

Galatians 6 • Chapter Study

INTRO

For those of you who attend Wed night weekly, I realize the beginning of our study is often repetitive.

Some of you take notes and follow along carefully.

So as we begin each week with a summary and overview of the previous week or the theme of the book we're in, it can be like, "Okay, Lance--Got it. I know. You've said the same thing now for the last 2-3 weeks. Move on."

If that's you, I hear ya.

What we need to remember is that the majority of people both here and watching online *don't* remember from week to week.

Some with us right now both in-person & online haven't heard a single study in Galatians.

So – a bit of review is called for as we prepare for our last study in this important letter from the Apostle Paul to the churches of Galatia.

He'd planted them on his first missionary venture some 5 or 6 yrs before penning this letter.

What occasioned his writing was hearing that false teachers called Judaizers had infiltrated them and were leading them astray.

There was a debate, you see, among *Jewish* followers of Jesus over what role the Law of Moses had in the life of faith.

Some Jewish Christians believed the Law was still in force, not just for Jews, but for Gentiles too.

So – if a Gentile came to faith in Jesus, he/she had to in-effect become a good law-keeping Jew to be right with God.

Now – this entire issue had already been settled by the Church's first council in Jrz, recorded for us in Acts 15.

The Apostles stated that Jesus fulfilled the Law and that faith in Him was the crucial issue.

No, they said, Gentiles do NOT have to be circumcised, keep a kosher diet, observe the Sabbath and all the rest of the rituals of the Law.

Well, the Judaizers ignored that decision and maintained the believe Gentiles did have to do all that.

They followed Paul around, waiting till he planted a church and left, then they snuck in and in effect said ...

"We've been sent from HQs in Jrz to complete your training in how to serve God."

"Paul's message was Part 1; we're Part 2"

"As Paul taught, you **start** your relationship with God with faith in Jesus.

"Now we're here to tell you how to **grow & STAY** in relationship with God by good works."

Of course, Paul knew God's grace is the beginning, middle and end of our relationship with God.

So when he heard the churches of Galatia were falling for the error of the Judaizers, he sent this, his most strongly worded letter.

It's strong, even harsh at times, because the Galatians were the kind of people who responded best to that style of challenge.

They weren't polite, tea-drinking dandies. They were rough and tumble brawlers.

Ch6

Since we covered vs 1-5 Sunday, we'll be more summary with them tonight.

¹ Brethren,

A family word, because that's what grace has made us; the children of God. So we're brothers & sisters.

And siblings have a duty to one another'; they look out for each other.

We may not always get along, but when one's in trouble, the others come to their aid.

if a man is overtaken in any trespass,

Picture someone running from something but it **outruns & catches** him.

All of us have been or will be overtaken by some sin.

Trespass = stepping *across* a boundary. "No trespassing"

To step into something we ought not.

To be where we don't belong. To stand in guilt.

Synonym // Transgress: *Pro*-gress = to move forward positively; advance.

Trans-gress = to move into a forbidden place.

The idea here is that someone is *caught UP* in a sin they know is wrong, or ought to know it wrong.

For generations, this kind of struggle has been called a **besetting** sin.

It's some moral failure that keeps rearing its ugly head.

We hate it & want to be delivered, but it keeps tripping us up.

It's a battle that often gets the better of us.

We're to **assist** one another with these things.

But take note of those called to this assistance -

you who *are* spiritual restore such a one

Those walking in the Spirit, not those overtaken by sin. Not spiritual trespassers.

If they're walking in the Spirit, their goal is to **restore** --

in a spirit of gentleness,

Not a heavy-handed, abusive berating for being a pathetic example of a Christian.

The goal is to **restore** the struggling believer, not condemn them.

considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Our adversary is accomplished in engineering temptation.

He has long experience in human nature and knows what works.

Pride is one of his most effective tools. → **Where pride goes, ruin follows.**

So he hammers away at our brother or sister who's overtaken by sin.

We heed Paul's call to restore them and they are indeed, marvelously helped.

They thanks us for helping them overcome what overtook them.

We go away *gratified* God used us. > Then a thought suggests we're remarkably spiritual. Special.

True story ...

A man asked to meet with his pastor.

He was a newer member who'd come to the church out of desperation.

He'd been addicted to heroin and decided to give God a last chance to save him.

So he attended church, heard the Gospel, was saved & immediately knew he had to quit the drugs.

A clinic helped him get clean // After that he was in church for every service.

The pastor & people know of his struggle, encouraging him as he grew remarkably in his faith.

He made an appointment with the pastor and when the time came, entered his little office, shared how thankful he was to God, the church and especially the pastor for saving his life.

He placed a packet of heroin on the pastor's desk, saying he'd found it in his stuff & wanted to officially mark the end of his addiction by willingly & literally giving it up.

