

## Studies in Galatians

### Chapter Six

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Leon L. Combs, Ph.D.

**Gal 6:1 “Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.**

**Gal 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.**

**Gal 6:3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.**

**Gal 6:4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.**

**Gal 6:5 For each one shall bear his own load.”**

The church consists of all of the people whom God has called out of the world to serve Him and to be His adopted children. We exist as a team also in that we are to help each other as we all walk through this world. I have had a strong tendency throughout my life to try to take care of myself rather than asking for help. This tendency of mine is actually a weakness as I am not supposed to be alone in solving problems. We are all to work together as we look at other members of the family as more important than we are so that we strongly desire to help others. We also should never be reluctant to ask for help for other Christians would love to help if they knew of a need we had. Paul also mentions that we should help a fellow Christian who temporarily loses a battle with his flesh. Paul is not talking about people who habitually sin but of those who have participated in some sinful act and have been caught in the act either by someone else or by themselves. When we realize that we have sinned, we are ashamed and hurt at what we have done. A fellow Christian can be a huge help at such a time by reassuring the person that he is still a child of God and that he can get out of the situation. The person who has thus slipped into some sinful act may have to make restitution and apologize to someone but we have to realize that we are all in this battle and any of us could slip. We who are trying to help the person must be very aware of our sinful tendencies and weaknesses so that we are very careful not to put ourselves into a situation where we may also sin. Any helpful actions we take toward the person who has committed a sin must be done with all gentleness as we do not condemn him and we also do not condone what he has done. We must take control of the situation and do what needs to be done to help the person be brought back into full fellowship within the family of God. Augustine compares such a situation with that of a physician who must help someone with a physical problem. In his time there were no analgesics or anesthetics available and the person being treated would have to be tied down so that the painful work of fixing the problem could be accomplished. Thankfully surgery is now a bit better! The analogy is good though in that doing what must be done to help a Christian who has sinned may be very painful. The person may have to go to prison for what he has done. The person may have to apologize to someone and admit his sin so that many people now become aware of his weakness. The person helping the sinner must be of considerable spiritual growth and also someone who has done considerable introspection of his weaknesses. Our Lord spelled out the details of what must be done in some events:

*Matt 18:15 "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.*

*Matt 18:16 "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.*

*Matt 18:17 "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer."*

The last step is excommunication and even that extreme act has as its goal the bringing of the sinner back into the fold of the church. The act of helping someone be restored to Christian fellowship may be one example of bearing another person's burdens. Our first burden was our sin burden before God and Jesus took that burden from us for it was too immense for us to even contemplate taking it on ourselves. But as children of God we are still in a battle and we will certainly not always be successful in fighting against our sinful nature and we would need human help. We also will encounter illnesses, job losses, financial problems, sinful children and other relatives, and other problems that prove to be too much for us to manage alone. The "law of Christ" that Paul mentions is the moral law that He taught in His ministry and it involves our love for each other:

*John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.*

*John 13:35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

This law is the law of loving each other and proving it by our actions. Of course this law has no part in our salvation but it is part of our sanctification process. We must each consider the other brother and sister as more important than we are.

We get into trouble when we think too highly of ourselves. We need to always put our evaluation of ourselves under the light of comparison with the holiness of God. Our Lord is again the prime example of how someone can put aside their importance to serve others:

*Phil 2:5 "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,*

*Phil 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,*

*Phil 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.*

*Phil 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*

When we understand how we compare to God's standards it becomes easier for us to bear someone else's burden. Paul then tells us to bear our own load. The word "burden" is a translation of the Greek word "baros" and the word "load" is a translation of the Greek word "phortion". When we pronounce the second word we can get some idea of the difference between the two words. The second word kinda sounds like "portion" so that "load" is our assigned portion as we walk in the world. It translates into a word similar to

“backpack” and we see people everywhere walking with their backpacks so we can easily understand what is meant by bearing our load. Each of us has an assigned load to bear and it is our responsibility to bear it. But the word “baros” describes a weight that is too heavy for one person to bear and it was given us with the intent that we needed help in carrying it. Even Jesus in His humanity had a baros with carrying His cross and God assigned someone to help Him with that burden. I am sure that we all know from experience the pleasure we have in helping someone with his burden. We also can see in the eyes of the person we helped that he very much appreciates our help. It is wonderful to receive help in carrying our burdens so we must all be alert to help someone whose load becomes a burden.

