

Galatians 6

Bear One Another's Burdens (6:1-6)

1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

- Having crucified the flesh and walking orderly with one another in obedience to the Spirit, we are to take care of one another. This includes helping our brothers and sisters in Christ when they are “caught in any trespass.”
- If another member of the body commits an unintentional error or a willful transgression, the *spiritual* members of the body are to restore them. What does Paul mean by spiritual? The spiritual walk in line with the Spirit's promptings, commands, and directions. The spiritual walk orderly, obeying everything the Spirit whispers. The spiritual have crucified their flesh so that their spirits, in union with the indwelling Spirit, are leading their life. The spiritual have nailed their self-life to the cross so that Christ's indestructible, overcoming life is fully released within them. As a result, the spiritual walk in love for one another.
- Whenever any member of the body of Christ sins, the spiritual help restore them. Not with a self-righteous, judgmental attitude. Not with a tone of condemnation. The spiritual ones restore them with *a spirit of gentleness*, embodying Christ's humility and meekness so their fellow brother or sister in Christ can be delivered from every *trespass*.
- First, they are to restore the fallen in their relationship to Christ. Second, they are to restore them in their family relationships. Third, they are to restore them in the church. And finally, if they are in any type of ministry, they should work towards restoring them to ministry at the appropriate time.
- The spiritual ones who restore others entangled in sin should always heed Paul's advice to look “to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.” As we restore others, we should do so with humility and not self-righteously, knowing that we also have a sin nature that can easily lead us into sin.

2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

- Throughout Galatians, Paul has built the case that we are no longer under the Law. We have been delivered from the Law through the body of Christ so that we can bear fruit for God. The Law is a heavy yoke weighing us down with guilt, shame, and condemnation. The Law is a burden that Israel could never fully keep. Though given by God and is holy, righteous, and spiritual, it produces more sin, condemnation, and death.
- Jesus invites us to swap the heavy yoke of the Law with His light and easy yoke. He offers us a relationship with Him that is intimate and deep, yoking us to Him face-to-face. This light and easy yoke is the burden we carry.
- But there is another burden we carry—and that is *one another's burdens*. As the body of Christ, we are to help our brothers and sisters in Christ through trying and difficult times.
- Paul said, “If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it” (1 Cor. 12:26). Not only does God help carry our load, He uses the body of Christ to ease the heavy burden others carry. These burdens can be relational, financial, job-related, or a hundred other things weighing them down.
- We carry one another's burdens through acts of service, kindness, listening, giving, helping with their children, and praying. We are one body. One spiritual family. None of us are meant to carry our burdens alone. We need each other to help shoulder the difficult challenges of life.

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- When we help carry each other's burdens, we *fulfill the law of Christ*. What, exactly, is the law of Christ? It's Jesus' new commandment to "love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).
- As we saw in 5:14, Jesus' new commandment to love doesn't replace the moral requirements of the Law, which defined sin and established God's righteous standard. What's acceptable and unacceptable in God's eyes will never be redefined. Therefore, Jesus' new commandment to love does not allow righteousness and unrighteousness to be redefined. Rather, Jesus' new commandment to love enables us to fulfill the already defined requirements of the Law. If we love one another, we will organically fulfill the moral commands the Law dictates we keep.
- Reading through Galatians, it's clear love is the ultimate goal. In fact, Paul said this in one of his last letters, when he wrote to Timothy, "The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1:5). Loving God wholeheartedly and loving our neighbor as ourselves fulfills every commandment of the Law.
- Here's a summary of our relationship to the Law as Paul taught in Galatians:

We have died to the Law in the body of Christ so that we can bear fruit for God. Therefore, we are no longer under the Law. We have exchanged the heavy yoke of the Law for Jesus' light and easy yoke. The Law, as our child trainer, prepared us to receive the blessing of Abraham, which is the indwelling Spirit. Now that we are alive by the Spirit and possess His life, it's imperative we crucify our flesh and walk orderly in obedience to the Spirit. When we do this, the Spirit's love is produced within us, empowering us to love one another, to serve one another, and to carry one another's burdens. This is how we fulfill the requirements of the Law, and ultimately, the law of Christ.

