

ED YOUNG

JUICY FRUIT



JUICY FRUIT
A STUDY OF THE FRUIT
OF THE SPIRIT

STUDY GUIDE

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Small Groups are a vital part of how we do ministry at Fellowship Church, just as they are in many churches around the world. There are a number of different theories on how small groups should work and they are all great in different ways. The book you are holding is written with our model in mind. So take a minute to read the following explanation, then feel free to adapt as necessary.

Each of our small groups practices a three part agenda in every meeting. That agenda includes a social time, a discussion time, and a prayer time. Each of these elements share equal importance, but not necessarily equal time. To help you get the most out of this book we have included an explanation of each of the parts.

The first element of every small group meeting should be a time of socializing. This phase of the meeting should be about 30% of your time together. Welcome everyone as they arrive at the host home, and make visitors feel welcome by introducing yourself and the other members of your small group. Enjoy some snacks, or if your group prefers, a meal together.

Then move on with second part of the meeting, the lesson. The lesson itself may take as much as 50% of your group's meeting time, but remember, it is not the most important element. You may want to start this phase of your meeting with a short "icebreaker" to get everyone talking. The questions in the "Start it Up" section of each chapter are what we refer to as "level the playing field" questions that everyone should be able to participate in, regardless of their level of spiritual maturity or Bible knowledge. As your group moves through the "Talk it Up" section in each chapter, remember that it is more important to finish on time than to finish each and every question. It is okay to skip some questions to be sure you allow enough time to take care of the third phase of the small group time: "Lift it Up."

The "Lift it Up" section is a vital part of every small group meeting and should be about 20% of the meeting. During this time you will be able to share with the group what God is doing in your life as well as asking the group to support you in specific prayers. To help focus this time, there are one or two questions at the end of each study that will prompt prayers based on the material you have just talked about. There is also a space for you to write down your prayer request(s) so you don't forget them and so you can communicate them clearly when it is your turn. Below that is a place to write down the prayer requests of the people in your group so you can remember and pray for each request throughout the week.

As an additional tool to assist you in your journey of spiritual development, there is a "Step it Up" section at the end of each session. This section consists of five devotional thoughts that reinforce the lesson you've just completed and are designed to help you develop a regular quiet time with God. To get the absolute most from this study, I challenge you to take five or ten minutes a day to read and apply these devotionals to your life. If your group meets twice a month or bi-weekly, choose five of the intervening days to incorporate these thoughts into your devotional life.

In select studies, we have incorporated special notes for youth groups using this material. You will notice a special icon (Y) used several times in each session. This indicates that there is a comment or question especially for youth included in the leader's guide for that part of the study. When you see that icon, simply turn to the leader's guide for that session in the back of the book and find the corresponding (Y) and letter (for instance, (Y)-a). These notes are designed to help each discussion time connect with the unique needs and issues of youth.

Juicy Fruit is one of my favorite pieces of gum to chew. When I chew a piece of Juicy Fruit, there is this big, sweet, juicy blast of flavor that takes over my mouth and makes my taste buds go bananas! However, after about eight minutes (yes, I actually timed it), the gum begins to lose its flavor, and it's time to throw it away.



Wouldn't it be great if the makers of Juicy Fruit could invent a product that never loses its flavor? It would be the ultimate Juicy Fruit gum! Many of our lives are like old Juicy Fruit gum. We've lost our zest for living, and we're stuck chewing on an old stick of gum.

The book of Galatians contains a passage with the recipe for the ultimate Juicy Fruit gum. When we chew on this passage, it will add vitality and vibrancy to our spiritual lives. Over the next several weeks, your small group will discover the fruity characteristics of the Christian life that give meaning and purpose to our relationship with each other and with God.

Let's chew on this fruit together!





LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS

JUICY FRUIT

START IT UP

Things aren't always as they seem. Television commercials make incredible promises about their products, only to be followed by small print disclaimers like, "Results not typical." Politicians run on "solid" platforms, only to dismantle them as soon as the inauguration is finished. People all around us say one thing, but live another. ④-a

1. What is something you have experienced that you expected to be one thing, but found out that it was another?

④-b

You would think that the problem with things not being what they seem doesn't affect Christianity. But it does. Sadly, within Christianity, there is a crisis concerning character. It's not hard to find people who say, "I am a believer. I know Jesus Christ. I follow Him. I am involved in church." But it's also easy to find a lot of those same people acting a way contrary to Christ's teaching. What they say and what they do are two different things.

TALK IT UP

THE BREWING BATTLE

The crisis of character creates a battle in each of our lives. It's a battle that stems from one verse in Scripture that on the surface seems innocent, but has towering implications as we live the Christian life.

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.
Philippians 2:3 (NASB)

The problem we face with this verse is that two word phrase, "one another." At times I feel like I am winning the battle brought on by that phrase; other times I feel like I am overrun and overwhelmed by the opposition. Everything is going great until I read, "one another."

There's something interesting when it comes to this verse, though. I don't think there would be a battle in my life if this verse read, "Regard celebrities as more important than yourself," or, "Regard VIP's as more important than yourself." I would have no problem obeying that directive from the Lord.

2. What do you think it looks like in your everyday routine to "regard one another as more important" than you?

If celebrities or VIP's were coming to my house, I would open car doors, front doors, and even bathroom doors for them. They would sit at the head of the table and get the most generous portion of hospitality.



Yet, so often in everyday life, that isn't the case. I have no problem letting my wife open all her own doors. She will stand in our kitchen and prepare a great

meal for our family. After the meal, especially on the weekends, I will expect her to keep the kids at bay while I relax for awhile. If I am not careful, I can put my interests and my needs above her interests and her needs. If I am not careful, I can think that I am more important than my wife. That's where the front line of this battle is drawn—it's whether or not I regard my wife as more important than me. And this battle plays out in every venue of life.

So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 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. Galatians 5:16-17

I've heard people say, "Christianity is for those people who need a crutch. It is for the lightweights of the world." But that is simply not true. A relationship with God is for the strong, because it takes strength to fight this battle, this conflict that plays out inside each of us. It takes strength to recognize the fact that we can't do it on our own. And it takes strength to go against our nature and turn to God's plan.

On the other hand, it doesn't take much strength, character or commitment to remain a self-centered person and do what makes me look good, feel good and gives me pleasure. It doesn't take strength to cave in and go with the flow of fulfilling my own needs first.

True love for our neighbors, regarding another person as more important than ourselves, isn't something we can do by our own strength. We must turn to God. Because without his Holy Spirit making us aware, we would remain hopelessly self-centered. God is committed to change our natural instincts into supernatural instincts. And these supernatural instincts produce character changes that can only be described as the fruit of the Spirit. In other words, when we muster up the strength to hand over control to the Spirit, he develops in us some supernatural produce.

SPIRIT-PRODUCED PRODUCE

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control....
Galatians 5:22-23

3. Explain what “fruit of the Spirit” you think is the most desirable as well as what “fruit” is most difficult to produce on our own.

We can’t pick and choose what fruit we want. We can’t say, “I’ll take some peace, joy and faithfulness, but hold the gentleness and patience.” If we know Jesus Christ personally, he has placed the person of the Holy Spirit, the ultimate gardener, inside us. And it is his objective to produce spiritual fruit in our lives to help us win these daily character struggles.

A while back, Lisa and I went to a restaurant that was packed. We were told the wait would be about forty minutes, and of course, all of the couches in the waiting area were full. So I decided to watch those couches until someone got up. You know what it’s like to wait in a crowd. This was going to be a race to the first empty seat. But as soon as someone stood up, I swooped in and claimed the empty seats for myself and my lovely bride. Lisa and I could now comfortably wait for our names to be called.

But as I was sitting there, basking in my self-centeredness, and ruling over the universe called Ed, the Holy Spirit began to work on my heart. First, he showed me an opportunity to show someone else supernatural love. I noticed an older man, probably in his 70’s, standing up across the way. I knew it was an opportunity to regard someone else as more important than me. But I didn’t want to. After all, I won these seats fair and square...or so I told myself.

