

## Galatians 5:25-26

Introduction: This small paragraph is a transition from the topic of battling the Flesh to the topic of helping one another spiritually. It introduces 6:1-5.

### Paul issues an important “if ... then ...” command—5:25

- 1) If—<sup>25</sup> *If* [εἰ, 1<sup>st</sup> class condition, assumed true for sake of argument] *we live* [pres. act ind. ζάω] *in the Spirit*,
  - a) This is true of all genuine Christians. The Spirit is the only source of genuine life and sanctification.
    - i) This should not be translated “since” as the NIV, and others. Paul does not desire to encourage complacency, but rather for the Galatian believers to ask themselves, “Is this really true of me?”
  - b) Should not our **OUTER** life be in harmony with our **INNER** life?
- 2) Then—*let us also walk in conformity* [pres. act. subj. στοιχέω] ***with the Spirit*** (emphasis).
  - a) This is required of all genuine Christians at all times. This is part of being led/directed by the Spirit (Matthew 4:1; Luke 4:1; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18)
  - b) To move in a straight line, as in a military formation or a dance team.
    - i) As one former instructor at West Point said: soldiers don’t need to worry about where they are going, or how they’ll get there. They do not need to guess how much farther they have to go. Their commanding officer will give them their orders as necessary. They only need to know how to step in time with the drill sergeant’s cadence.
    - ii) If we try to focus on the other soldiers, we may get out of step with the Spirit. But, if we focus on the Spirit, we will probably stay in step with other believers, but we will be out of step with the world.
  - c) To be in conformity and submissive agreement with the Spirit and His standards.
    - i) Acts 21:24—walk orderly; Romans 4:12—live by faith like Abraham; Galatians 6:16—walk in conformity to this rule; Philippians 3:16—walk by the same standard
    - ii) As unbelievers we walked according to the standards of the world—cf. 4:3, 9; Colossians 2:8, 20 [στοιχεῖον]
    - iii) The Spirit illuminates the Word of God and provides the enablement for us to consistently obey.

### Paul shows, by a trio of negative commands, what is not consistent with “walking in conformity with the Spirit”—5:26

- 1) One who walks in the Spirit will be not conceited—<sup>26</sup> *Let us not continue becoming* [pres. dep. subj. γίνομαι] *conceited* [κενόδοξος],

- a) The Galatian believers were in circumstances to be tempted to this sin. But there is no place for exaggerated self-conception or empty-glory. Legalism sets the stage for this temptation.
    - i) I obeyed the list better than you did; I am more faithful than you; etc. (cf. Matthew 6:2)
    - ii) This is the opposite of humility.
  - b) Some people think they have weight to throw around when in reality they are lightweights. They assume people will listen to them when in reality they have not earned the right to be heard. These are those who attempt to achieve unfounded respect with big talk, boasting, and sheer ambition.
  - c) This is expanded later in 6:3.
  - d) Remember the example in Philippians 2:3 in comparison to Christ.
- 2) What does it look like in real life?
- These are subordinate to the main verb in the first part of the verse, describing the means or manner of being conceited.
- a) One who walks in the Spirit will not aggressively compete with other believers: **those who think they are strong think they can win—challenging** [pres. mid. ptc. προκαλέομαι] *one another*, (similar to selfish ambition cf. 5:20)
    - i) There is never a good time to call a brother/sister out to combat with you.
    - ii) Deliberately provoking or irritating other believers is never right.
  - b) One who walks in the Spirit will not passively envy other believers: **those who are weak think they deserve better—envying** [pres. act. ptc. φθονέω] *one another*. (this is part of the flesh, cf. 5:21)
    - i) It is never right to have ill will toward a brother/sister because of any real or perceived advantage you think they might have over you.
    - ii) Holding grudges because you think someone has more talent/ability, a better marriage relationship, a better job, etc. is sinful.
    - iii) Assuming sins in the life of another so we can gain an advantage—  
Matthew 27:18; Mark 15:10
    - iv) The presence of this sin will hinder our embracing the Word of God—1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:1-3.
  - c) Both of these concepts are expanded in 6:1-5 in relation to our attitude and actions concerning the sins of others.

**Take-home truth:** The true depth of our relationship with God is expressed in our gracious relationships with others.