3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

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

5 For each one will bear his own load.

- As we saw in 5:26, self-focus leads to pride and pride leads to competition and envy with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Rather than being joined together in unity, bearing one another's burdens, we compete with other members in the body of Christ.
- The same dynamic is in play in 6:3. Self-focus leads to self-conceit. This attitude of thinking we are *something*, even though in God's eyes apart from Christ, we are *nothing*, hinders us from bearing one another's burdens.
- Self-focus means our flesh has not been experientially crucified. This hinders the indwelling Spirit in our spirits from flowing outward into our hearts, souls, and bodies. The love of Christ and the other fruit of the Spirit remain locked away in our spirits. The unfathomably great treasure within us is suppressed. The power to love is blocked. The requirements of the Law and Jesus' new commandment to love are unfulfilled. Self-conceit, as the byproduct of self-focus, is like a dam that blocks the flow of Christ's love.
- Self-conceit not only leads to pride; it also results in deception. Paul warned that the proud "deceives himself." The great problem with deception is you don't know you are deceived. This is what makes deception so deceptive.
- The truth is, apart from Christ, we are *nothing*. We are men and women of the flesh, having a depraved nature. We have no capability to be or do anything of value to God. The flesh is consigned to death. It is

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utterly corrupt and irreparable. God's only solution for the flesh is to crucify it. Such is our true condition apart from Christ and the indwelling Spirit.

- The remedy for pride is knowing we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. This is what Paul has in mind in 6:4-5. "Each one," wrote the apostle, "will bear his own load."
- Stop for a minute and ask if Paul is contradicting himself. He just said we are to bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ. This not only means we are to carry each other's burdens. We also must allow others to carry our burdens. Now Paul says we are to bear our own load. This does not contradict Paul's previous statement because he has something else in mind. Namely, the judgment seat of Christ.
- In context, bearing our own load means we will each give an account for who we are, how we lived, and what we did at the judgment seat of Christ. After this fiery scrutiny, then we "will have reason for boasting in regard to [ourselves] alone, and not in regard to another" (emphasis mine).
- The judgment seat of Christ is the great equalizer, removing the pride and self-conceit that deceives us into thinking we are more special than others. Only Christ is special and we can only please God to the degree Christ lives in us and through us—to the degree that He possesses us and is formed within us.

6 The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him.

- As a teacher, this might be one of my favorite verses. Paul said those who are *taught the word*, meaning those who are influenced by a teacher, should *share all good things* with their teacher or pastor.
- *All good things* would include things like fifty-yard line seats to football games, top-of-the-line espresso machines, new cars, paid vacations, and lots of money. Of course, I'm being a little sarcastic, but Paul is hitting on a vital truth. Those who work hard at preaching and teaching the Word should be valued, honored, blessed, and rewarded by those who are influenced, shaped, and impacted by them.
- Over the years, the Holy Spirit has quickened this Scripture to me, leading me to send emails or other forms of communication to those who have taught me. What I have discovered is how much our teachers need constant encouragement. If you don't teach the Word on a regular basis, you don't realize how much spiritual warfare apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors, and evangelists encounter on a daily basis. Many wrestle with discouragement, wondering if anyone is being impacted by their teachings they work hard to deliver week after week.
- As I have let my teachers know how they have impacted me deeply, it almost shocks them. They are so accustomed to being criticized, judged, slandered, ignored, and under appreciated that they are at a loss of words. Honestly, they really don't know what to say.
- I try to live by this motto: People can't hear all the great things you have to say about them at their funeral. That's why we need to encourage one another daily, especially "the elders who rule well . . . who work hard at preaching and teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17). Paul said these are "to be considered worthy of double honor" (1 Tim. 5:17).

Sowing and Reaping (6:7-10)

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

8 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.

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9 Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

- I sometimes hear sincere Christians who love God and want to serve Him complain about their circumstances. They blame God or the devil for how terrible their lives are, completely blind to how their own past choices have produced a life they want to escape.
- Usually, I just listen quietly, but deep down I'm thinking to myself, *you are reaping what you have sown for years*. Their frequent unwise decisions in the past have become their destiny. Like the old saying goes, "The chickens have come home to roost."
- Paul warned that our fleshly decisions and actions will eventually produce a harvest in our lives. He cautioned us *do not be deceived*. Sin is deceitful (Heb. 3:13). Sin always has consequences, which sometimes isn't experienced until years later. We believed the lie that sowing to our flesh repeatedly won't eventually impact us. Paul said otherwise.
- *God is not mocked*. We can't live for ourselves for decades without reaping the consequences. Paul warned *whatever a man sows, this he will also reap*. If we sow fleshly seeds we will reap a fleshly harvest.
- To *sow to his own flesh* begins with selfish and sinful beliefs and thoughts. This eventually leads to selfish and sinful actions. When our actions are repeated consistently, we form habits. Eventually, habits shape and form our character. Ultimately, character determines our destiny—both now and for eternity.
- In summary . . . *beliefs lead to thoughts. Thoughts lead to actions. Actions lead to habits. Habits lead to character. And character leads to destiny*.
- If we follow this process by yielding our beliefs, thoughts, and actions to the deeds of the flesh (5:19-21), we will *from the flesh reap corruption*. *Corruption* means "a bringing or being brought into an inferior or worse condition, a destruction or corruption."
- If we aren't happy with our lot in life, especially the life we created by sowing to the flesh for decades, there's only one solution. We must begin to *sow to the Spirit*. What, exactly, does it mean to sow to the Spirit? It's what Paul said in 5:25. Namely, if we have been made alive by the Spirit and possess His life, then we are to walk in line or walk orderly by the Spirit. We are to live from our spirit, strengthened and empowered by the indwelling Spirit, so that Christ's abundant life will be progressively released into our hearts, souls, and bodies.
- If we crucify our flesh daily—brutally nailing our sinful and selfish passions and desires to the cross—and if we allow our spirits—in union with the indwelling Spirit—to become the leader of our lives, we will eventually *reap eternal life*.
- To *sow to the Spirit* begins by rewiring our beliefs and thoughts through meditating on the indwelling Christ and His Word. As we think deeply about who dwells within us and how He has transformed our spirits to be righteous, holy, complete, and a partaker of the divine nature, we will progressively take Spirit-led actions that please God. Over time, these actions become Spirit-led habits, and eventually, these habits form and shape our character into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, Christlike character will give us the most incredible destiny—both now and for eternity.
- The *eternal life* we reap is not somewhere we go but Someone in us who possesses us. The word *eternal* means without a beginning or an end. It is uncreated, indestructible life. The word *life* is *zōē*, which is God's life. In summary, eternal life is far more than a destination we go to when we die. Eternal life is a Person. Eternal life is Christ's abundant life released in fullness from our spirits into our hearts, souls, and bodies.

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- Eternal life will be the harvest we experience if we create a habit of sowing to the Spirit. Though true, there will be many days when it doesn't seem worth it. The sinful passions and desires of our flesh scream for satisfaction. It seems like we will never have the abundant life Christ promised. Discouragement clouds our thinking, tempting us to quit. Because of this very dynamic, Paul exhorted us not to *lose heart in doing good*. If we will persevere through dry, discouraging, and disheartening seasons, staying disciplined to sow to the Spirit, the word of the Lord to us is . . . *we will reap if we do not grow weary*.
- If you stay the course, sowing to the Spirit daily whether or not you feel like it, your beliefs will change. Your thoughts will change. Your actions will change. Your habits will change. Your character will change. And ultimately, your destiny will change. If you don't quit sowing to the Spirit, you will eventually reap the abundant life Jesus promised. This abundant life, which is His life flowing out of you like a mighty river, will be your satisfying destiny.

10 So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

- The organic result of living by the Spirit is doing *good to all people*. When we crucify the flesh and sow to the Spirit daily, it will lead us to love—to love our neighbor as ourselves, to serve one another in love, and to bear one another's burdens, thus fulfilling Christ's new commandment to love.
- Sowing to the Spirit produces organic life. This life, which is the life of Christ, releases His love in our hearts for others, motivating us to take every *opportunity to do good to all people*.
- Our priority should be to the church first and then to the world. Our best energy should be *especially to those who are of the household of the faith*. Since our brothers and sisters in Christ are part of our spiritual family, they should be our highest priority. We should shoulder their burdens, serve them, care for them, and pray for them.

Circumcision or Crucifixion (6:11-14)

11 See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

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

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

- Paul unveiled the true motive of the Judaizers. It was not to please God. It was to *make a good showing in the flesh*, it was to avoid being *persecuted for the cross of Christ*, and it was to *boast in your flesh*.
- Ultimately, the Judaizers were motivated by selfish ambition. They wanted others to see their religious works and praise them for being righteous and good people. They wanted the other Judaizers in their tribe to heap accolades on them for traveling to a distant country to spread obedience to the Torah.
- The problem was they didn't *even keep the Law themselves*. The Judaizers were hypocrites. They broke the Law but traveled all the way to Galatia so their religious peers and leaders would praise them.
- How deceitful is the human heart apart from Christ!

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

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- The Judaizers boasted in numbers. They wanted their religious leaders and friends to know how many they converted to the Law of Moses so they would receive praise.
- Sounds familiar to evangelical Christianity today, doesn't it? How many people are you running? How many baptisms have you performed? How many have been saved? How many people are being disciplined in home groups?
- I'm not saying you shouldn't keep track of statistics. But our first boast should be *in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*; not the numbers we use to boast in our religious success.
- Paul said the cross of Jesus Christ crucified him *to the world*. The world system, with all of its allurements, had no sway on Paul because the cross that put Jesus to death also put Paul's flesh to death.
- The kingdoms of the world, exhibited through nationalism, patriotism, conservatism, globalism, or liberalism should hold no sway over us. Anything of the world system—including entertainment, sports, money, education, career, and religion—that still has roots in us highlights where the kingdom of God doesn't yet reign within us. To be a citizen of the kingdom of God is to swear allegiance to Christ and His kingdom. This should look like treason to every other aspect of the world's system—no matter how noble or good it seems.
- Before the kingdoms of the world become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, the kingdom of self must be torn down within our hearts and souls. Like Paul, the cross of Jesus Christ must penetrate deeply into our self-life, uniting us experientially with Jesus Christ and Him crucified, until the world system has no sway over us.
- Can you honestly say *the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world*? It's one thing to be crucified to sin, self, and the Law. But being crucified to the world system affects everything related to how we live in the world. We are to be in the world but not of the world.

The Law of the New Creation (6:15-16)

15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

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

- Paul said neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is *anything*. Whether a Jew had been circumcised or a Gentile had not been, the external removal of skin had nothing to do with who we are internally and God's ultimate intention of having a *new creation*.
- Pay close attention to the phrase *a new creation*. These are just three simple words but there is a depth of meaning that we can't afford to miss. What does it mean to be a new creation? To answer this question, read what Ezekiel prophesied about the New Covenant:

Moreover, I will give you a *new heart* and put a *new spirit* within you; *and I will remove the heart of stone* from your flesh and give you a *heart of flesh*. I will put *My Spirit within you* and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. (Ezek. 36:26-27, emphasis mine)

- God promised to do these four things in the New Covenant: 1) Give us a new heart that is soft and pliable; 2) put a new spirit within us; 3) remove our heart of stone; and 4) put His Spirit within us. This is what it means to be a new creation in Christ.

