

Message Discussion Guide

FREE TO LIVE

The Church at Brook Hills,

Ben DeLoach

January 11, 2009

Galatians 5:16-26

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Encourage learners so share something that they don't like to ask for help in doing. (*For example, putting together something, shopping, a hobby, planning, etc.*) Ask the following questions:

- Why do you now like to have help with these activities?
- What does it say about yourself that you prefer independence in these times?
- Do you think that you could be denying someone else pleasure in serving you by not allowing help?
- Could you do a better job if an expert in that field helped?

Explain that today we'll discuss how living like Christ is impossible without help.

Option 2

Divide learners into two groups. Encourage one group to compare the similarities between a self-centered life and an other-centered life. Encourage the other group to contrast the differences between a self-centered life and an other-centered life. Allow groups 3-4 minutes to discuss. When time is up, invite the groups to share their ideas. Ask: How much does the primary focus of a person's life affect how that person lives? Why?

Explain that today we'll discuss how very little our own selves play in our lives.

Review the Message . . .

Christian freedom means to live by faith through the Spirit in hope with love.

"With love"

We are free *from* slavery to the law but we are free *to* the slavery of love

- We are free to desire the good of others as much as our own.
- We are free to care for the needs of others as much as own.

Discussion Questions

- Remind learners that the discussion last week centered around the following statement: Christian freedom means to live by faith through the Spirit in hope with love.

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- Enlist a volunteer to read Galatians 5:13-14. What does Paul indicate that Christians are called to?
- What does Paul warn Christians about their freedom from the Law?
- How do these verses indicate that Christian freedom should manifest itself?
- Read Galatians 5:15. How does Paul describe the opposite of loving one's neighbor? What evidence does this give as to the nature of truly loving one's neighbor?

Application . . .

- Do we often feel that Christianity is a call to freedom or a burden? Why?
- How do we allow freedom to become legalism?
- How does it make us feel that freedom is more about others than ourselves?
- How does freedom draw us to follow Christ?

“Through the Spirit”

Three Aspects of Living by the Spirit

- Living out the desires of the Spirit
 - We consistently obey the commands of Christ
 - Christ's commands are opposed by our sinful nature
 - Christ's commands cannot be obeyed in our own power
 - Christ's commands are joyfully accomplished by His Spirit

Discussion Questions

- Enlist a volunteer to read Galatians 5:16-26. Emphasize the sinful nature clashing with the Spirit. Focusing on Verse 17, how does Paul describe the relationship between our sinful natures and the Spirit?
- Read John 14:15-16. Why does Jesus indicate that He is sending the Spirit? In relation to keeping the commands of Christ, what is the Spirit's role?
- What are the desires of the Spirit?

Application . . .

- What is our idea of a “good Christian?” Why do we think that the power to live obediently to Christ is mere determination to do so?
 - How do we know when a desire is of the Spirit or from our sinful nature?
 - What role does our will play in allowing the Spirit to accomplish Christ's desires within us?
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- Living under the leadership of the Spirit
 - We are helpless to follow in our power
 - We are eagerly led by the Spirit's power
 - God's children pursue His Spirit

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- God's children are not under the Law
 - Because we are alive by the Spirit
 - Because we enjoy obedience

Discussion Questions

- Emphasize Galatians 5:18. What is the word that Paul used to describe how the Spirit helps believers? (*a form of the word "led"*) Think of a picture that would illustrate how the Spirit leads us. Allow learners to share their ideas. Explain that the Ben describes the Spirit's leadership as a train engine, pulling willing train cars behind it.
- Enlist a volunteer to read Galatians 4:5. How does Paul describe what happens to those believers whom God redeems?
- Paul clearly indicates that God's children are not under the Law—bringing them freedom. Invite a volunteer to read Romans 8:3-4. How do believers live out Christ's commands?

Application . . .

- Do we allow the Spirit to lead us, or do we try to lead the Spirit into blessing our desires?
- How does trying to live without the Spirit's help a burden to us? Why do we do it?
- How does the idea of being God's child affect how we view His desire to lead us into freedom?
- How can obedience to the Spirit's desires lead us to joy?

- Living with the evidence of the Spirit
 - We demonstrate the character of Christ
 - Fruit produced by the Spirit does not command performance
 - Fruit produced by the Spirit fulfills the Law
 - Fruit produced by the Spirit proclaims union with Christ

Discussion Questions

- Read Galatians 5:19-21. What does Paul indicate is the opposite of loving one's neighbor? How do these types of sin challenge the command to love one's neighbor?
- How are these sins the opposite of being a loving neighbor?
- Enlist a volunteer to read Galatians 5:22-23. What is the purpose of these "fruits?" Why do they demonstrate the working of the Holy Spirit within a believer?
- Are these "fruits of the Spirit" the only character attributes that exemplify Christ? Is Paul making an exhaustive list of Christ's character attributes?
- Read Romans 8:9. What does a lack of spiritual fruit indicate about a person?

Application . . .

- How can we turn the "fruits of the Spirit" into legalism?
- How can we seem to demonstrate fruit and our behavior not be of the Spirit?

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- How is behavior modification different from a spiritually transformed life?
- Do followers of Christ struggle with these evidences of spiritual work in our lives? Why? How can we know that the Spirit is working within us?

Two Avenues of Living by the Spirit

- Be victorious over the sinful nature
 - Recognize your heart's focus
 - Realize sustaining grace
- Belong to Christ

Discussion Questions

- Invite a learner to read Galatians 5:24-26. What does Paul indicate is imperative to living by the Spirit? What are the two things that he states must be relinquished?
- Is it possible to love and feed the sinful nature and still allow the Spirit to grow?
- If a person belongs to Christ, who has dominion over that his or her life—sin or Christ?
- What hope is found in belonging to Christ? Can victory over sinful nature come without belonging to Christ?

Application . . .

- What does it mean for us to live by the Spirit? How do we do that practically day in and day out?
- Is living by the Spirit a Christian duty? How do we view the work of the Spirit in our lives?
- What does a life transformed by the Spirit look like?
- If we belong to Christ, how should we view our sinful nature? How can we not be a slave to our sinful nature?
- How can we be a slave to Christ?