

God's Power to Perfect - The Mending Process a paper written for the 2026 Fall Bible Conference at Gulf Coast Baptist Church by Steve Thomas

Introduction

The balance between God working in the believer and the believer yielding to this working is a fascinating thing. God will orchestrate events that are meant to edify the believer, producing a more Christ-like individual, growing him towards the ultimate goal of conformity to the image of Christ. The believer can yield to these providential events and grow in grace, or he can resist and become hardened, leading to chastening from a Loving Father. One of the words to describe God's working in the believer's life is *katartidzo*. In several instances, a believer has made a choice that has sent him back in his growth. This decision has created division among believers or has offended God in some way. God responds by seeking to mend the believer. His purpose is to mature him, growing him, making him look more like Christ. In other instances we see the word used in a situation where the believer has made no obvious poor choice, God is simply bringing him from where he is to where God desires him to be. Not locationally, but in the area of Christian growth. This word is used in several introductions and benedictions of New Testament books, causing us to believe that it accurately describes the process that God utilizes in many believers. It is also present in a foundational verse describing the purpose of the church. It is central to what God is doing in the lives of believers of this time.

Καταρτίζω *Katartizō* - to *complete thoroughly, repair* or *adjust*: - fit, frame, mend, (make) perfect (-ly join together), prepare, restore.

1 Cor 1:10 - perfectly joined together

Paul was facing divisions in the church at Corinth. The sin nature was at work in the Corinthian believers. Poor decisions were bringing damaging results in the church. Paul wrote them two inspired letters dealing with these issues, seeking to set them back on the right path. In the first chapter, right after his introduction Paul gives the reason for writing. There is division in the church and the remedy is for them to be repaired or restored.

The remedy for division is unity. The recipe for unity is the same mind and the same discernment. This "*completes thoroughly*", "*repairs*", or "*adjusts*" the believer as needed. Division or schism is a result (1 Cor 11:18-19 and 1 Cor 12:25) of heresies which is a work of the flesh (Gal 5:20). The word for heresy is a choice or disunion. Peter describes those who bring these divisions in privily. This act denies the Lord which bought them (2 Peter 2:1), and brings destruction. Both Peter and Paul are encouraging believers not to act as the false prophets do and to be like-minded so there does not appear to be a schism or division in the Body of Christ. Believers sometimes get caught up in issues that divide instead of acting as unifying factors. Having the same mind and judgement will protect the believer from the results of division.

Paul calls out those in the house of Chloe, and the fact that many of the believers there were carrying the banner of one apostle or another, and it was causing division. Paul corrects this by drawing their attention to Christ, and away from personalities that were distracting the believers. Christ crucified (1:23) is the center of the gospel and should be the believer's focus, not becoming divided by forming different sects based on personalities of individuals. Paul reminds them that God uses foolish things to reveal Himself so that no flesh can glory in His presence. Paul included himself in this list of foolish things since the example used was Paul, Apollos, and Cephas. Christ is not divided, not the individual or the corporate Body, so believers should not give the impression that it is by dividing unnecessarily.

Matt 4:21 - Mark 1:19 - mended

The verb here gives us a good baseline for what God does in the believer. The fisherman repairs the net so that it can do the job for which it was designed. Nets could tear, become tangled, or suffer wear from repeated use and contact with rocks, weights, and other equipment. Fishermen inspected them and repaired damaged sections so the nets would remain effective. The repair equips the tool to endure the rough seas, the weight of the catch, and any other hardship that would keep the net from performing its purpose. The time of repair often happens while other nets are at work. Fishermen also needed to clean, sort, and prepare their nets for the next outing. This was necessary maintenance, not wasted time. The job is ongoing, but in order to participate the net must be set aside for the repairs. A net can become broken because of use, or from neglect. Believers often get worn down from service, and need to be perfected, restored. The opposite is also true, believers can become broken down from withdrawal from the fight. God cares equally for believers in these situations and will provide a recipe for restoration.

