

**Galatians 6:1-10 – Not Under Law, But Still Comanded To Love and Serve Others**  
**Community Group Galatians Lesson 13**

**I. Review Galatians 1-5:18**

- A. 1:1-10 – God sent me to correct you from distorting the gospel by adding to it.
- B. 1:11-24 – My gospel came from Christ Himself and was authenticated by the apostles.
- C. 2:1-10 – Fourteen years later, my gospel was verified AGAIN by Jerusalem apostles.
- D. 2:11-21 – Later, even Peter had to be reminded that we are saved by faith alone.
- E. 3:1-14 – The gospel justifies everyone by faith in the promise, just like Abraham was.
- F. 3:15-29 – The law tutored us to bring us to faith in Christ and we now share Abraham’s inheritance.
- G. 4:1-18 – You are His child and heir and no longer under regulations of external control.
- H. 4:19-31 – Adopting the law puts you into slavery, but you were saved to be free!
- I. 5:1-12 – You have been set free! Do not subject yourself to a law that severs you from Christ.
- J. 5:13-18 – Serve one another as you walk by the Spirit and you’ll not fulfill the desires of the flesh
- K. 5:19-26 – Walking by the Spirit and walking according to the flesh produce different results

**II. Carry Your Own Weight Yet Help Those Who Struggle**

**Galatians 6:1-5**

**A. Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one with gentleness, watching out for yourself lest you also be tempted. (6:1)**

- 1. Word for **man** means man/woman and ‘any sin’ is “a particular or specific sin.”
- 2. The idea of **caught** (*prolambano*) is really *overtaken* (see KJV). We see this portrayed in Proverbs 5:22 (*His own iniquities will capture the wicked and he will be held with the cords of his sin*).
- 3. The idea of **you who are spiritual** refers to the passage we just studied. The **spiritual** in Paul’s mind does not have to do with position, but with the “label” of the fruit of the Spirit manifested by people walking by the Spirit.
- 4. Paul is contrasting the well-known attitude and actions of legalists who were eager to condemn a woman taken in adultery (John 8:3-5) with this approach of **restoring** those who had fallen into sin and been overcome thereby.
- 5. **Restoring** here is from the same root word as the word in 5:19 (impurity). Where impurity was that root word with the prefix “a-” (meaning away from), this word is the root word turned into a verb – we might say, to make whole. It was used of mending nets. It is the idea of taking something that had fallen from usability and making it once again capable of being used.
- 6. Part of the mindset here (*in a spirit of gentleness*) is to love people such that instead of judging them with an unloving (yet understandable) attitude of *they brought it on themselves!*, we see them as having been overtaken in it. Not saying they didn’t make choices to get here. Just saying that what they did originally might have been a Proverbs 16:12 sort of thing – “well, it seemed like the thing to do at the time.” (See also 2 Tim. 2:24-26 for an example of this.)
- 7. And one of the most important component of this verse is the warning at the end. *Looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted*. It means guard yourself against thinking you are above this sort of thing, because you are not. Maybe you won’t fall into the very same thing (though you could), but your attitude about this person’s sin could open you to a different attitude and different sin.

**B. Bear one another’s burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ. (6:2)**

- 1. The burdens spoken of here (*bare*) are “heavy, crushing loads” (Bible Knowledge Commentary, BKC) – those things that weigh a person down more than he/she can bear themselves.

In this context, the word refers to the crushing load that their sin has caused in their life. You are helping them bear that weight in their lives, and by doing so, **fulfilling the law of Christ.**

2. What do we mean, fulfill the law of Christ?  
In 5:14, we read: *For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* Paul takes a quote from Jesus in Matthew 22:39 which itself was actually a quote from Lev. 19:18 (*you shall love your neighbor as yourself*). He then interprets that when we love our neighbor, we are actually fulfilling the whole law (as he also does in Rom. 13:8).
3. Perhaps it is unnecessary for us to recall this, but I think in a book so filled with a message of grace, I think it bears repeating from one of the previous classes. With all the negative references to the “Law” in this book, we must not make the mistake that the law itself is the problem or is bad. I have seen people moved by grace away from legalism who have done that – like a pendulum swinging too far. All that Paul is critiquing in this book regarding the Law is the idea of trying to control people’s behavior by the pressure of “the Law,” or boasting in ourselves as in, *I never did THAT*. Those forms of legalism cause a devaluation of grace, and carry the idea with them that we can perfect what Christ has begun in us through faith. Remember, Jesus said in Matthew 5:17, “I did not come to set aside the law, but to fulfill it.” And Romans 8:4, which we have looked at before, says that “when you walk according to the Spirit, the law will be fulfilled in you.” And Galatians 5:13 said, *“You were called to freedom, but do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh. Rather, through love serve one another.”* Why? Why serve one another in love? Verse 14 says, because as we do so, “we will fulfill the law.” And here we see it once again in 6:2: When you bear one another’s heavy loads (bare), Christ’s intention for the law (loving each other in truth) will actually be accomplished. That brings Him joy. It brings Him glory. And, we will find, it even ministers to us.