Then I began to feel the Holy Spirit nudging me to take action. I kept thinking, “Get up and show this gentleman some Philippians 2:3 love.” But I still didn’t get up. And to justify my behavior to myself and God I thought, “The guy is probably a jerk anyway. He looks kind of negative. Plus, I don’t owe him anything. I’m here on the couch and he’s not. Too bad.”

Then the Holy Spirit brought out the heavy artillery; he reminded me of the cross. God owed me nothing, yet he gave me the gift of eternal life through

Jesus. But even though I remembered that, I was still arguing with the Holy Spirit. I did not want to give up my seat for this stranger.

The final thing the Holy Spirit did was bring in reinforcements. He used someone else to motivate me to action. Who? You guessed it. My wonderful wife suggested that I ask the man if he would like my seat. God used Lisa to encourage me to produce spiritual fruit.

The internal battle was on, so here is what I did. I got off my self-centered rear end (albeit somewhat grudgingly) and offered this gentlemen my seat. Guess what happened? He told me that he was fine. He wanted to stand. I had gone through all that internal turmoil for nothing! At least it felt that way. Every time we cooperate with the Holy Spirit supernatural things happen in our lives.

The first thing that happens is a little part of your old, sinful nature dies. Next time I’m in that situation, I probably won’t be so reluctant in giving up my seat to someone else.

Cooperating with the Holy Spirit also delights the heart of God. Selfless acts, even as little as giving up a seat in the waiting area, please God because he sees that you are treating others as more important than yourself.

It also shows other people love. Putting someone else’s needs above your own profoundly registers with them.

Finally, many times cooperating with the Holy Spirit provides the opportunity to share what Christ is doing in your life. That selfless act may lead to a conversation which can lead to an invitation to church which can ultimately lead to a life being changed.

4. When have you felt the Holy Spirit encouraging you to produce spiritual fruit and how did you respond? (Y)-d

LIVING THE TWO-THREE

I challenge you to ask yourself the two-three question. That is Philippians 2:3. “Do I regard _____ as more important than myself?” Fill in the blank with your spouse, a friend, your boss, someone who rubs you the wrong way or anyone else God brings to mind.

Once you have asked yourself the question, determine what you need to do to change your actions in order to cooperate with God’s will. And then record your progress. I recommend using a journal to track those times. **Y-e** Take time to pray through Philippians 2:3, Galatians 5:16-17 and Galatians 5:22-23. Record the opportunities the Holy Spirit alerts you, nudges you, reminds you of the cross or uses someone else in your life to help you produce spiritual fruit. Write down how you respond and what happened. In no time, you will have pages of God’s work in your lives.

FAITHFULNESS

Wouldn’t it be great if the people at Wrigley’s could invent a gum that never lost its flavor? Talk about the ultimate piece of Juicy Fruit! Well, the Bible describes a juicy fruit that never loses its flavor. Galatians 5:22-23 says “The fruit of the spirit...,” in other words, the real juicy fruit, “... is faithfulness.”

Unfortunately, many of us can recall the bad taste of unfaithfulness that has permeated our lives—the broken marriage, the violated vow, the backstabbing from a friend. We despise unfaithfulness. We want to discard it, to throw it away like some chewed up gum. We want the flavor of faithfulness to permeate everything we touch. But if we are honest with ourselves and look around our culture, we see that faithfulness is fading just as fast as the flavor of Juicy Fruit gum.

5. In what areas of our culture do you see faithfulness on the decline? **Y-f**

Many a man claims to have unfailing love, but a faithful man who can find? Proverbs 20:6

We all struggle to recall a couple who has been in a 30 year marriage. We have to think hard to find someone who has a 15-year friendship, or a man or woman who has been with a company for 20 years. It’s obvious that the flavor of faithfulness is fading in our world. The reason it is fading is because it takes a lot of courage, commitment, discipline and integrity to carry it out.

Faithfulness means you stick with the project even after the shine has worn off. Faithfulness means you blast through a relational quitting point even though every fiber in your being is screaming for you to bail out. Faithfulness means that you stick to your word, no matter what the cost. Faithfulness means that you stay true to your relationship with Jesus Christ, no matter how much peer pressure comes your way. And that faithfulness is difficult to produce on our own.

