

ST. MATTHEW A.M.E. CHURCH
WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP
SPRING SERIES:

THE DIVINE NINE

GALATIANS 5: 22-23



THE HOLY SPIRIT

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Women's Bible Study Fellowship

Spring Series: "The Divine Nine"

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things, there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

Session III: "Tell It Like It Is"

"In a word, what I'm saying is, Grow up. You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously toward others, the way God lives toward you." Matthew 5:48

Review of Sessions I and II

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Session I – "The Divine Source"

- The Holy Spirit is clearly not a force. He is a thinking, feeling active person working with God the Father and God the Son to affect our lives according to their collective wills. But He is more than a person. He is part of the Trinity.
- The idea of the Trinity has been a point of confusion for many people throughout church history. Scripture clearly teaches that there is but one God. Yet God is presented in the form of three distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The formula adopted by the early church is as follows: one essence, three persons.
- The work of the Holy Spirit is to change human nature into God-like nature. Our flesh does not want to change. Our flesh wants us to maintain our arrogance and not change it into humility. We want to maintain our resentment and jealousy. We thrive on the things of the flesh when we are not led by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 7:14-25 and Galatians 5:19-21)
- When our own wills are centered in the flesh, we block the Holy Spirit from coming through in our lives.
- The Holy Spirit's power cannot be harnessed. His power cannot be used to accomplish anything other than the Father's will. The Holy Spirit is not a genie waiting for someone to rub His lamp the right way. The Holy Spirit is our Holy God.
- If you have trusted Christ as your Savior, you "have the baptism." Not only that, you have been indwelt and filled and therefore have everything you need to experience the wonderful spirit-filled life.
- The Holy Spirit takes up residency in believers forever. He doesn't just pass through. He makes His home in us. He comes to stay.

Session II – "Don't Get It Twisted" (John 15:1-5)

- Jesus makes a clear distinction between the vine and the branch. The two are not the same. He is the vine, we are the branches. The two are joined, but not one.
- Christ is the vine and God is the gardener who cares for the branches to make them fruitful. The fruitful branches are true believers who by their living union with Christ bear much fruit. But those who become unproductive and those who turn back from following Christ after making a superficial commitment will be separated from the vine.

- Fruitful branches are cut back to promote growth. In other words, God (the Gardener) must sometimes discipline us to strengthen our character and faith.
- We are not equipped to produce change, only bear it. Your new life produces change. You are simply the vehicle through which the fruit-producing life of the vine is expressed. You are a bearer, not a producer. Branches (We) are totally dependent on the vine for fruit. And we are totally dependent on the Holy Spirit.
- The sign of a Spirit-filled believer is fruit, not a particular experience or a particular gift. Matthew 7:15-20
- The fruit of the Spirit is the most effective evangelistic tool we have. Nothing is more powerful than a life characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
- The fruit of the Spirit provides the relational qualities necessary to enable members of the body to work together successfully.
- The fruit of the Spirit is a by-product of being tuned in to the Spirit of God. The more Spirit conscious we become, the more fruit we will bear. Walking in the Spirit is not about focusing on fruit. It's about sensitivity to the Spirit. Fruit is not to be the center of our attention. We are not to begin the day with a commitment to bear fruit. Our commitment must be to walk in the Spirit. The result of that decision will be the fruit of the Spirit.

II. "Fruit of Desirable Circumstances"

- Nonbelievers can demonstrate patience or kindness. Just about everybody exercises self-control at some level. So just because a person is patient doesn't mean he or she is walking in the Spirit. The same goes for the other eight qualities. In fact, there are some nonbelievers who demonstrate more "fruit type" character than many Christians.
- The thing that sets the fruit of the Spirit apart from its counterpart is that the fruit of the Spirit is not environmentally sensitive. It's one thing to have peace and joy when everything is going your way. It's another thing altogether to maintain your peace and joy, when the bottom falls out.
- What is often passed off as fruit of the Spirit is nothing more than the fruit of desirable circumstances or mutually beneficial relationships.

III. "Tell It Like It Is"

"In a word, what I'm saying is, Grow up. You're kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God created identity. Live generously toward others, the way God lives toward you." (Matthew 5:48 Message)

- We can't achieve Christlike character and holy living all at once, but we must grow toward maturity and wholeness. Just as we expect different behavior from a baby, a child, a teenager, and an adult, so God expects different behavior from us, depending on our stage of spiritual development.
- Before listing the fruit of the Spirit, Paul had just finished speaking about the acts of sinful nature. Galatians 5:19-21
 - Sexual immorality
 - Impurity and debauchery
 - Idolatry and witchcraft
 - Hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage
 - Self-ambition
 - Dissensions, factions
 - Envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like

- We must deal with these evil desires decisively (crucify them). Those who ignore such sin or refuse to deal with them reveal that they have not received the gift of the Spirit that leads to a transformed life.

IV. "This Is What We Want"

- Just as unconditional love shines brightest in the midst of our differences so fruit of the Spirit demonstrates its divine source when circumstances and relationships take a turn for the worse. The reason is, the fruit of the Spirit is just that: fruit produced by the Spirit. It is not fragile. It is not subject to change. Its root is deeply embedded in the person of Christ. When we abide in Him and allow Him to live through us, the result is character that endures the chaos of life.
- The fruit of the Spirit is:
 - Love – for those who do not love in return
 - Joy – in the midst of painful circumstances
 - Peace – when something you were counting on doesn't come through
 - Patience – when things aren't going fast enough for you
 - Kindness – toward those who treat you unkindly
 - Goodness – toward those who have been intentionally insensitive to you
 - Faithfulness – when friends have proved unfaithful
 - Gentleness – toward those who have handled you roughly
 - Self-control – in the midst of intense temptation

Have a Blessed Summer!

Bible Study Will Resume in September