

Galatians *Freedom in Christ*

8. Bear With One Another

Galatians 5.26-6.10

Aim: To consider how we can affect our social groups, friends and families. It focuses on what happens when we compare ourselves with others and how we can learn to appreciate and bless each other.

To start with:

In what situations would you say you are competitive?
What do you think are the pros and cons of competitiveness?

Engaging with the Text:

1. a. Get people to make two lists.:
 - Those they tend to compare themselves to
 - Those they never compare themselves to.
- b. Ask people to share what they notice about the lists they have made?

(They don't have to name names - it's more about noticing patterns in their thinking.)
2. Why do you think people compare themselves with others so often?
What affects do you think it can have on individual relationships, families and even communities?

Read Galatians 5.26-6.6

3. a. How do you feel when someone you compare yourself to in some way sins? Why?
- b. What does Paul say our response should be to any of our brothers or sisters who sin? How easy do you find that?

- c. Why is forgiveness such a powerful thing? How does it influence a community? (think about the effect the opposite [unforgiveness] has)

Read Galatians 6.7-9

4. Paul says we should not compare ourselves or envy one another. What will we reap if we sow these bad habits in our lives? (ie. What are the long-term consequences of this?)
5. By contrast, what do you notice about what Paul say about sowing good habits? In this context what do you think those good habits would actually look like?

Finally Read Galatians 6.10

6. One of the most powerful ways of breaking the comparison habit is to learn to appreciate and bless each other. Take some time to build each other up by encouraging the talents, gifts and characters God has given them.
 - You could try doing this verbally around the room, taking one person at a time, and other cell members can say what they appreciate about them.
 - Alternatively, put people's names on a piece of paper (or draw a stick person) then pass the sheets around the group, allowing each cell member to write one or two encouraging words or characteristics about everyone else in turn, until the sheets reach the original person again.
7. Allow everyone a few moments to reflect on this and to soak in the good things everyone else has noticed about them. Then in pairs or threes discuss what receiving this piece of paper or hearing those words makes you feel like and pray for each other?

