

Day 7

Gentleness

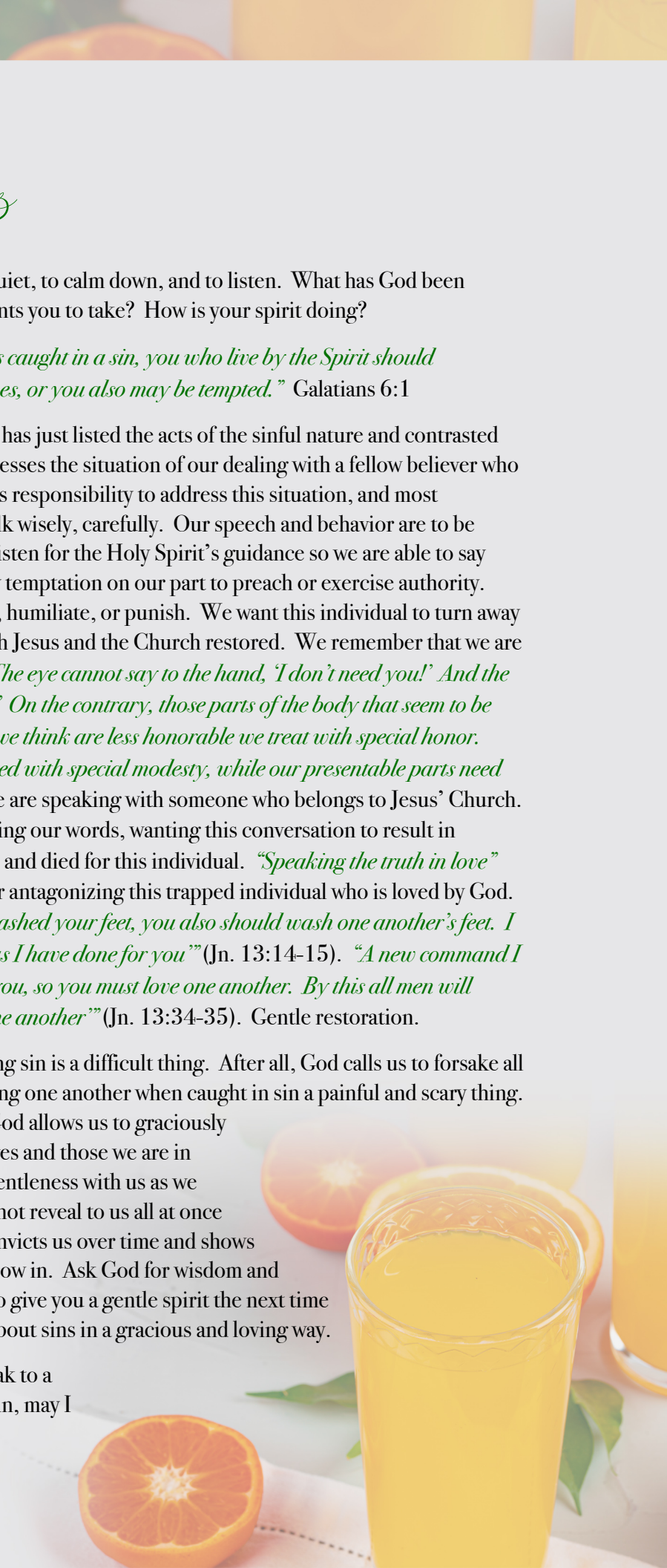
Silence (2 minutes) Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

Scripture *“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.”* Galatians 6:1

Discussion In his letter to the Galatians Paul has just listed the acts of the sinful nature and contrasted them with the fruit of the Spirit. He now addresses the situation of our dealing with a fellow believer who is caught in a sin. It is a privilege and a serious responsibility to address this situation, and most importantly, it is Jesus' Church. We must walk wisely, carefully. Our speech and behavior are to be gentle. We who are alive by the Spirit are to listen for the Holy Spirit's guidance so we are able to say what He wants, not to speak what satisfies any temptation on our part to preach or exercise authority. Our aim is to restore, not confront, put down, humiliate, or punish. We want this individual to turn away from their sin and have their relationships with Jesus and the Church restored. We remember that we are speaking with a brother or sister in Christ. *“The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don't need you!’ And the head cannot say to the feet, ‘I don't need you!’ On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, while our presentable parts need no special treatment”* (1 Cor. 12:21-24). We are speaking with someone who belongs to Jesus' Church. We speak knowing that Jesus is present, hearing our words, wanting this conversation to result in repentance and restoration, because He loves and died for this individual. *“Speaking the truth in love”* (Eph. 4:15) we avoid unnecessarily hurting or antagonizing this trapped individual who is loved by God. *“Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you”* (Jn. 13:14-15). *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another”* (Jn. 13:34-35). Gentle restoration.

Application Gentleness with others regarding sin is a difficult thing. After all, God calls us to forsake all sin, and as Christians this can make confronting one another when caught in sin a painful and scary thing. Yet, this is precisely when the gentleness of God allows us to graciously and without shame confront sin in our own lives and those we are in Christian community with. Consider God's gentleness with us as we grow in sanctification as Christians: He does not reveal to us all at once every single sin we commit, but rather, He convicts us over time and shows us progressively which direction we should grow in. Ask God for wisdom and gentleness as you grow in sanctification and to give you a gentle spirit the next time you must confront another brother or sister about sins in a gracious and loving way.

Prayer Lord Jesus, when You lead me to speak to a brother or sister in your Church about their sin, may I



speaking as You want me to, to speak as You do. I submit myself to You. I commit myself to listen to your Spirit's voice, to speak and be silent as You want. I commit myself to speak with an attitude of love. You have called me to be gentle with this person. Thank You that You have been gentle with me when dealing with my sin. May I be gentle as You are gentle. I thank You Jesus that You love me and You love this person I will be talking with. Help me remember that we are both redeemed by You. We are both God's adopted children. May every word I speak be an acknowledgment of Your love for this person; Your longing for restoration. *"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, my Rock and my Redeemer"* (Ps. 19:14). Amen.

Silence (2 minutes) Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

Scripture memory for the week: *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."* Matthew 11:28-30