Galatians 5:22-23 says “...the fruit of the spirit is faithfulness.” God loves us so much he can’t stand the tastelessness of unfaithfulness that permeates our lives. The great news is he did not leave us alone to produce this spiritual fruit of faithfulness. He takes it upon himself to transform us from unfaithful human beings into faithful human beings. It is a difficult process, but God is willing to stick it out.

The Bible promises that the moment we ask Jesus Christ to come into our lives, he places the person of the Holy Spirit within us. What does that do for us? The Holy Spirit’s responsibility is to transform us, to turn us, to alter us and to change us into faithful human beings.

I define a faithful person as a man or a woman of their word. And the Holy Spirit will keep telling us, nudging us and reminding us that God wants us to become a man or woman of our word. Let’s talk about three major areas we all deal with becoming a man or woman of our word.

FAITHFULNESS IN RELATIONSHIPS

First, the Holy Spirit will help us become men and women of our word in our relational world.

Y-g

Husbands, you gave your word to honor, love, cherish, submit to and hold your spouse in high esteem. Yes, you might have been mouthing the words just to get to the honeymoon in Cancun, but you said the words. And God holds you to your word. Wives, you stood before God and witnesses and promised to be faithful to your husband, to submit to him, to love him, to honor him and to cherish him. Both of you promised to remain faithful—until death do you part. The Holy Spirit helps each of you stick to your word. And if we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, we will find a supernatural infusion of faithfulness to love our spouse. We will experience a new desire to cherish, to court, to romance, to love and to pray with our spouse.

Let's look at the parent-child relationship. Unfaithfulness can produce huge resentment issues in this relationship. We say to our children that we will take them fishing next week or that next month we will go to Chuck E. Cheese's. But when the time comes and we don't follow through with our word, all we're showing our children is how to be unfaithful. How can our children learn how to produce spiritual fruit if they don't see it modeled and articulated by Mom and Dad?

How about the friendship factor? Are you loyal to your friends? Are you trustworthy? Are you reliable? Do you keep your word? When you say you are going to pray for them, do you really pray for them? When you say you are going to help them, do you really help them?

6. How has someone demonstrated faithfulness to you in a relationship that impacted your life?

FAITHFULNESS IN CAREER Y-h

In the marketplace, certain phrases are standard operating procedure. We say, "The check is in the mail," or "I'll see to it myself." Yet, when we articulate

those words, many times we don't really mean them. We rationalize that everyone does it, that it is necessary to tell the client or customer what they want to hear. The Bible calls that unfaithfulness.

But if you cooperate with the Holy Spirit, the next time you want to say that the check is in the mail even when you know it isn't, you will feel his leading. You won't be able to say, "The check is in the mail." Instead, you'll admit that you won't be able to deliver the check for another 10 days. Or the next time you want to say that you will take care of it yourself, the Holy Spirit will nudge you and remind you of God's faithfulness. Then you will say that it will not really be you, but someone else in the company will see to it. In business, the Holy Spirit will urge to remain faithful by maintaining a high level of integrity for everyone to see.

FAITHFULNESS TO GOD

The third big area that the Bible challenges us is to become a man or woman of our word is with God. There are three specific areas that God wants to see if we will be faithful to him.

We all have a certain amount of time on this earth, time that is a gift to us from God. And only he knows how much time we really have. But no matter how much time we have, God wants us to become great stewards of the minutes that he has entrusted to us.

What are you doing with your time? Are you so busy you don't know which way to go? It could be you have a warped view of time and that you need to learn what God's priorities are for your time.

Many of us are going to have to refuse a lot of good things in order to discover the great things God wants us to do with our time. We may have to simplify, to downscale in order to do accomplish all that God desires for us.

If we don't spend one-on-one time with God every day, one day we will look up and wonder where our time has gone. On the other hand, if we make a serious effort to give God the first moments of each day, we will be amazed at how he can multiply our time and help us make the most of the time we have.

