**Bear One Another’s Burdens**

*Galatians 6:1-10*

**Introduction**

1. As Christians we are told to bear each other’s burdens **(cf. Galatians 6:2).**
   1. In doing so we ***“fulfill the law of Christ”*** – **5:14** – namely to love one another – **John 13:34** – as disciples.
2. What does it mean to bear each other’s burdens?
   1. Often, this is considered in light of the burdens of this physical life – illness, sorrow, discouragement, loss, adversity, etc. – such would be remedied by kind words, acts of hospitality, keeping company, expressions of sympathy and empathy, etc.
   2. These are wonderful things that are certainly expected by a Christian and may be considered in light of bearing each other’s burdens.
   3. However, the context of **Galatians 6:2** is more specific, and concerns matters of greater importance than the above thoughts.
3. The Call to Bear One Another’s Burdens **(vv. 1-5)**
4. “You who are spiritual” **(vv. 1-2)**
   1. The command to bear each other’s burdens **(v. 2)** is preceded by the command of **verse 1** – such is the contextual substance of the burden bearing.
   2. CONTRAST – the “spiritual” one and the one “overtaken in any trespass.”
   3. Spiritual – who is the spiritual one that would move to restore the erring brother?
      1. Context of Galatians – apostasy via Judaizing error and influence.
         1. Promotion of an OT/NT hybrid.
         2. Consequence – **5:4** – estranged from Christ, fallen from grace.
      2. **(5:13)** – liberty from Law of Moses not a license to sin.
         1. Freedom from OT is not freedom from moral constraint.
      3. **(5:16-18)** – Under the law of Christ is under the Spirit’s guidance which controls the desires of the flesh.
         1. Law of Christ = Law of Spirit – HS = Spirit of Christ – **Romans 8:2, 9**
         2. **(v. 17)** – You don’t do what you wish, you do what the Spirit instructs.
         3. **(vv. 19-23)** – examples of the diametrically opposed desires of the flesh and the Holy Spirit.
      4. The “spiritual” one of **6:1** is seen in the verses prior – **5:24-25**
         1. **(v. 24)** – they have put their fleshly desires away.
         2. **(v. 25)** – so they can follow the Spirit’s direction.
         3. Spiritually minded – **Romans 8:5-9**
   4. The conflict **(6:1)** – one who is currently walking after the direction of the HS sees a brother who has erred, i.e. is no longer walking after the Spirit’s direction.
      1. Overtaken – does not minimize the sin – HE NEEDS TO BE RESTORED.
      2. So, restoration is attempted – BY TEACHING AND CORRECTING – **2 Timothy 3:16; 4:2**
   5. **(v. 2)** – in doing so you are bearing each other’s burdens.
      1. Law of Christ – **5:14** – love – **John 13:34** – especially as fellow disciples.
      2. WHAT GREATER ACT OF LOVE CAN BE SHOWN AS DISCIPLES THAN LOOKING OUT FOR EACH OTHER’S SPIRITUAL WELL BEING?
         1. **1 Peter 4:8** – love covers a multitude of sins. How?
         2. Because love will not neglect such, but act to restore the one in sin – **James 5:19-20**
         3. **Additional to when sin needs correction is everything that would prevent sin in the first place – ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY, STUDY, EDIFICATION, ASSEMBLING TO WORSHIP, DISCIPLINE, ETC. (This is bearing one another’s burdens.)**
         4. **If restoration in the sense of teaching and correcting is not successful, bearing one another’s burdens would also include THE CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE OF WITHDRAWAL:**
            1. **1 Corinthians 5:4-5** – that their spirit might be saved.
            2. **2 Thessalonians 3:15** – still counted as a brother – still showing love.
            3. LOVE ALWAYS DOES WHAT IS BEST FOR IT’S OBJECT – IGNORING SIN IS NEVER BEST.
5. You who are “nothing” **(vv. 3-5)**
   1. The spirit possessed in restorative action – **(v. 1)** – gentleness.
      1. **5:23** – a characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit.
      2. More than simply a mildness, but the foundation from which such grows.
