

## THE MINISTRY OF RESTORATION

***26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. 1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. But keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 5:26-6:2 ESV***

### Introduction

The Apostle Paul, the human author of this letter, has just described the conflict that exists between our flesh and the Spirit, and that our only hope of victory in regards to this conflict is to daily choose to walk by the Spirit. He now describes one of the practical results of this victory. It concerns our personal relationships, especially with our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. One of the greatest signs that we are truly walking by the Spirit is not some private mystical experience on our own, but our relationships of love with one another. It is easy to talk about love in an abstract way, but it is extremely challenging to get down to particular situations where we actually demonstrate our love to each other in practical ways.

### I. How To Ruin Relationships (Verse 26)

*26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Galatians 5:26 ESV*

This verse is extremely insightful because it reveals that our conduct towards others is determined by our view of both them and ourselves. It is when we become conceited that we mistreat others. Here the word conceited is used to describe someone who has an opinion of themselves which is empty, vain, or false. They are cherishing an illusion of themselves that isn't actually real. This causes them to be incapable of viewing themselves, or others, rightly.

Some form of conceit is almost always the cause of broken relationships. It causes us to do one of two things: provoke or envy. To provoke means to challenge someone to a contest. Provoking implies that we are so sure of our superiority that we want to demonstrate it. To envy means to be jealous of another's gifts or achievements. Envy implies that we are so sure of our inferiority that we would be willing to take something from someone else.

*3 ...I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. Romans 12:3 ESV*

We must not view ourselves any higher or any lower than we should. Ask God to help you to see yourself the way he does. We must realize that both arrogance and insecurity come out of pride.

### II. How To Save Relationships (Verses 1-2)

*1 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. Galatians 6:1-2 ESV*

#### A. Bearing Others' Burdens (Verse 2)

Many will argue that we have a divine burden-bearer who is completely capable, and therefore it is a sign of weakness to ever require any human help. Christ alone can bear the burden of our sin and guilt, but this is not the case when it comes to the rest of our burdens such as worry, temptation, doubt, and sorrow.

*5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. 2 Corinthians 7:5-7 ESV*

## B. The Ministry Of Restoration (Verse 1)

One of the ways that we carry people's burdens is by helping to restore them when they are caught in sin.

### 1) What Should Be Done

If we see someone we know doing something wrong we cannot choose to act like it is none of our business simply because it would be uncomfortable to get involved, or because we despise them in our hearts and secretly want them to have a taste of their own medicine.

### 2) Who Should Do It

The people who are called to participate in the ministry of restoration are those who are spiritual, meaning those who are humble, wise, and mature. We should never use this as an excuse to avoid confrontation. We are all called to participate in the ministry of restoration because we are all called to be spiritually mature.

### 3) How Should It Be Done

Restoration should always be done with gentleness. One of the reasons that only those who are spiritually mature should attempt the ministry of restoration is because only the spiritually mature are truly gentle. Remember, Paul also warns us to be careful when we restore others so that we do not become tempted ourselves. This suggests that true gentleness is born out of a sense of our own weakness and propensity to sin.