, me. In one sense, it's referring to your life. To love the Lord with all your soul therefore, means to love Him in the way we live, in the choices we make and in the behaviour we adopt etc... Our soul's love for Him will practically shape every aspect of our lives. See John 14:15

**c) What do you think it means to love God with all your mind?**

Our faith is a rational faith. Becoming a Christian doesn't mean that we turn our minds and common sense off. We can love God with our minds, by responding to the saving truth of the gospel message, by remembering Him at all times, by studying His word, by meditating on His character, and by defending the faith etc... See Romans 12:2, Col 3:12 and Phil 4:8.

Make sure that the group understands that our love for God should never merely be a feeling, rather it should be an incredibly practical thing. Our affections must be drawn towards Him, our lives must revolve around him, and our thoughts must be fixed upon Him.

**3) How do you think our culture has distorted our understanding of the word "love"? How do you think a typical Australian would define love?**

Our culture has made love a very self-centred thing. I love you because of what you can do for me, or because of how you can make me feel. Movies often tend to make out it is primarily a sexual thing. A typical Australian would probably define love as a "strong feeling of affection" that they can fall into or out of.

**Please read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

**4) How does the Apostle Paul's definition of love here, differ from that of our society's?**

Paul wants us to see that Christian love is not based on a feeling, rather, it is an act of the will, whereby we resolve to sacrificially do good to another person. It is THIS sort of love towards others that is a fruit of the Spirit.

**5) Paul lists a range of ways in which Christlike love will demonstrate itself. Which do you find the hardest? Why?**

Help people to open up by sharing your struggles.

**Please read 1 John 4:7-12**

**6) What should we remember when we find that we are struggling to love others?**

We should remember that God loved us when we were still enemies. We should remember that God loved us sacrificially. We should remember that God has empowered us to love others.

**7) What do verses 11 and 12 say that we are also doing when we are showing love to one another?**

These verses show us that when we show sacrificial love, we're not just making someone else happy, we're actually giving the world a glimpse of God's love. In verse 12 John says that "no one has ever seen God", but because God's love abides in US, and because WE CAN be seen, we can show the world something of God's amazing love, in the way that we imitate Him, and love others.

I like the way that the New Living Translation puts it: "No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us." In other words, showing Christian love isn't just a good thing to do, it is actually a form of evangelism. See Matthew 5:16.

**8) How does verse 8 connect back to Galatians 5:22-23 which says that love is a Fruit of the Spirit?**

Verse 8 makes it very clear that an absence of Christian love indicates an absence of God's saving love in someone's life. Just like the absence of the Spiritual Fruit of love indicates an absence of the Spirit's presence in someone's life. True Christians MUST bear the fruit of love and be growing in the fruit of love.

**9) Is there anyone in your life that you struggle to show Christian love towards? What steps can you take to remedy this?**

# PRAYER POINTS