**Gal 6:6 “And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.**

**Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.**

**Gal 6:8 For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.**

**Gal 6:9 And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary.**

**Gal 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”**

Paul continues with the issue of burdens and loads when he exhorts us to help in the physical needs of those who have been called to teach God’s word. We know that occasionally, for the purpose of his ministry, Paul did sometimes go back to his vocation of tent making to support himself. But Paul often was helped materially so that he could devote himself to studying and teaching God’s word. The PCA has in its instructions that congregations are to leave their ministers free from worldly care. Certainly there have been ministers and teachers who have taken advantage of the generosity of congregations but they will answer for such sins. They may fool the people in their congregations but they will not fool God for He knows all that we do and think. God will give to each person according to his works:

*Rom 2:5 “But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,*

*Rom 2:6 who will render to every man according to his deeds:*

*Rom 2:7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;*

*Rom 2:8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.”*

The universal law of reaping and sowing has been known for a long time:

*Job 4:8 “According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity And those who sow trouble harvest it.”*

There will be a harvest at the end of this age:

*Matt 13:39 "and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.*

*Matt 13:40 "Therefore just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.*

*Matt 13:41 "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,*

*Matt 13:42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

*Matt 13:43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear."*

Sowing to the Spirit means acting in this world according to the leading of the Holy Spirit as He will direct our paths so as to be sowing good deeds for the kingdom. Bearing burdens of fellow Christians is sowing to the Spirit. We should all concentrate on sowing to the Spirit for the end times will be the more wonderful for such acts:

*2Cor 9:6 "Now this I say, he who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully."*

Sowing to the flesh will result only in death and destruction but sowing to the Spirit results in eternal life and rewards there for the sowing. Even though our justification and thus our home in heaven are fixed because of the works of Jesus, how we use our time here is critical to our rewards in heaven. We are given twenty-four hours for each day of our life here and we always choose what we will do on each of those hours. We also always do what we really want to do the most. Sometimes I know that we get tired and need rest. Even Jesus in His humanity needed rest and He took such in prayer. So when we start to feel faint in our heavenly works we need to take some rest time in prayer. But as long as we have breath here we should be showing our love for others by our actions toward them. We are especially told to take care of our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Our opportunities are only limited by our time on earth and that time is fixed by God.

**Gal 6:11 "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.**

**Gal 6:12 Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.**

**Gal 6:13 For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised, that they may boast in your flesh.**

**Gal 6:14 But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.**

**Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.**

**Gal 6:16 And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.**

**Gal 6:17 From now on let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus.**

**Gal 6:18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.”**

Some people think that Paul is saying that his eyesight is failing is the reason that he writes so large but probably he is not an accomplished writer and this statement is just meant to say that all of this is indeed from me. He used a secretary to write most of his work. Those of us who have tried to write in a language that is not our main language know how hard it is to write in that second or third language. I remember when our son received a letter from a Swedish friend of his and I was so surprised at how poorly it was written because his verbal communication in English was excellent. Paul then reminds them that the reason the Judaizers were trying to force circumcision on them was so that the teachers would not be criticized for preaching only the cross of Jesus. If they can get the Galatian Christians to be put back under the curse of the Law then they can boast at what they have done. He reminds them that those who are circumcised cannot keep all of the Law themselves. Preaching only the Cross brings severe criticism then and now.

As great a Christian as Paul was, he could not boast in anything that he did. He could only boast that the Cross saved him so all boasting is in the work of Jesus Christ. When we really are born again due to the work of Jesus we then become a curse to the world and the world becomes a curse to us. We are outcasts from the world but we are citizens of God's Kingdom and children of God. We have cast off the worldly materialism for the rewards of Heaven. When you think about it, such an exchange is really a no-brainer! There are no worldly works that are of any lasting meaning. Being circumcised or not means nothing for the only reality is in store for those of us who have been chosen as children of God. For those who have become children of God and thus walk in this world according to their profession then Paul asks for peace and mercy to be upon us. This wonderful prayer is still in force today so we can expect such peace and mercy from the only provider of reality. Paul also asks for peace and mercy for the Israel of God, which means all of God's children throughout all time. He then closes by saying that nobody can really give him a hard time for he has the marks of his service for Jesus on his body.

In his benediction he asks for grace for the spirit of all of the true children of God in Galatia. What a great pastor and evangelist was our friend Paul! I hope that he is your brother in Christ also.

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