7. What have you done to regularly spend time with God and how does that affect the rest of your time?

Another area where our faithfulness to God comes into play is with our talents. We all have certain God-given abilities and gifts. You can do things others can't do; other people can do things you can't do. God has made an investment in each of our lives. And he wants a return on the investment. What are your gifts? What are your abilities? What are your talents? Usually, those can be found in the areas where your interests lie. Usually, it is the way you are naturally wired.

Two of my strongest God-given gifts are in the realms of leadership and communication. Now, I could just thank God for those gifts; I could just tell him that I love him and use my gifts for my own, personal agenda. But that isn't what God wants. God wants me to give back to him using the abilities and gifts he has given me. That is an act of worship. And it is how I can remain faithful to God.

8. How did (or can) you discover the talents and abilities God had given you and how you could use those gifts to show your faithfulness to God? (Y-i)

Another area that God urges us to remain faithful is with our finances. Let me clarify something right now: your money is not your money. It is God's money. God has given us everything we have. (Y-j) He has given us time. He has given us talents. He has also given us treasure. And he wants us to become faithful stewards of our money. How are you doing financially?

As a first act of faith when it comes to finances, God commands us to bring 10% of everything we have to the local church. It's called the tithe. And it is a minimum of what God requires us to give back. We're also to save at least 10%. And then the remaining 80%, God says, is ours to enjoy. That's what we live on. And when we follow God's financial plan; when we are faithful in the area of finances, God promises us that he will remain faithful to us.

Every time the offering plate is passed, it is a faith test. Every time you get a paycheck, it is a faith test. Every time a bill comes in, it is a faith test. Do you pay your bills on time? To remain faithful to God in the area of finances, follow his commands of tithing, saving, and enjoying.

WRAP IT UP

We could go on and on and on talking about ways to remain faithful and areas that are impacted by faithfulness. We could find dozens of motivational factors driving us to remain faithful in life. But there is one thing that motivates me be a faithful person more than any other. I know one day that I am going to meet Jesus face-to-face. And when I do, he is going to look in my eyes and ask: "Were you faithful in your life? Were you faithful to me, to others and to yourself?"

And after he asks me that question, I want to be able to say, "Yes." I want Jesus to say to me, "Well done, good and faithful servant." That is my ultimate dream. And that is my prayer for you.

Prayer Requests:

DAY 2

Romans 12:9-21

These Scriptures are powerful! Words that jump out are: love, cling, devoted, honor, joyful, patient, faithful, share, bless, rejoice, mourn, live, and peace. How rich our lives would be if we would learn and apply these few verses in our daily living and incorporate them into our thoughts and actions.

When it comes to living out the love that puts others first, these verses are a great picture. Those vibrant words that we talked about earlier are powered by a love that only comes from the Spirit. We cannot live out these verses on our own strength. Maybe you have tried it. Maybe you have tried to be patient in affliction. Maybe you have tried to bless those who persecute you. If you have tried to make those more than just a one time thing, but a part of your life, you know the necessity of the Holy Spirit.

Read through the verses for today one more time and ask God to point out what parts of this lifestyle of love you are lacking. Then ask for the Holy Spirit to produce those in you starting today.

Notes:

Prayer Requests:



LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS

JUICY FRUIT

LEADER'S NOTES

Y-a

As an alternative way to start, have the students try to quote or act out the commercials that over promise.

1. What have you experienced that was not what it seemed to be?

Tip: Your group will probably have some negative stories to share about things that weren't what they seemed to be, but challenge them to also think of positive scenarios where they were pleasantly surprised.

Y-b

Most students have expectations about high school. Some are afraid of being picked on by upper classmen. Others are excited about because their expectations were painted from teen movies of high school parties. What were your expectations before you started high school and how was high school different from what you expected.

Y-c

The way we treat others in our home can be so different than the way we treat a celebrity or VIP if they were at our house. We come home and expect our parents to have something ready for us to eat. We finish eating and leave the dishes to be cleaned by someone else. We hog the TV, the computer, the bathroom and anything else we want. We act like we are the VIP instead of attempting to treat someone else as the VIP.