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

1. Here Paul, with characteristic wisdom, strength and gentleness, warns us that if we see people caught in sin but see ourselves above that (i.e., judging them) or think that we are above sometimes needing help ourselves, or think that because we helped someone, we are on a different spiritual plateau, we are deceiving ourselves. When we see someone caught by their sin, it should evoke in us compassion, humility, gentleness and the desire to help them lift that very heavy load (both the sin they are in and the results that sin has produced) if we are in a position to do so since doing so will fulfill the purposes of Christ.
2. Interesting that a book which began with the purpose of correcting the people in their understanding of the gospel because of legalists in their midst (people pressuring them to certain behaviors and practices which they taught would make them holy and guard them from being able to be judged), comes full circle to now motivating people by grace and by love to actually live in such a way as reflects the fact that they are no longer under judgment, and by doing so, enables them to restore others to the purposes of God. There is such irony.
3. 1 Cor. 4:7 is a favorite verse of mine in connection with this. *“Who regards you as superior? For what do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”*

**C. But let each one examine his own work and then he will boast in regard to himself and not in regard to another. (6:4)**

This verse takes a little explanation. It helps to know that the word for boast (take pride) is not what we usually think of as pride. It is a word that means “glory in,” “rejoice in,” or “exult in.” Specifically, it refers to a person being able to look at her or his own life, seeing things that God has taught them, areas where they have grown and changed, places where they are no longer doing what they once did, and letting out a war whoop – *like a Praise God!* (Diane’s granddad: *Are you a “yeah”-er or a “wow”-er?*) God is doing something and it is actually changing me and it is leading to eternal impact. The reason Paul says to have that type of “rejoicing in ourselves” (“boasting in ourselves”) and *not in another*, means that rather than comparing ourselves to someone else who has recently been overtaken in sin and thinking we are superior (remember verse 3 again), we can justly praise God and exult that He has been doing a work in us, but not such that it makes someone else look worse in our eyes.

**D. For each one shall bear his own load. (6:5)**

To our eyes, reading English, this appears to be in contradiction with verse 2, where we are taught to “bear one another’s burdens.” But that is only because our English words *burden* and *load* are not very distinct. But the Greek words used are quite distinct. Where *burden* in verse 2 referred to a cumbersome weight no one can manage alone (i.e., the accumulated weight and consequences of being overtaken by sin), *load* in verse 5 refers to the normal responsibility and expectation and weight that we as Christians all bear. (That topic: *what are the responsibilities and loads we all bear* would be worth a stand-alone class someday.) But we do well to remember that Jesus uses this same word in Matt. 11:30 where he says that “take on His yoke” and that it “is light.” This is to say, helping people with their sin is not the same as helping them with their own responsibility. We all still have that. But the Body of Christ is to help one another with the load that often gets in the way of lifting our daily load.

**III. Let each of us invest in one another (6:6-10)**

**A. And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. (6:6)**

1. Here Paul demonstrates that what we call “ministry” (serving one another in love, see 5:13-15) is not a one-way street. All of us minister to one another in a variety of ways. That is the Body of Christ.
2. The example he gives here is not meant to be the only one, but an illustration. The illustration is, as those who teach God’s word and help people apply it are investing in the lives of those they help through instruction, correction and guidance, so, too, the recipients “share all good things with those who teach.” In Paul’s day, that meant that some of those who spent time ministering had to take time from their wage-producing work to teach others. He was saying, “it is appropriate to share with those who minister to you.” In our church, some of us say at the time of the offering, “if you are visiting the church, please let this just be our ministry to you as a guest. Feel no need to contribute. But if this church ministers to you, please share in the giving that makes that work possible.” I think that same thing is what Paul is addressing.