      3. Gentleness – the quality of not being overly impressed by a sense of one’s self-importance, gentleness, humility, courtesy, considerateness, meekness. (BDAG)
      4. **(v. 1)** – a humility of spirit that acknowledges it is not above the danger of sin.
   2. This humble self-awareness will lead one to act to restore a fallen brother rather than abnegating such a responsibility in pride – **(vv. 3-5):**
      1. Opposite of **(5:26)** – an attitude of ambition at the expense of the well-being of brethren.
      2. “He that is meek indeed will know himself a sinner among sinners…and this knowledge of his own sin will teach him endure meekly the provocations with which they may provoke him, and not to withdraw himself from the burdens which their sin may impose upon him.” (R.C. Trench)
      3. **(v. 3)** – describes a man who lacks the quality of “gentleness” thus does not bear the burden of his brother.
         1. Actually – NOTHING; Thinks – SOMETHING; In doing so – DECEIVES SELF
         2. He is actually nothing if not but for the simple reason that he lacks the gentleness commanded by the Spirit that would lead him to doing the very thing that fulfills the law of Christ.
      4. HE THINKS HE IS SOMETHING BY HIS OBSERVATION OF THE ERRING BROTHER:
         1. **(v. 4)** – he is not examining his own work to find himself approved, but the error of another.
            1. It is unwise to compare self to others in this way – **2 Corinthians 10:12**
         2. Why is it unwise? – **(v. 5)** – each will bear his own load.
            1. Not contradicting verse 2.
            2. **(v. 2)** – burden – *baros* – “experience of something that is particularly oppressive, burden” (BDAG)
            3. **(v. 5)** – load – *phortion* – “an invoice (as part of freight), i.e. (figuratively) a task or service” (STRONG) (**cf. Matthew 11:29-30** – regarding the burden of obligation/responsibility in obeying Christ)
            4. I.E. YOUR RESPONSIBILITY BEFORE CHRIST IS NOT TAKEN CARE OF BY ANOTHER’S FAILURE.
6. Instead of elevating self in pride when we see a brother caught in sin, we should be moved with compassion for them because of our understanding of our own frailties and take an action of love to help them bear their burden by restoring them.
   1. The bottom line is, LOVE FOR A FELLOW DISCIPLE WILL NOT IGNORE THEIR SIN, OR GLORY IN IT, BUT WILL ACT TO RESTORE THEM BY TEACHING, REPROVING, REBUKING, AND EXHORTING.
   2. This surpasses anything we could do for a brother or sister in Christ, AND IT IS SOMETHING THAT EVERY FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN (“YOU WHO ARE SPIRITUAL”) IS CALLED TO DO.
7. The Proper Response to Being Restored **(vv. 6-8)**
8. Share in the Spirit’s Teaching **(v. 6)** (The context of the previous verses continues.)
   1. **(v. 6)** – where does this thought of a teacher, and one being taught come from?
      1. **(v. 1)** – the restorative process involves teaching.
      2. One is erring and is being corrected by the “spiritual” one – could be any faithful Christian.
   2. Who has the ***“good things”*** according to the context?
      1. NOT the one being taught.
      2. Consider the connection of ***“doing good”*** of **(v. 9)** with sowing ***“to the Spirit”*** of **(v. 8)** and then with ***“good things”*** of **(v. 6).**
      3. The ***“good things”*** in the context are still that which is by the direction of the Holy Spirit – IN THE CASE OF **(V. 6)** THE TEACHING OF SUCH.
      4. “The one who instructs has the good things; the one being instructed is to proceed to participate in them, in ‘all’ of them.” (LENSKI)
      5. Share – *koinōneō* – a word denoting participation, or fellowship.
         1. Shared (monetary sense) – **Philippians 4:15** – Paul supported by Philippians.
         2. Share – **1 Timothy 5:22** – sharing in another’s sins.
         3. Partaken– **Hebrews 2:14** – Jesus sharing in flesh and blood.
         4. Partake– **1 Peter 4:13** – sharing in Jesus’ sufferings.
         5. Shares – **2 John 11** – sharing in evil deeds by having fellowship with a false teacher.