He asked if the pastor would dispose of it for him.

The pastor said he would. They prayed and the man left.

Before *his* conversion to Christ, that pastor had done heroin // It was yrs since he'd done *any* drugs.

But now, as that heroin sat on his desk a thought came, "What would it be like to try a little now?"

"Just one time – like an experiment to see how much I've changed."

So he used – And that was The End of his pastoring, that church, his marriage.

He lost everything to a full-blown addiction to smack.

The Apostle Paul calls the Family of God to face sin head on & take responsibility for one another.

Those walking in the Spirit are to be pro-active in assisting the struggling.

On Sunday, we considered what the implications are for a local church in order to do that.

It means we neither *ignore* those who are struggling, nor *over-reach* & *condemn* them.

It means we believe God's grace & truth are able to deliver the struggling.

And that we guard one another's dignity.

3 men agreed to meet for prayer on a weekly basis.

After a few weeks they knew they weren't connecting like they needed to.

So one said, "If we shared something we struggled with, it would break down the walls & help our prayer."

The others agreed & the 1st guy said, "I confess I occasionally shop-lift. I know it's wrong but sometimes I stick something in my pocket and walk out of the store. Please pray for me."

The others nodded & said they'd pray.

After a pause the 2nd said, "Your honesty humbles me to admit I visit porn sites on the internet. I know it's wrong and should stop. Pray for *me*."

The 2 then looked at the 3rd, waiting for his confession.

Finally he said, "I have a problem with gossip, & I can't wait to get out of here."

Probably the biggest complaints we hear about Christians is that we're hypocrites.

That is of course a massive generalization, but it speaks a perception that needs to be addressed.

Have we set a standard that doesn't allow failure?

Are people afraid if they let others know their struggle, they'll be an outcast.

So they go to church with a saintly-smile pasted on, never admitting they're need for help.

Then they grow resentful no one *really knows* them.

Soon it's too much keeping a pious front up.

They stop going because it's little more than an empty hour of pretend.

They tire of reciting lines they don't believe anymore.

Let's turn that around and **DO** what Paul says here.

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

Instead of standing at a safe distance watching people blow up, let's move to their side & help.

This practical, tough-minded love & service of one another is the heart of what Jesus said the greatest was =
To love God & others.

Paul now has a word for those who see themselves as too important to help others.

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

If Jesus, God incarnate, would kneel before a bunch of teens & wash their dirty feet, who we think we're too important to serve others?

Jesus touched lepers & played with toddlers.

And what? We won't give a homeless person a burger or work in the nursery?

⁴ But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

Because the translators brought the words straight over from the Greek, this sounds self-congratulatory.

That's not at all what Paul means → He's calling for honest self-evaluation.

But when we evaluate ourselves, we need some standard to compare ourselves to.

The only standard we're to use is Jesus, not one another.

The *proud* tend to only pick those they know they'll come off as superior to when comparing themselves.

The *defeated* only pick those they're vastly inferior to.

There's only One we ought to compare to – The one we're being made into the Image of = Jesus.

While none of us **DO** attain to His stature, the whole time we're considering Him the Spirit IS making us into His image.

And that's something to celebrate!

⁵ For each one shall bear his own load.

We dug into this Sunday >> V5 seems to contradict v2.

Bear one another's burden vs. bear your own load.

The solution lies in the different words for *burden* & *load*.

In v2, *burden* is a weight **too heavy** for one to carry alone.

In v5, *load* refers to something **light** and speaks more to what it is than its weight.

It was used for the pack a soldier carried on campaign.

There are some responsibilities in life only **we** can carry because they're **our** obligation.

You & I are responsible for our spiritual growth. We can't hold someone else responsible for that.

What God's called me to do, I must do. And so for you.

Part of our call in following Christ to love one another.

That means serving each other in the hard work of restoration & burden-bearing.

⁶ Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

Paul reminded them to support those who labor in a ministry of teaching God's Word.

Every believer has a calling.

Some, a few are called to the **work** of full-time ministry.

If people are blessed & growing because of the faithfulness of pastors & teachers, they ought to support them so they can continue to minister.

Preparing sermons & studies isn't easy or quick // It takes time & serious effort to put one together.

You come on Wed spiritually hungry, ready to belly up to a table spread with a good meal.

I don't want to throw down a cold hot-dog in a dried out bun before you.

Or a microwaved frozen pizza; downloading someone else's study & reheating it with a couple new stories.

Of course the pastors and teachers here at CCO are inspired & blessed by other teachers, books, commentaries.

We read & study what they have to say.

But more than anything, we desire for the text itself to be the thing.

We want you to know the Bible, – not what we or someone else says about it.

So first the text work on us; rearranging & editing us.

