

A Symphony of Burden Sharing

6:1-5

How does the Spirit transform community?

What are the signs that the Spirit is working?

What are the spaces where the ideal of love is realized (love incarnate)?

If you stumble you will take on symptoms of the flesh.

P&F -> This practice can act as a boost, reset, focus, deep cleaning of our faith.

vs. 1-2,

Love - carries one another's burdens

- If someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing
- Then those who are being led, living, and walking in the Spirit practice restoration
- With gentleness
- Fulfilling the law of Christ

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage each other daily, while it is still called **today**, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception.

What helps us not be overtaken by the flesh?

What environment encourages Spirit living?

The community of faith, the church.

Paul does not regard falling as "normal".

To be overtaken is the exception, not the norm (the flesh is tricky and it won't go down without a fight).

P&F -> prayer certainly aids our walk on the narrow path. Hunger and our attachment to comfort are tricky and won't go down without a fight.

The tone and attitude of restoration is not shame, but of humility and acknowledgement of your own vulnerability.

Matthew 5:41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

The practice of taking up someone else's burden as your own, with gentleness and humility, can only be accomplished through the Spirit.

P&F -> Is the tip of the spear when it comes to interceding for others.

Law of Christ - self-giving love, others-centered

- Submitting to the teachings of Jesus
- Mutual burden bearing is a day-to-day expression of that love.

P&F -> It is an ancient, rich discipline of emptiness of which the Spirit delights to fill.

vs. 3, The goal of the Christian life is not to collect spiritual trophies.

This attitude and understanding will always lead to pride.

Love does not compare, it shares resources for the purpose of bringing more of the truth of God to light.

vs. 4, Personally, take the time for an honest self-examination.

Honesty is a remedy to pride (self-deception).

Don't compare!

P&F -> This week don't compare. There are no rules. Be free to lean into what God would have you do.

Paul was in an honor / shame context and culture.

- An inflated ego was a normal part of the Roman / Greco world.

It is not necessary to measure your spiritual maturity with someone else.
The Spirit is enough!

Galatian context - The Judaizers were boasting and comparing their number of converts.

Paul could also be telling the Galatians to keep their honor to themselves as to not cause division.

You have honor. You are a child of God.

Jesus has come. Your sins have been forgiven.

You can have self-respect, not because of your resumé, but because you are rooted in the Spirit.

P&F -> It is a discipline. It is a journey. It takes practice. It is very unpredictable. It is helpful to have encouragement.

vs. 5, Paul is not contradicting himself.

Individual responsibility

Mutual accountability

If you are helping someone, you can't put more effort into their life than they are willing to put in themselves.

They will stand before God for how he or she has lived.

Both of these areas are able to function at full capacity when

- Self-importance is removed.
- Others are served with humility.
- It is understood and accepted that God will hold you accountable to how you love.

Question: What needs to change in your attitude toward faith that will help you not live a defeated life? Do you trust that the Spirit is more powerful than the flesh?

Are you a person who is led, living, and walking by the Spirit? Are you in a place of spiritual overflow which allows you to notice and care for those who have stumbled?

Are you captured in the cycle of comparison? What will it take for you to embrace and accept that the honor that comes from being a child of God is enough?

Is your ability to love fully charged? Is Jesus your source of energy? Who and how can you tangibly love this week, month, and year?