Heb 11:3 - framed

The verb's core sense is to “put into complete order, to arrange, to render fit for function”. We see that the author is attributing everything in sight to an act of God. This takes faith, the theme of this chapter. Taking this meaning along with the repair application in Matthew and Mark, we see a complete use of the word that will be used to describe what is done to believers. God puts them into a complete order. He arranges and adjusts them. He renders them fit for function. The meticulous design in creation from the large to the microscopic reveals the genius of the Creator. “God doesn’t make junk” I have heard it said. Everything everyone has ever learned or will ever discover in the fields of geology, biology, physics, astronomy, and all the other sciences combined originated in the mind of God. God designed this universe to reveal Himself. The same genius that God used to frame the universe is applied as God continues to repair, adjust, and restore His children. Here are some scriptures that show the attention given to the Creation.

Psalm 33:6, 9

“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”

“For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.”

Jeremiah 32:17

“Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee.”

Isaiah 40:26

“Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.”

Psalm 104:24

“O LORD, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.”

Proverbs 3:19

“The LORD by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding hath he established the heavens.”

Proverbs 8:27–29

“When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth.”

Jeremiah 10:12

“He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.”

Psalm 139:14

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”

Psalm 19:1

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.”

Job 39:26–27

“Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south? Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?”

Job 38:4–7

“Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.”

Luke 6:40 perfect

Jesus is delivering the beatitudes which are full of kingdom truth here. The Kingdom from the heavens, essentially the offering to Israel of Jesus's authority, is being offered here which Israel will ultimately reject and lead to the crucifixion of Christ. Jesus tells those listening here that the servant can hope to one day be as complete as his master. The slave being the broken one, as a result of financial ruin or displacement from war or some other disaster. But the slave can hope to be repaired, so as to return to the level of the master who has purchased him. The word

perfect is used here to describe the restoration of the broken man to match that of the master. An excellent picture of what happens when God accomplishes this work in one of His children. The individual is elevated and grown. God sees a deficit, and works to bring about growth and restoration. The need for this attention often goes unnoticed by believers. Saints often are proficient about hiding their issues from other people. God sees the needs of each heart. Believers often miss the work that needs to be done in others, and they even see work that is unnecessary. God does not make these mistakes, He sees the thoughts and intents of each heart.

Matt 21: 16 - perfected

In a stinging rebuke to the religious leaders of His time, Jesus quotes from Psalm 8. The sense of the rebuke is that God will use the weak to perform His bidding if those called will not respond. He uses our word to describe the praise itself.

The word carries at least three layers of force in this moment:

God planned this praise and established it long ago. The children's Hosanna is not noise to be silenced but Scripture being fulfilled in front of the leaders' eyes. To rebuke the children is to stand against what God Himself ordained. The Pharisees are revealing that they stand in opposition to the divine revelation of Jesus as Messiah that the children recognize.

This praise is complete, it needs nothing the leaders could add. This is the sharpest edge of the rebuke. Psalm 8:2 continues, "because of your foes... to still the enemy and the avenger." The "perfected" praise comes from the weak — infants — and it is adequate, even superior: it silences enemies. The implication is stinging: God's praise is fully accomplished by babes, while the learned professionals supply nothing. The praise is complete without them. Again the lines of who believes and who does not are being clearly drawn.

In Matthew's Gospel, "infants" echoes the thanksgiving to the Father in Matthew 11:25: "you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children." The "perfected" praise marks the paradox running through the chapter — God reveals to the lowly what He hides from the proud. What the children confess intuitively ("Son of David") is exactly what the experts with the Scriptures deny. "Perfected" means ordained and brought to completion: God established this praise from the foundations (ordained), and it finds its finished, sufficient expression in the mouths of the humble — so that the religious experts, who should have led it, are exposed as the only ones missing from the choir. The perfection seen here is the act of praise by the vulnerable while those seen as self-sufficient miss out on an opportunity to give praise to the Holy One. This was Israel's folly, to advance their own righteousness, missing the perfect manifestation of righteousness right in front of them. What a missed opportunity to give praise to Jesus!