We wrestle with it, puzzling over hard passages.

What does it mean, & how do we communicate that?

What's God saying in the text before us?

Paul calls the Galatians to support their teachers who are faithful in the Word in **ALL GOOD THINGS**.

That includes financial support but isn't limited to it.

Encourage them with a report on how God uses their teaching in your life.

There are a few people who express their appreciation for nearly every study, every message & service.

Then there are those who've been members for decades, yet have never said a word.

I realize how self-serving this sounds. // But it's what Paul says and what we're doing is simply teaching v by v thru the Bible.

⁷ Do not be deceived,

Paul wouldn't say that unless what he was about to say was a legit challenge.

God is not mocked;

God's not fooled. No one's ever going to pull a fast one over on God.

Paul says all this because he's about to reveal an important truth the devil works overtime trying to hide.

for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Sowing to the flesh means living with a regard dominated by self.

It means living & choosing as though what Satan said to Even in Eden was true; that SHE was God.

Sowing to the Spirit means living with regard to the centrality of God as God.

Actions. Have. Consequences. The law of cause & effect applies equally to both physical & spiritual realms.

Choices prompted by the flesh, by our old fallen sin-nature, ultimately result in loss.

They may provide a *moment* of pleasure, but they always, inevitably lead to ruin.

It's the immediate pleasure-payoff that makes temptation appealing.

But there's a weird *spiritual amnesia* that sets in when we're tempted.

We're attracted to the promised pleasure while forgetting the long-term bitter result.

God's forgiveness of sin removes the guilt that justice demands be punished.

It may help us *resist* temptation to never forget that forgiveness doesn't negate the consequences.

As a youngster, I loved fire. Even when I was 5 I loved to play with matches.

I learned that by peel off a match, and putting it against the striking surface and holding the cover over it, I could start it.

My parents bought a new living room chair for my dad. He LOVED that chair.

It was upholstered in a new fabric called *nagahyde*. Red. Expensive.

One day, I was playing with matches & my mother told me to put them away.

Instead, I went into the living room, knelt in front of dad's chair, and proceeded light matches.

One flared while still between the cover and striker, burning my finger.

So I dropped it onto the seat. Instant hole.

I got a well-deserved whoopin' from Mom for that.

When my dad got home, I assumed I'd get another.

But she made sure he knew I'd already been dealt with.

I apologized to them both and they forgave me.

But we had that chair for many, many yrs.

That hole forever reminded me that the consequences of sin far outweigh the promised fun.

Beside the promise of *pleasure* in temptation is the appeal for what's "easy."

Life is often hard, tiring, confusing, complicated.

So the enemy plays on our desire for things to be *easier*.

But the easy way he suggests ends up not being easy at all.

It ends up being even HARDER = because his goal is to → Steal, Kill, Destroy.

Because we live in a fallen world, with a fallen nature, we tend to follow the path of least resistance.

But choosing to do what's easy now doesn't last. It only makes life harder *later*.

While life seems easier in choosing easier options, it's only temporary.

Experiencing the "hard" in life isn't a matter of *if*, but a matter of *when*.

Realizing hard-*now* and hard-*later* are not equal.

You may have heard this → **GENERALLY** speaking ...

- Eating whatever you want, whenever you want is easy.
But being overweight & out-of-shape is hard // Staying lean & fit is hard. >> Choose your hard.
- Spending whenever you want on whatever you want is easy.
Being in debt is hard // Being financially responsible is hard. >> Choose your hard.
- Letting your emotions run rampant is easy.
Broken & unhealthy relationships is hard // Maintaining healthy relationships is hard. >> Choose your hard.

Consider vs7&8 again --

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Commentary on this tends to focus on the first-half of the v // The last-half is given little space.

So, it's important to bear in mind that *grammatically they're equal*.

Just as sowing to the flesh *degrades* life, sowing to the Spirit *enhances* of it.

It isn't that *corruption* comes from flesh-derived choices, while spiritual-choices are *just nice*.

To the same measure that sowing to the flesh results in the *decomposition*/lit=*de-construction* of life >>

Sowing to the Spirit results in the vitality & growth of life.

Our souls are either being *impoverished* or *improved* by our choices.

So ...

⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

One of the evidences of maturity is the realization and application of what's called delayed gratification.

Young children don't understand this. When they are hungry, they want to eat, even if there's nothing healthy around.

Part of growing up is learning to defer and delay the satisfaction of our *appetites & desires* till there's a something good, instead of something easy.

Doing good doesn't always lead to an immediate reward.

But it does to a later and more long lasting reward.

Paul promises that In God's system of justice, the good we do WILL ultimately be rewarded.

But he has to put a *qualifier* on that & says, "if we do not lose heart" to warn the Galatians what'll happen if they cash in the Gospel of Grace for a Religion of Works.

¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

We ought to be on the lookout for opportunities to do good.

Specially when it comes to showing practical love to our brothers & sisters in Christ.

Now Paul ends the letter with some personal notes.

¹¹ See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!

Earlier he mentioned how when he was there in Galatia, they'd regarded him as so dear, if possible they would have given him their eyes.

That comment, along with what we find in Acts moves scholars to the conclusion Paul had an affliction of the eyes.

There was a variant of malaria in that part of the world causing migraines & eye-problems.

Paul's eye-sight was so poor he wrote using large letters.

Because parchment was expensive and could be hard to come by, that's why Paul mentions in some other letters that he dictated it to a scribe, but then would sign his own name to it, so readers would know it was *really* from him.

Now he repeats what he'd said before.

As we said a couple times; The Galatians weren't the sharpest knife in the drawer.

Paul wanted the Galatians to know that the Judaizers who introduced such abominable falsehoods into their churches didn't really care about helping the Galatians in their relationship with God.

No. Their motive was quite different. They were driven by pride.

They wanted bragging rights on how many Gentiles they convinced to get circumcised.

¹² As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh,

That is, those who think righteousness is attained by works.

these *would* compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

Even though it was still early in the development of Christianity, believers were persecuted.

It came from 2 sources; Jews who rejected the Gospel & Roman officials who regarded any new religion as a threat to their system.

Though Judaism was unique among the pagan religions of the ancient world due to its belief in only one God, because it was ancient, Rome had officially allowed it as a state-approved faith.

But when the Jewish Sanhedrin declared the followers of Jesus as a sect not part of Judaism, Christians came in for persecution by both Jews & Romans.

The quickest way to dodge that label of being a sect was to swing back under the Mosaic Law.

Which the Judaizers tried to use as a selling point for Gentiles on why they ought to get circumcised.

But Paul again makes it clear that Grace & Works don't mix.

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

Paul then speaks with some authority as one who'd been a die-hard advocate for the Law.

Even the most radical pro-circumcision advocate can't in fact keep the Law.

The Law was never meant by God as a path to righteousness.

On the contrary, it was given to make plain our **UN**-righteousness.

It put names on our sins so no one could say, "I'm not a sinner."

After the law came, now people would realize they were more than generic sinners; they were

Thieves, Liars, Idolaters, Adulterers, Murderers, Rebels, Coveters, etc.

The Judaizers hoped that by persuading Gentiles to go under the knife, that would somehow make up for their moral and spiritual shortcomings.

But this would be like a golfer who can't break a hundred.

So he recruits a dozen people to play golf; they buy a set of clubs, a case of balls, & a golf get-up.
Then brags about what a good golfer he is.

14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

God's given us is the ability to exult, to rejoice, to let loose with a burst of enthusiasm.

Because He created us with that capacity, there must be a proper venue, a holy outlet for it.

There is; in praise to Him.

Praise is boasting in God, bragging on Him.

The Cross makes clearly what God is about in loving us.

It speaks of the wisdom, humility, & power of God.

This is why the Cross takes a central place in our worship & praise.

The cross puts everything else in the proper perspective.

When Ulysses was sailing his ship through the Sea of Mermaids, he stopped his men's ears with wax so they would not hear their song which drove men mad with desire.

They then sailed their ships onto the rocks and were drowned.

With their ears plugged, Ulysses lashed himself to the main mast of the ship but left his ears open so he could hear the siren's song but could not get to the wheel.

By tying ourselves to the cross of Christ, it keeps us centered & clear from the traps that would wreck us.

And clinging to the cross God fills our ears with a sweeter song than any the world can sing.

Matt Redman

I have heard so many songs - Listened to a thousand tongues
But there is one - That sounds above them all - The Father's song
You sung it over me and for eternity - It's written on my heart
Heaven's perfect melody - The Creator's symphony
Heaven's perfect mystery - The king of love has sent for me
And now you're singing over me - The Father's song

15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision [Jew nor Gentile] avails anything, but a new creation.

In Christ we're new people where old labels like Jew & Gentile don't matter anymore.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

Paul uses one of the Judaizers' words = Rule, and attaches it to grace.

Our rule isn't *rules*, our ritual is *religious rites*.

It's a new life that makes us a New Israel >>

Not the physical descendants of Jacob, but the spiritual children of Abraham.

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

Paul's done a more than adequate job of unmasking the error & schemes of the false teachers.

He calls the Galatians to not let any more such foolishness find a place among them.

They must remember who & what he was to them - an apostle of the Gospel of Grace.

That calling had cost him dearly in persecution.

But he was more than glad to bear it because he saw his scars as trophies of Christ.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.