   3. This is instruction for any who would be found in trespass, and who are approached by a “spiritual” one seeking to restore them.
      1. How are we supposed to react to those who are trying to correct us, and bring us out of sin?
      2. Accept the correction, reproof, rebuke, and exhortation and get back in line with the Spirit’s teaching!
9. Do Not Deceive Yourself **(vv. 7-8)**
   1. Some, out of stubbornness, pride, rebellion, etc. do not submit the correction of another.
   2. **(v. 7)** – to fail to repent of the sin that the “spiritual” one is convicting you of and seeking to turn you from is to DECEIVE YOURSELF.
   3. Why? **(v. 8)** – Because God will not be mocked by you continuing to sow to the flesh and reaping the reward of the Spirit – everlasting life.
      1. Thus, a basic and fundamental principle is applied spiritually to get the one in sin to see how important it is to repent and accept the correction from the “spiritual” one.
10. The Proper Perspective of Doing Good **(vv. 9-10)**
11. There are obvious struggles, frustrations, and discouragements all around.
12. Do Not Lose Heart **(v. 9)**
    1. Submission to the Spirit is always a struggle – **5:16-17** – like a tug of war.
       1. It can especially be hard when there is the discouragement of seeing others of the household of faith that just aren’t doing right, and therefore aren’t helping you.
       2. Encouragement to keep fighting!
    2. Approaching a brother in Christ who is in sin in order to restore them is never an easy thing to do **(v. 1).**
       1. We fear a negative response.
       2. We fear ridicule by others who don’t think we should “get in another’s business,” and by those who think love means ignoring their sin and carrying on the relationship lest there be any discomfort.
    3. It is never easy to learn we have sinned, and it is always a fight to overcome it **(v. 6).**
    4. Do not lose heart FOR WE SHALL REAP **(v. 8)** – the sowing may be toilsome, and the effects not immediate, but God’s law of sowing and reaping is sure!
13. Be Earnest and Diligent in Doing Good **(v. 10)**
    1. Therefore – **(v. 9)** – the reason we shouldn’t lose heart is because if we endure, we will reap the harvest of everlasting life.
    2. So, we should persist in our following of the Spirit:
       1. ***“as we have opportunity”*** – considers a SEASON of opportunity, not an isolated instance.
       2. He is saying we should be earnestly striving to follow the Spirit’s direction while we live.
    3. To everyone – Christ living in us is for the world to see and experience.
       1. Some lead a double life – act as disciples around disciples, but not the world.
       2. This is one of the many verses which indicate our faith in following God’s word is to be on exhibition to lead others to Christ.
       3. **John 7:37-38** – the thirst-quenching living water Christ gives us is to spring forth unto others.
    4. Especially to the household of faith:
       1. Contrast with **(vv.3-4)** – not using their sin for your pride but being diligent to help them overcome it!
          1. In contrast – **5:15, 26** – brethren should not treat each other poorly.
          2. It should be easier, and more important to us to do good to our brethren than it is to everyone else.
       2. Also, we should never shy away from correcting a brother or sister in sin! **(v. 1)**
       3. **NOTE: Ephesians 4:11-12 – equipping of saints necessary for the work of ministry (i.e. the saints involvement in such).**
          1. We must not forsake the internal growth of the church by overly focusing on bringing more people in.
          2. Evangelism should always be a focus – but don’t put the cart before the horse – GOD’S PLAN IS THE BUILDING UP INTERNALLY THAT WILL SPILL OVER INTO EVANGELIZING THE LOST.

**Conclusion**

1. The greatest thing we can do for each other as fellow members of the body of Christ is to watch out for each other’s spiritual well-being.
2. This comes in the form of bearing one another’s burdens!
3. While we should be willing to aid one another when adversity strikes in this physical life, HOW MUCH MORE SO WHEN ONE IS STRUCK WITH SIN?