Rom 9:22 - fitted

Paul is describing the longsuffering of the Lord in this passage, and to illustrate it he brings up those that have been “fitted” or prepared for a specific purpose. Just as the fisherman mends his nets, God fitted those who will ultimately reject Him. We see in the passage that God is predisposed to mercy and long suffering. However, it is the resistance to God that determines the final result of these individuals. The irony is real: the verb that mends, restores, and equips is here turned to its opposite — but its core sense holds. "Fitted" means made complete and suitable for an end: vessels whose settled, finished fitness for judgment stands in contrast to the mercy God actively prepared beforehand — fitted, it seems, by their own long resistance, even under the patience that was inviting them otherwise.

1 Peter 5:10 - make you perfect

Peter has just spent over four chapters reminding the believers that those chosen by God, redeemed by Christ's blood, and born to a living hope should live holy, loving, and faithful lives as exiles — rejoicing to share in Christ's sufferings because they will share in his glory. He finishes his text by reminding them that God has called us to eternal glory *In Christ*, and that after a season of suffering, God will adjust the believer along with other benefits (stablish, strengthen, and settle). He summarizes these thoughts in his benediction pointing the believer to the problem and the solution.

1 Peter is written by the apostle to "elect exiles" scattered across Asia Minor (1 Peter 1:1) — Christians facing social pressure, slander, and the shadow of persecution. The immediate context is the closing charge: humble yourselves, cast your anxiety on God, and be alert, "because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world" (5:6–9). Verse 10 is the benediction that follows — Peter turns from the danger and prays the answer. Verse 11 seals it: "To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen." The believers there were on the receiving end of hostility for belonging to Christ. Peter understood this firsthand. Peter also understood firsthand the attacks from the Evil One mentioned in verses 8-9. The worst part of that, as Peter could attest, was not the pain of the attack but the crushing guilt in the aftermath of failure.

1Pe 5:10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

Suffering breaks, shakes, depletes, and uproots. That is exactly the four-fold damage that the four verbs in the second half answer. Read devotionally, God's response is shaped to the injury: broken → restored/perfected; shaking → stablished; weak → strengthened; unstable → settled. God provides exactly what the believer needs.

The word is *oligon* — small, brief, momentary (Strong's).¹ Peter used it already in 1:6 ("for a little while... grieved by various trials"). The point is not that suffering is trivial; it is that it is temporary when set against something eternal. The only way a whole lifetime of suffering reads as "a little while" is by comparison with eternity — "take time and put it into the grand context of eternity... it is nothing".² The problem's sharpest sting is that we cannot repair it ourselves — a truth Peter, who had once relied on his own strength and failed, knew well.

"the God of all grace" - Not some grace — grace of every kind and measure. The solution begins in God's character, not in our performance. He gives what we could never earn.

"who hath called us" The solution rests on an already-accomplished call. Because the calling is settled in the past, the future is secure.

"unto his eternal glory" Not mere relief, but glory — his own. This is the destination that makes the "little while" small by comparison.

"By (lit. in) Christ" The sphere in which all of this is secured: it is in union with Christ, not in our circumstances.

God acts personally — no intermediary, no outsourcing. The God of all grace does the work himself.

"perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle" four future verbs

καταρτίσει katartisei **restore / perfect** To mend, put in order, make complete — used of mending fishing nets (Matt 4:21), setting a broken bone, and restoring a fallen believer (Gal 6:1) Repairs what is broken; makes whole again

στηρίξει stērixai **confirm / establish / secure** To fix firmly, make fast, set in place — the word Jesus used of Peter, "strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:32) Stabilizes what is shaking; gives firm footing

σθενώσει sthenōsei **strengthen** To infuse strength (from sthenos, strength) — a rare word, found only here in the New Testament Empowers what is weak

θεμελιώσει themeliōsei **establish / ground** To lay a foundation (from themelios, foundation) — to ground and consolidate Grounds what is unstable; gives a foundation that cannot be moved

Notice the order: "after you have suffered a little while." God's provision is not escape from the problem but restoration through and beyond it. I know the believer often wishes that there was a plan of God that did not include suffering. But God uses these things to perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle us.

¹ <https://biblehub.com/greek/3641.htm>

² <https://bethlehem.church/sermon/stand-firm-in-the-true-grace-of-god/>

Something to note in the grammar. These 4 verbs are in the optative mood. This is significant in that this mood expresses the strongest possible wishes concerning an event. However, it is also considered to be the 4th class condition in which the completion is doubtful. Peter is saying, through inspiration, that he has the strongest possible wish that these things will occur, yet he is doubtful that it will happen. Paul expresses confidence that the one that began a good work in the believer will be faithful to complete it (Phil 1:6). This confidence is based on the fact that the complete work of sanctification is assured by predestination and will be completed after our deaths. However when the believer is the one upon whom the work depends, as he aligns his mind with that of Christ's, the future is doubtful. Peter is most assuredly doubtful that the believer will yield and get out of the way while here on earth. As Paul is referring to what will happen when God takes the believer home, removing his sin nature and will from the situation. And because it comes as a benediction — a prayer Peter prays over hurting people — the verse functions as comfort, not instruction. The command to "resist" (5:9) is met by the promise that God himself will do the rebuilding that resistance alone cannot.

Heb 13:21- make you perfect

Hebrews is a letter to Jewish Christians worn down by pressure, tempted to drift back to the old covenant system they had left. The writer's whole argument is better: a better priest, a better sacrifice, a better covenant, a better city. The letter closes with a request for prayer (13:18–19) and then this benediction — a prayer in the style of the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:22–27. And like the request in Peter, grammatically the petition hangs on *katartisai* — an aorist optative, the mood of a prayer-wish: "may he equip you." That matters, because it tells you the whole verse is not a command laid on you but a blessing asked over you.

The writer of Hebrews invokes the power of the resurrection in his benediction. But the idea is similar to Peter's admonition. God is capable of adjusting, repairing, and completing the believer thoroughly. He adds that it is for the purpose of accomplishing God's Will rendering the believer well pleasing in the sight of the Father. These works are distinct from the positional sanctification that occurs at the moment of salvation. These acts are "worked in" the believer through the power and agency of the Godhead. God working in the believer to be well-pleasing to God.

The problem is that the people represented here are unfinished, ill-equipped, and self-insufficient people. They are not capable of perfecting themselves. The work to be done is *thelema*, God's desired will, and believers are not capable in and of themselves to accomplish it. If God has to work in us what is pleasing to him, then the pleasing thing is not something we can manufacture from the outside in. This is the verse conceding that Christian obedience is not self-generated. It is the same logic as Philippians 2:13: "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure".

In a larger contextual sense of the book - the readers were drifting ("we ought to give the more earnest heed... lest at any time we should let them slip," 2:1), dull and immature ("ye are become dull of hearing," 5:11–14), tempted to return to a system that could never perfect the conscience, carrying reproach without the camp, with no continuing city (13:13–14). And 13:9 gives the internal problem in one line — with the KJV's own word: "it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats." The danger is a heart propped up on external rules ("meats") instead of grace. The problem of Hebrews 13 is a worn, unsteady heart that cannot complete the good it knows it should do.

The old covenant's blood could not cleanse, could not perfect, could not give a clear conscience (9:9, 10:1–4). Left to ourselves, the requirement of being "wellpleasing in his sight" is not merely difficult — it is unmeetable.

Put plainly: the problem is inadequacy — not enough goodness, not enough strength, not enough standing, and a will of God that God desires to be done to bring Himself glory.

The Solution is "the God of peace... through the blood of the everlasting covenant" The answer is not a technique. It is a God, described by **four** grounding clauses, and then **two** promises of what he does.

The four grounding clauses

"the God of peace" Peace — shalom, wholeness — is his name here. The God who has made peace (through the covenant blood) is the God who now makes us whole. Redemptive peace is the atmosphere the petition is prayed in. Peace with God, the Peace of God, makes possible peace with men.

"that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus" (The guarantee). The petition asks for power strong enough to change a person; it is grounded in the resurrection, the greatest display of that power (cf. Eph 1:19–20). Not a wish — an appeal to something already done. The KJV's "brought again" = *anagagonta*, "brought up."

"that great shepherd of the sheep" (The relationship) . He is our Shepherd — the fulfillment of Psalm 23, Isaiah 40:11, Ezekiel 34, and Jesus' own "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11).

"Great" heightens it: the Shepherd who is alive.

"through the blood of the everlasting covenant" (The legal basis). Contrast Exodus 24:8's covenant sprinkled with blood that was temporary. This covenant is everlasting, ratified by the blood of Christ, and therefore never obsolete. This is why the petition can be asked at all. (The KJV's "everlasting" = *aiōnios*, "eternal.")

The two promises

"Make you perfect in every good work" *katartisai* (aorist optative) God himself completes, mends, and fits you for the work — with everything needed. The same word 1 Peter 5:10 uses for "restore." What you lack by nature, he supplies whole.

"working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight" *poiōn* (present participle) Continuous action: he keeps working on the inside. *Euaireston* — "fully agreeable, well-pleasing" (Strong's 2101) — is the same term as in 13:16, where doing good and sharing are "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." So the verse says: ***the God-pleasing life is produced in you by God, not merely performed for him.*** This is what so many believers miss about the Christian life. It is not meant to allow us to elevate ourselves, God elevates us graciously because of what He has done and what He is doing.

Peter finishes the book outlining the problem and inviting us to cast our gaze on the solution to the problem - the God of Peace.

I Thess 3:10 - perfect

Sometimes God allows the believer to be separated from other believers. Sometimes individuals experience this separation - whether brought on by circumstances outside of our control or sometimes we choose this separation. In these verses we see that Paul longed to be with the Thessalonians again. He believed that by seeing them face to face that he could perform what was not optimal by letter. The believer cannot forget the value of face to face Christian fellowship.

"Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith" (1 Thess 3:10).

Paul is reaching for something more specific than "make your faith stronger." As we have seen and will see the verb he chooses is *καταρτίζειν* (*katartizai*, from *καταρτίζω*), which means to mend, restore, put in order, equip — the same verb used of mending fishing nets (Matt 4:21), restoring a fallen brother (Gal 6:1), and equipping the saints for ministry (Eph 4:12). The picture is less "add more faith" and more complete the parts of the faith that are missing or out of joint.

The noun means deficiencies, gaps, what is left over and missing — not weakness of quality but incompleteness of formation. The context explains where the gaps came from:

2:17 Paul was "torn away" from them — separated abruptly, "in person not in heart".

2:18 Satan hindered his repeated attempts to return.

3:1–2, 5 He sent Timothy because he could not bear the suspense — had their faith held under persecution? (3:5)

3:6–8 Timothy returned with good news — their faith and love are firm — and only then does Paul pray this.

So the "lacking" is what an abrupt, forced departure left unfinished: areas of teaching he never got to deliver, unsettled questions, wounds from affliction that had not yet been fully addressed.

And we can actually see him filling those gaps in the rest of the letter — sexual holiness (4:1–8), brotherly love and daily work (4:9–12), the dead in Christ and the parousia (4:13–5:11), how to treat leaders and the weak (5:12–15).

The prayer Paul gives here is not just "Lord, grow them" but "let me see them" — Paul believes his personal presence, presence plus teaching plus affection (3:6 "good news of your faith"), is the instrument God uses. Faith is completed through relationship, not at a distance.

It is humble, not insulting. Paul is very complementary of the Thessalonians, more than any other group that he writes to. Coming right after Timothy's glowing report (3:6–7, "now we live, if you are standing fast"), the phrase is not a rebuke. Paul models what he says elsewhere: faith "grows and increases" (2 Thess 1:3) — even a healthy faith has room to be made complete.

The believer's faith is taken as a whole with parts. The plural "deficiencies" suggests faith can be sound in one area and thin in another — firm under persecution (3:7) yet confused about death and the Lord's return (4:13). A visit would equip the whole structure. Paul is saying: my presence, by God's grace, would mend and complete what my forced departure left unfinished in your faith — not because your faith is failing, but because formation in Christ is meant to be finished face-to-face, and I long to be the one God uses to finish it.

Paul is saying: my presence, by God's grace, would mend and complete what my forced departure left unfinished in your faith — not because your faith is failing, but because formation in Christ is meant to be finished face-to-face, and I long to be the one God uses to finish it. There is a powerful nuance here. Paul is suggesting that face to face fellowship enhances, completes, strengthens faith. Some things are possible from a distance, but made so much better with the face to face fellowship that is one of the sacrifices of the believer-priest mentioned in Hebrews 13:16. A faith that is commendable still needs to be strengthened and built up. This process is not only for the carnal believer or the one overtaken in a fault, but for every believer.

