



“Off Road”

Galatians 5

— Small Group Plan —

There must be a constant and increasing appreciation that though sin still remains it does not have the mastery. There is a total difference between surviving sin and reigning sin, the regenerate in conflict with sin and the unregenerate complacent to sin. It is one thing for sin to live in us: it is another for us to live in sin. It is one thing for the enemy to occupy the capital; it is another for his defeated hosts to harass the garrisons of the kingdom.

*From Redemption — Accomplished and Applied
by John Murray*

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- How do you respond to this quote by Murray?
- What does he mean by “surviving sin” as opposed to “reigning sin?”
- How would you identify both “the capital” and “the garrisons” of our life?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— THE “TOLL ROAD” OF RELIGIOUS PERFORMANCE —

Galatians 5:16-18

¹⁶ So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. ¹⁷ For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.

- Paul uses two phrases, “live by the Spirit” (v. 16) and “led by the Spirit” (v. 18), to describe the same idea. What do you think he means?
- How is the actual lifestyle of a performance-based life different from the lifestyle of a Spirit-led life?
- Paul is saying that, of the two, Spirit and law (v. 18), one speaks with power to the “sinful nature” while the other simply doesn’t work. Why?

— THE BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS —

Galatians 5:19-21

¹⁹ The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

- What are the causes of these Christian's internal spiritual battles?
- These “works of the flesh” (KJV), could be called IEDs (Improvised Explosive Devices) or landmines and can be divided them into 3 categories: sexual, religious and relational.
- According to your own observations, how would you rank these three in terms of their spiritual damage?
- In Paul's warning “those who live like this” (v. 21), the Greek verb refers to a habitual practice rather than an isolated lapse. Why is this distinction important?

— THE OFF-ROAD TRAIL OF THE SPIRIT —

Galatians 5:22-25

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

- Share stories from the life of Jesus that can illustrate one or more of the spiritual qualities listed by Paul?
- Why is it important to remember that this “fruit” is a product of **God's** Spirit? What would happen if we concluded that love, kindness and goodness came from our own performance?
- How do the fruit of the Spirit work to counteract the destructive effects of the sinful nature?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- For some people the Holy Spirit is the most unclear part of the Trinity, while for others, he is vital to their faith experience. Why the difference? What has been your own experience?
- What evidence do we have that, everyone on the planet is already looking for the qualities listed in verses 22-23?
- Every Christian discovers that they want God's will but have failed to do it. How do we typically respond as we learn about our failures? How can we gain insight into why we fail?
- Share with the group strategies that we can follow that will nurture the character of the Holy Spirit in our lives?
- How has the fruit of the Spirit changed the way you respond to God, to other people and to yourself?
- Close in prayer, asking for God to use his Holy Spirit to mold and shape you from the inside out.