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- The finished work of the cross and the indwelling Holy Spirit have made us fundamentally new creations. We are not mere men and women, like those of the Adamic race. We are a new creation with a righteous spirit, a new heart that has been cleansed from sin, and we have the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwelling inside of us. When we have a revelation of what it means to be new creations in Christ, everything changes!
- Because of the finished work of the cross and the indwelling Holy Spirit, your spirit has been raised from the dead, is one with the Holy Spirit, is a partaker of the divine nature, is righteous, holy, and complete, and has been recreated in the image and likeness of God (Rom. 8:10; 1 Cor. 6:17; 2 Pet. 1:3-4; Eph. 4:24; Heb. 12:23). Not only that, but when you were born again, you were given a new heart that was cleansed from sin and is now being prepared and molded for the Spirit of Christ to dwell in fully.
- In 5:25, Paul wanted more for us than just to be alive by the Spirit and possess Christ's life. He wanted us to *walk* by the Spirit. He wanted us to walk in line, to walk orderly, following and obeying the Spirit's leadership. The same idea is at work in 6:16. Paul wanted more for us than just being a new creation. He wanted us to walk in line, to walk orderly, as a new creation. He wanted us to live from the parts of our internal being that have been made new by the work of the indwelling Spirit.
- Speaking of being a *new creation*, Paul said *those who will walk by this rule will have peace and mercy*.
- The Greek word for *rule* is *kanōn* and means *a rod or straight piece of rounded wood to which any thing is fastened to keep it straight*. A *kanōn* was used for various purposes, such as a measuring rod, a rule, or a carpenter's line or measuring tape. Metaphorically, *kanōn* is *any rule or standard*, such as *a principle or law of investigating, judging, living, acting*.
- Having the indwelling Spirit, a new spirit, and a new heart, we are to "walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk"—obeying the five senses of the body and the reasoning, feelings, and desires of the soul (Eph. 4:17). Instead, we are to walk in line with who we are as new creations. We are to live from the parts of our internal being—namely our spirits and our hearts—that have been made new by the work of the indwelling Spirit. I call this the *law of the new creation*.
- There are many laws governing the earth, such as the law of gravity, the law of aerodynamics, and the law of thermodynamics. Take the law of gravity as an example. As you learned at a young age, what goes up must come down. This law is invariable unless it is trumped by the law of aerodynamics, which allows planes to overcome the law of gravity and fly.
- In Paul's writings, he listed several immutable laws that govern whether we live by the flesh or by the Spirit. These laws are: 1) the law of sin and death at work in our flesh; 2) the law of the mind; 3) the law of faith; 4) the law of the new creation; and 5) the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2; Rom. 7:23-25; Rom. 3:27). How we align ourselves with these immutable laws determines whether we live by the flesh or by the Spirit.
- The law of sin and death is somewhat like the law of gravity. It's our default way of living unless a greater and more powerful law overcomes it. When we wake up in the morning, living in the flesh is our default mode of operation unless we overcome it through prayer, meditation, waiting on the Lord, worship, and studying Scripture. When we engage in these activities, the law of the mind and the law of faith overcome the law of sin and death at work in our flesh. As our minds are renewed and our faith activated, our spirits are strengthened as the life-source we live by and our hearts are filled with Christ. Practicing this daily is how we live by the law of the new creation. By the Holy Spirit's help, we strengthen the parts of our being that were made new when we were born again. Developing a habit of living as a new creation activates the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus within us. This is how Christ's indwelling life is released from our spirits to our hearts to our souls and

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ultimately to our bodies. This is how the abundant life of Christ flows out of us like a mighty, life-giving river.

- Not only did Paul pronounce a blessing of peace and mercy for those who live as new creations. He also pronounced the same blessings *upon the Israel of God*.
- There have been endless debates about whether the term *Israel of God* was referring to the church as the true Israel or to the nation of Israel and the Jewish people. If we are honest, there's not enough context in this verse to make the argument either way. If we want to know Paul's view about Israel, then a better source is Romans 9-11.

Conclusion (6:17-18)

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

18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

- As Paul concluded this masterpiece epistle, which has freed multitudes from the chains of legalism over the centuries, he wrote his last words about the Judaizers, saying, "Let no one cause trouble for me."
- Why does Paul have authority to say this? Because he bears on his body marks far greater than the mark of circumcision. His body was branded by the beating and flogging he suffered for faithfully preaching Christ and him crucified.
- Paul ended his letter by blessing the Galatians with *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ* to their *spirits*. God's grace is more than His unmerited favor. His grace is more than imputing righteousness upon the undeserving. God's grace is also His power directed to our spirits, enabling us to be who God created us to be and to do what He has called us to do.
- God releases His grace to our spirits first. Then His grace flows outward from our spirits to the other parts of our being.