2. What do you think it looks like in your everyday routine, to “regard one another as more important” than you?

Brainstorm with your group how to put others first at work, home, and everywhere else. Examples might be: helping a coworker with a project and not taking credit for it, doing chores around the house without anyone asking, or letting a mom with her hands full go ahead of you in line at the grocery store.

3. Explain what “fruit of the Spirit” you think is the most desirable as well what “fruit” is most difficult to produce on our own.

Tip: The explanation part of this question is essential. Explore what makes a “fruit of the Spirit” so desirable or difficult. Encourage personal examples of trying to produce that fruit or how that fruit has affected them.

4. When have you felt the Holy Spirit encouraging you to produce spiritual fruit and how did you respond?

The Holy Spirit nudges us to produce fruit in all kinds of circumstances. The situations can be as small as letting another driver pull ahead of you, or as big as donating your entire bonus check to the church or a charity. Help your group think of big and small examples from their lives, and remind them that it’s important for us to respond when we’re being nudged by God no matter how significant or insignificant it may seem.

Y-d

A follow up question could be, “What made you think the Holy Spirit was nudging you?”

Y-e

Leaders, if you have a journal you could bring it and read the group excerpts recording how God has changed you. You can also explain what it means to you to have those changes journaled so you can reflect on what God has done and is doing in your life.

5. In what areas of our culture do you see faithfulness on the decline?

Divorce rates are through the roof, people hop around from company to company, and recent data even shows that we have fewer close friendships than we did two decades ago. We struggle with being faithful to our spouses, companies, friends, and more.

Y-f

You could personalize this question by asking, “How have you been unfaithful?”

Y-g

Being faithful to your word is more than just when you “triple pinky promise” to do something. James 5:12 tells that if we just say “yes, I’ll do it” people should expect it to be done. We should not need to make extra special promises for people to believe us.

This plays out in multiple areas of life. If you tell someone you are going to meet them, they should be able to count on you being there. If you are scheduled to work, your boss should be able to expect you to show up. If you’re working with a group at school and tell them you will take part of the project, they should be able to trust you that it will get done.

6. How has someone demonstrated faithfulness to you in a relationship that impacted your life?

Tip: Friends, family members, and romantic relationships are the obvious examples of faithfulness, but help your group to also think about coworkers, teachers, pastors, or anyone else who has shown them loyalty and devotion.

Y-h

When you talk about career, focus on their educational career first then on after school jobs.

7. What have you done to spend time with God and how does that affect the rest of your time?

Our culture is so fast paced and busy that many struggle with penciling God in. Encourage your group to share the ways they spend time alone with God. It may be praying out loud in their car, reading the Bible for 20 minutes at their desk, or taking a run without music and simply listening to what God has to say. For those in your group who faithfully have quiet time with God, ask them to reveal the impact it has on their lives.

8. How did you discover the talents and abilities God had given you and how you could use them for God?

Tip: Answering this question will be very easy for some and very difficult for others. God has given each of us different talents and abilities, and the less obvious ones can be hard for people to identify. If someone in your group doesn’t know what their gifts are, you might ask them what they enjoy doing, what they have always been good at, and what comes the most naturally to them.

Y-i

Athletic, musical or academic ability could be a platform to get attention to tell others about Jesus. The ability to design websites could be used to get a message out to others. God wants to use abilities that go beyond an ability to preach or lead worship.

Y-j

Even if you get your money from your parents, it is still your responsibility to honor God with it. Tithe, be generous to those in need, and recognize whatever money you have is from God.

CREATIVE NOTES

ICEBREAKERS

Gotta Serve Somebody

As people arrive for your meeting, explain to them that they cannot serve themselves. If they want something to eat or drink, someone else must serve them. And, they need to be on the lookout for how they can serve others before the meeting. Once the meeting starts, discuss how it felt to serve others and to be served.

BRIDGE – If we want to display the spiritual fruit of love, we must regard others as more important than ourselves. Practically speaking, that means serving them.

Juicy Fruit

Pass out pieces of Juicy Fruit gum at the start of the meeting and let everyone start chewing at the same time. As you are having your discussion, let the members of the group signal when the flavor of their gum is gone.

BRIDGE – Juicy Fruit's flavor is limited, but the Holy Spirit can produce Juicy Fruit in our lives that last.

Famous Faithful Friends

Who are famous examples of faithfulness in friendships: Lone Ranger and Tonto, Laverne and Shirley, Friends, etc. What could we learn from them?

BRIDGE – God wants to produce the fruit of faithfulness in our lives along with a number of other spiritual fruits.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

VIP Badges

Print out VIP badges for your group that are blank on the back. Pass out the badges to everyone in your group. If your group is married, have them partner up with their spouse for a time of discussion. Let each spouse tell the other what makes them feel like a VIP and write that on the back of the badges as a reminder of how to serve their spouse.

If your group is made up of singles, have them brainstorm the people they are least likely to serve. Then, let them write ideas for how they could begin to serve those people on the back of the badges.

BRIDGE – Show love means making those around us VIP's. When we serve them, we show them how important they are to us.

Scavenger Hunt

Put out a few simple clues for a scavenger hunt that leads your group around your home to a reward (the reward could be something simple like a special desert).

BRIDGE – The Holy Spirit will give us promptings, but not all the details. We have to follow his promptings to get the rest of the information and the rewards that await us. Producing spiritual fruit requires following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

Evidence All Around

Pass out newspapers and magazines to everyone in your group. Look through the articles for evidence of how our culture puts themselves before others or evidence of a decline in faithfulness.

BRIDGE – Serving others and being faithful are not characteristics that come naturally. They require the power of the Holy Spirit working through us.

VISUAL REINFORCEMENTS

Fake, Rotten and Good

Put out a display of fake fruit, rotten fruit and good fruit mixed together. Discuss what kind of fruit they are producing.

BRIDGE – Fake fruit might look good from a distance, but when we get up close we can see its flaws. Rotten fruit can be spotted a long way away and nobody wants to get too close. Good fruit draws others in then delivers where fake fruit cannot. God desires us to produce good spiritual fruit.

Favorite Seat

If you have an especially decorative or desirable chair (like a favorite recliner) in the room you meet, use it as an example of how that is desired seat. When it is just family, we are likely to sit in that seat, but when guest come over we will give that seat up. Ask the group to describe the best seats in their house.

BRIDGE – God wants us to live a lifestyle of giving up the best seat in the house to others.

Battle's Brewing

Put out symbols of conflict like boxing gloves, toy guns or plastic army men to symbolize the battle that is brewing between God's Spirit and our sinful nature.

BRIDGE – God wants us to recognize the battle brewing between God's Spirit and our sinful nature. When we given in to our sinful nature, we will always lose. Victory comes through giving God's Spirit the victory.

Gets Better with Time

Bring something that is special to you like an old Bible or something passed down through your family that has lost its shine. Talk about the value of the object although the shine has disappeared. It was probably tempting at some point to get rid of it and upgrade to something new, but keeping it has made it valuable.

BRIDGE – Faithfulness is rarely the most tempting option. The payoff comes after we have stuck with something we wanted to quit.

MEDIA REINFORCEMENTS

"I Wanna Talk About Me" by Toby Keith

The song describes how the boyfriend talks about every aspect of his girlfriend's life. The conversation is focused on her, but every now and then he wants the conversation to be about him. If we are not careful, we can conversations and life in general just about us.

"Gotta Serve Somebody" by Bob Dylan

The song describes how no matter who we are, we are going to serve somebody. God wants us to choose to serve others.

TAKE HOME OBJECTS

Glue Sticks

Pass out glue sticks as a reminder that faithfulness takes sticking with things even when we want to give up. Encourage them to put the glue sticks somewhere they will see when they are struggling with faithfulness.

Check's in the Mail

Print out fake checks or stop by your bank to pick up blank checks. Pass them out to everyone in the group as a reminder to follow through when they make promises like "The check's in the mail." They could write an area they are struggling with faithfulness on the check.

OTHER

The Picture of...

Who are people you know that are pictures of faithfulness or a servant's heart? What makes you admire them the most?

"Who Let the Dogs Out" by Baha Men

The song describes how some people can act like dogs.