**BCM Bible Study - April 19th and 20th**

**Galatians 5:13-26 - Living By The Holy Spirit**

This passage focuses on living in freedom through the Spirit and the impact of living by the Spirit versus living in our own desires. Paul emphasizes the powerful transformation that believers will have as they rely on the Spirit and stresses that change only happens through the Spirit of God.

Start by reading the whole passage as this will help with context and seeing the larger picture as we break down each section.  **Read Galatians 5:13-26**

* Do you have any initial thoughts or questions about the passage?
* The verses directly before this (5:1-12) focus on our freedom in Christ. How does this passage relate to the verses we studied last week?
  + Why is it important that our freedom in Christ be established before Paul begins talking about living life through the Holy Spirit?
* As Paul begins to wrap up his letter, he emphasizes the integral work of the Holy Spirit in Christian living. Why would this reminder be particularly important to the Galations?

**Read Galatians 5:13-15 - How living by the Spirit impacts relationships**

We are called to freedom. This isn't unbridled freedom, instead, it is freedom from sin and the slavery of our flesh which controls us. Through the Spirit, we have the power to say no to our flesh and its demands. When we are living by the Spirit, we will love and serve one another. That is the opposite of our flesh that wants us to love and serve ourselves. **(Optional: John 13:14-15 & 34-35)**

* Where do you see yourself serving humbly with love? In what areas are you serving with pride and for your own gain?
* What does it mean to bite and devour one another?
* Where in our families, friendships, or BCM community are we living and serving well? Where are we biting and devouring one another?
* How can we individually change to serve instead of “biting and devouring”?

**Read Galatians 5:16-21 - The battle between our desires and the Spirit**

To gratify the flesh is to encourage/fulfill/feed our own desires above God’s desires for us. "Flesh" is the Gk. "sarx"--your fallen, not-yet renewed nature, which we still have. The word "desires" here in Greek actually means "over-desire" or "inordinate desire," and it can apply even to good things. - (Thomas Gardner Bible Study Commentary)

* In what ways have you/are you gratifying your own desires over what God’s desires are for you?
* What does it mean to live under the Spirit instead of under the law?
* How do you recognize if you are living by the Spirit or by the law? (legalism/self righteousness and pride are all products of living by the law instead of the Spirit)
* In what ways are you living by the law instead of by the Spirit?
  + If you are living under the law instead of by God’s Spirit, how do you transition to living under the Spirit?

After listing sin which comes from living out our own desires, Paul tells the Galatians that if they “live like this they will not inherit the kingdom of God (vs21)”.

* What does it mean here that those who live in these sins will not inherit the kingdom of God?

God’s kingdom starts here on earth. If believers are living in sin now, they are missing out on God’s kingdom here. They are losing the inheritance of the fruits and growth of the Spirit and they are allowing themselves to be pulled back into slavery.

* In what ways are you experiencing God’s kingdom here and now as you live by the Spirit?

**Read Galatians 5:22-26 - The Fruit of the Spirit**

The Fruit of the Spirit is a gift every believer has the chance to cultivate. When we are walking “in step with the spirit” the Fruit of the Spirit will be apparent in our lives. Notice that the passage says “Fruit” singular. Thus it refers to all the individual fruits as a singular/whole and we are called to mature in all of them.

* Which of these is the hardest for you to live out? Why?
* How can you actively cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in your life?

For the fruit of the Spirit to flourish in our lives, we have to die to ourselves. We must be crucified with Christ. When we die to ourselves we create space for God’s Spirit to flourish in us. Supporting Verses **Read**: **Galatians 2:20, Matthew 16:24 & Colossians 3:1-4.**

* What things keep you from dying to yourself? How would dying to these things allow the Spirit more freedom in your life?

The fruit listed in verse 22 is impossible if we are not “keeping in step with the Spirit”

* What does it mean to keep in step with the Spirit?
* What does this look like for you?How can you grow in walking daily with the Spirit?

The Chapter ends with Paul warning the Galatians to “not become conceited, provoking and envying each other”

* Why does the chapter end with this admonishment?
* How could this admonishment be particularly relevant to the Galations?

When we are living for Christ there is a tendency to forget that the fruit you have is from Christ. Genuine love, goodness, kindness etc., that is beyond human capacity, only comes from God but it can turn into self righteousness and pride if we don’t remember the source.

* Where have you seen yourself become self righteous over gifts God gave you?
* How do we, as believers, combat pride and self righteousness?

**Conclusion:** This passage focuses on the transformative power of the Holy Spirit in our lives as we live out the freedom we have in Christ. Consider taking time to pray through what areas of your life you need to die to yourself in order to allow space for God’s spirit to grow and work in and through you.