

Galatians 6 - Live by the Spirit

Bear One Another's Burdens (1-5)

"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵ For each will have to bear his own load.

While it may initially seem like verse 5 is a contradiction of verse 2, we have to look at each statement in the proper context. The "burdens" we are to help one another bear in verse 2 are related to the moral weaknesses and sin struggles referenced in verse 1. We should restore each other with gentleness, because we each struggle with something, but not always the same things.

James instructs us to confess our sins to one another and pray for each other so that we may receive healing (James 5:16). When someone confesses their sins to other believers, the initial reaction they receive will have a huge impact on their willingness to do so again.

We are each responsible for presenting our own work before Christ, who will judge our fruitfulness as His disciples.

We Must Choose Whom We Will Serve (6-10)

⁶ Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. ⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he 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.

Whether you think of them as wolves, bears, or purple dragons, there are two distinct spirits at work within each believer:

- The spirit of our sinful flesh
- The Spirit of Christ

The one that we feed will be the one that produces the most fruit.

“Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey – whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.” (Romans 6:16-18)

In Romans 6, Paul views this scenario as presenting only two possible options:

- Either we are slaves to sin
- Or slaves to Christ.

Anyone who thinks he can be free from the bondage of sin while retaining lordship over himself is deceived.

⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Benediction and Closing (11-18)

¹¹ See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. ¹² It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. ¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. ¹⁷ From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

What's really at the heart of the issue is when people try to attach something external to the gospel in order to make it "essential" for all believers.

Paul was also consistently quick to "lay aside" his freedom for the sake of those who needed to hear the gospel.

"To the Jews, I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law, I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law, I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not under the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means, I might save some. I do this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings".
(1 Cor 9:20-23)

Application

- Following Christ is not a one-time event, but a lifestyle. That is why Jesus said "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his *daily* cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).
- The gospel is not merely a transaction that results in us going to heaven when we die. It's about surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus so that we can receive the Holy Spirit as our co-pilot in life. The more we try and wrestle with him for control, the bumpier the ride is going to be.
- "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free...but do not use your freedom to gratify the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love" (Galatians 5:1, 13)