

(25) If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

(6:1) Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ.

(3) For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. For each will have to bear his own load.

(6) Let the one who is taught the Word share all good things with the one who teaches.

(7) Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap...if we do not give up!

(10) So then --- as we have opportunity --- let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Think on these things:

- 1) Last week we focused on "living by the Spirit," i.e., walking daily in companionship with the Holy Spirit. It's a prayerful communication thing. Why do you think Paul says we "also" need to keep in step with the Holy Spirit (v.25)? What can we deduce from this guidance?

Understanding what God is saying to us is not the same thing as obediently doing it...!

- 2) What problem does Paul identify when one Christian compares him/herself to another (v.26)? Let's define this term. Is it a sin to envy others for how they live and what they have?

Becoming conceited – "I'm better than you!" Provoking is being nit-picky with others' shortcomings (needling them verbally). And, yes, envying others for how they live and what they have is a sin (the 10th commandment, Ex. 20:17).

- 3) Let's explore this a little bit more. Read Mark 14:3-9 (esp. v.7), Luke 2:18, Acts 2:44-45 & 6:1-4, and James 2:1-9. In the dynamic of life's haves and have-nots, who has the upper hand in Christ's perspective?

In Christ's perspective, the have-nots, the Poor, have the upper hand. They will always be with us.

- 4) Chapter 6 opens with a discussion on church discipline. Does the language of v.1 indicate the church is investigating its membership? Who would you describe as "spiritual"? In what spirit should the spiritual ones approach the sinning member, and why? See also James 5:19-20.

No, the church does not exist to 'investigate' its people. But when living in sin is common knowledge and comes before church leaders, they must address it. "Spiritual" is usually a description we have for individuals walking closely with the Holy Spirit. They may or may not be leaders. And when addressing sinful behaviors, we must approach church members with gentleness because we, too, are easily led astray by temptations.

- 5) V.2 describes a better dynamic among members of the church. Instead of focusing on discipline, what should we focus on? What is Paul's name for this effort?

We should focus on bearing one another's burdens by being supportive and helpful. This is the "Law of Christ."

- 6) Vs. 3-5 indicate that self-evaluation, "self-analysis" can be deceiving. That is, *some people can't or won't see themselves as God does*. They believe that they are doing just fine as Christians. See Romans 12:3, 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, 2 Corinthians 13:5, and Ephesians 4:11-13. Define the 'mature' Christian from Ephesians. Who are we to compare ourselves with/to? Here in the last phrase of v.5, what Christian principle is stated (consider also 2 Thessalonians 3:10-15)?

Maturity ~ measuring up to the "stature of the fullness of Christ" (Christlikeness). We are to compare ourselves to Jesus only, not others. V.5 teaches that each believer must bear his own load, i.e., be responsible for himself/herself. (Don't live irresponsibly.)

- 7) V.6 is a stewardship passage. We won't go into all kinds of passages on stewardship at this time. What is the basic principle expressed here? What do you think: is this support only financial?

We are indebted to those who teach us God's Word, and we are to share 'all good things' with them. This is more than just about money, but still a tithing concept.

- 8) V.7 is a farming concept – and a key principle of the Bible. Even when we do the wrong things, and then repent, we often still face the consequences of our decisions. What is the principle? What two extremes does Paul say we can "sow" to, and with what results (vs. 7-8)?

We reap in life what we sow, just as farmers sowing corn, reap corn (not watermelons!). We can sow to the Holy Spirit for eternal life and salvation --- or to ourselves to reap corruption.

- 9) What Christian activity can we "grow weary" doing (v.9)? What do you think causes us to be discouraged doing this? Paul says be patient: there is a "payoff" coming. How does he refer to God's perfect timing?

We can grow weary of "doing good" to others. Sometimes we give and give and give but never see any resulting changes. God's promise is that His timing is in "due time (season)."

- 10) Who should Christians do good for? Who "especially" should Christians do good for (v.10)?

Do good to EVERYONE, but especially to the fellow Christians in our local church family.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: