THEME: MANIFESTING THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT
TOPIC: THE SOURCE OF THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT: ABIDING IN CHRIST
TEXT: GALATIANS 5:16-25, JOHN 15:1-8

Introduction: What Is Growing in Your Life?
People often notice our character before they understand our beliefs. Our families hear the tone we use when we are tired. Co-workers see how we act when someone else gets the credit. Strangers encounter us in traffic, in a queue, or online. These ordinary moments reveal what is growing within us.

Paul calls love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control **the fruit of the Spirit**. He uses *fruit* in the singular. Together, these qualities describe the character the Holy Spirit grows in a believer. We should not treat them as a menu from which we select the virtues we find easiest. A person may be cheerful but unkind, or generous but quick-tempered. The Spirit calls us to grow in every area.

In Galatians 5, Paul places this fruit beside the "works of the flesh," including hostility, jealousy, angry outbursts, selfish ambition, and division. The contrast invites an honest question: **What tends to come out of me when life presses on me?**

This study is an invitation to bring that question to God without pretending or despairing. Fruit grows over time. Jesus describes the essential relationship: "**Abide in Me, and I in you**" **(John 15:4)**. As we remain close to Christ, listen to the Spirit, repent when we fail, and practise obedience, his work becomes visible in the way we live.

A helpful distinction: Spiritual gifts equip believers to serve. The fruit of the Spirit describes the character with which we serve. We need both God's power at work through us and his character growing within us.

Key truth: The Holy Spirit grows lasting character as we remain connected to Christ and follow his leading.

Opening thought
A branch cannot produce grapes by trying harder to look fruitful. It bears fruit because it remains connected to the vine. In the same way, spiritual growth involves more than managing our outward behaviour. We need an ongoing relationship with Jesus.

That relationship does not make our choices irrelevant. Paul says, "Walk in the Spirit" **(Galatians 5:16).** We choose to listen, obey, confess sin, seek help, and practise what God teaches us. Yet we do so in dependence on him.

Let's Explore the Text
1. **Recognise the struggle. Galatians 5:17** describes a real conflict between the desires of the flesh and the Spirit. A believer can acknowledge this struggle without surrendering to it.
2. **Look at what our actions produce (Galatians 5:19–21**). Which patterns damage relationships with God and others?
3. **Stay connected to Jesus.** In **John 15:4–5**, Jesus links fruitfulness to abiding in him. Prayer, Scripture, worship, fellowship, and obedience help us attend to that relationship.
4. **Expect growth.** Fruit usually develops gradually. A setback calls for repentance and a return to Christ, not the conclusion that growth is impossible.

Biblical Examples to consider

- **Peter** failed publicly by denying Jesus, yet Jesus restored him and gave him work to do **(Luke 22:54–62; John 21:15–19).**
- **Barnabas** became known for encouraging believers and welcoming others into fellowship **(Acts 4:36–37; 9:26–27).**
- **The Thessalonian believers** showed faith and love while enduring hardship **(1 Thessalonians 1:2–8).**

Discussion

1. Which situations most often expose your impatience, fear, anger, or selfishness?
2. What does abiding in Christ look like during an ordinary working day?
3. How can we make honesty and growth easier than pretending?

Take Away assignment

Each morning, pray: **"Holy Spirit, lead me today. Show me where I need to respond like Jesus."** Each evening, write down one moment when you followed his leading and one moment you want to bring to him in repentance. Share one observation next week.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, keep us close to you. Show us the truth about our lives, forgive us where we have gone our own way, and grow your character in us. Amen.