**B. Do not be deceived; God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the man 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. (6:7-8)**

1. Paul instructs or reminds his audience that God will “pay back” what a person invests. Here he is not talking about money exclusively; money or support from the previous verse is only one example. He is teaching a spiritual principle that we “reap what we sow.” This is true in farming, and it is true in the spiritual life.
2. Specifically, Paul is getting at the idea that if a person lives by the flesh, he will also reap from the flesh. So if he puts himself under the law, he will reap what the law produces: death.
3. That is to say, when a person tries to control themselves and others by legalism, it will not produce life. It will reap fear and pride and comparison and resentment and distance and all sorts of similarly dead things.
4. Similarly, if a person decides to use their freedom for the flesh, and serve themselves, they will reap from the flesh not only the deeds of the flesh listed in 5:19-21, but they will reap all kinds of additional “corruption” (6:8).
5. But, and here is the good news, if a person walks by the Spirit, if a person loves others by serving them, if a person reminds themselves that they are loved by God, that they are His kid, that they have an inheritance, that they are forgiven (our greatest need), and other things mentioned in this book and other biblical books, they will reap from that investment, “eternal life.”
6. “Eternal life” here is not “going to heaven,” as we usually use the term. It is more like what Dennis McNutt preached last week from Romans 5 about true life. Paul means that the more I invest in living by the Spirit (and all that means), the more I will **reap the experience of eternal life** – both here and in eternity.
  - a. John 17:3 – *this is eternal life, that they may know You... and Jesus Christ*
  - b. Philippians 3:9-10 – *I consider all this but rubbish... that I may know Christ*
  - c. 2 Peter 1:2-3 – *All things necessary for life and godliness through the true knowledge of Christ Jesus*

**C. And let us not lose heart in doing good; for in due season, we will reap if we do not grow weary. So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of God. (6:9-10)**

1. Paul encourages all believers in Christ at this point by saying, “let us not lose heart in doing good.” Why does he need to say that? Because life is hard. Because we haven’t yet received our reward. Because it is easy to lose heart.
2. He is speaking to me. He is telling me, “John, you sometimes want to quit bearing the burdens of people because it wears you out physically and emotionally and spiritually. But don’t. Do not let yourself give in to losing heart.”
3. He is speaking to our missionaries and their families. He is saying, “Daniel in Pakistan, and Joshua in Nigeria, and Hanson in India, and Pete in Togo, do not grow weary as you make disciples and build the church in those places. You will reap if you do not give up.”
4. But he is more importantly speaking to each one of us wherever we are in our walk with Him, where He is challenging us to invest – time, prayer, money, effort – as we evangelize those without Christ and as we build up the Body of Christ.

- He is saying, “where you want to stop praying, where you want to stop giving effort, where you wonder if this is all going to be worth it,” do not stop “sowing.”
5. “Sowing” here is any effort you are making toward knowing Christ and following and serving Him and loving others in His name. It involves your efforts to forgive, to trust God, to see places of need and fill it, to grow.
  6. In fact, as if to prove that last point, Paul finishes this section with the words, “so then, as long as there is opportunity, let us do good to all men.”
  7. How did Paul’s conversation get around to “do good to all men”? Well, if I am walking by the Spirit, I am not fulfilling the desires of the flesh. If I do not fulfill my selfish desires (which include living for myself, trusting myself), I will see needs all around me. As I see them, I can serve others in love. It might be moving chairs at church. It might be helping the lawn crew do the landscaping. It might be helping with the four year old class. It might be helping with technology. It might be mentoring kids in a school. It might be any of a number of things. As I see the needs in front of me (which I really don’t see if I am busy living under a law or living for myself), I can see 1000 ways to do good in the name of Jesus.
  8. That he wants us to do good to all men should help us fight prejudice of any sort - political, cultural, racial, economic – where there is need I can help fill, let me do it. But let me not do it in fear of being judged if I don’t. Let me not do it in pride of what if someone notices me. Let me do it in freedom, out of gratitude, yet knowing that in His kindness, God will reward me. I will reap a reward. [NOT HEAVEN – THAT IS A GIFT. NOT A REWARD.]
  9. Finally in this section, notice the phrase I left off in the above discussion:  
*Especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*  
This means that while I do good to all men, I need to pay special attention to the needs of the Body of Christ, because it is the pillar and support of the truth, the bride of Christ, and the vehicle that is going to continue to champion making disciples until Christ comes back.

#### IV. Discussion

- A. What roles can we play in helping turn someone else from sin that overcomes them?
- B. Why would Paul need to say in verse 7 – “*Do not be deceived; God is not mocked*” before he tells us that we will reap whatever we are sowing?
- C. In what way is “doing good to all men” the antithesis of “losing heart”?