2 Cor 13:11- perfect

2 Corinthians is Paul's most personal and most painful letter — written to a church plagued by factions, rival teachers, and open challenge to his authority ("debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults," 12:20). He writes on the eve of a third visit, having warned them to "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith" (13:5). Verse 11 is the letter's final exhortation before the closing benediction (13:14). It is addressed to a fractured, disordered, un-restored community — and every word is fitted to that injury.

In Paul's final benediction to the Corinthian church he uses grammar to illustrate a beautiful point. God's work enables the believer's work. The mending/adjusting is a work done by God, as is the comforting. As we have seen in other passages, the believer is to focus and frame his

mind and to keep peace. The passives guard against moralism; the actives guard against passivity. If everything were passive, sanctification would be mere waiting. If everything were active, unity would be a human project. Paul's grammar holds both: be acted upon by God, then act. Man's reconciliation can only proceed when God's work is received. Too often the believer seeks to "fix" himself or others when only God can repair. The believer is to be like-minded and seek peace.

The problem: a broken, scattered congregation that needs mending it cannot do to itself.

The solution: a God whose character is love and peace, who does the mending (passively, through our submission) and who pledges his presence as the outcome.

The responsibility: attached to both sides. The imperatives are real commands; three of them require our active ongoing effort. But the two middle verbs of the verse — the very things the church most needed — are passive, because those God must do.

The balance in one line: *Rejoice, be restored, be comforted, be of one mind, live in peace — and the God of love and peace will be with you. You must obey; only God can mend; and the mending shows up as his presence.*

This verse is a study in grammatical tension on purpose. Paul issues a run of commands — and then, right in the middle of them, uses a verb form that says the commanded thing is done to you, not by you. That switch is not sloppiness. It is the doctrine of grace written into the syntax. (1) The grammar is the sermon — two commands are passive, so ***the responsibility the verse lays on you is not to fix yourself but to stop resisting the One who does.*** (2) The passive imperatives are surrounded by active ones: God's work and your work are not competitors but companions, and the verse ends with the presence of the God of love and peace as the reward of both. (3) The same verb *katartizō* that God promises in 1 Peter 5:10 and you pray for in Hebrews 13:21 is the verb you are here commanded to let happen — the whole arc of grace in three moods.

God's love is ever present, but to feel the presence, the believer must get out of the way. He must have the right mind set, or he is the winner who experiences constant losing. He is the slave set free that experiences constant bondage. He is the forgiven, redeemed, sanctified believer who constantly experiences guilt, slavery, and the grime of sin.

Gal 6:1 - restore

Paul finishes his book to the Galatians with an admonition on how to live out the spiritual life versus the carnal life. Believers are to bear one another's burdens. However, there is also the advice to bear their own burden. The juxtaposition here can be confusing until we see that the Greek words for burden are different. Some burdens are built for an individual, like a backpack, they can only be carried by them alone. This is a personal responsibility to frame their mind as the mind of Christ. This is the responsibility that falls on the listener of a message to prepare his heart and to listen with a submissive attitude. This is the responsibility to frame his mind on

things above and to retreat to his position In Christ. Other burdens are designed for multiple individuals to carry them at once. The believer can repair/restore the individual that is caught up in a trespass by helping to carry burdens that no one was meant to carry on their own. As we have seen in other passages, this repair is not accomplished by men, but by God. The work of the believer paves the way for the individual to open to God's adjustment.

In Galatians 6:1 Paul really does lay the mending on the believer: the verb there is active, not passive. Where 2 Corinthians 13:11 told the church "let yourself be mended" (passive), Galatians 6:1 tells the spiritual ones "you mend him" (active). God is still the healer — but he heals through his body, and Paul names burden-bearing love as the delivery mechanism.

Paul never lets this become raw human effort. The active command comes wrapped in three restraints:

1. The restorer must be "spiritual." Those led by the Spirit — not merely the zealous, the senior, or the self-appointed. The instrument must be filled with the thing it is dispensing.
2. The mode is "a spirit of meekness" (ἐν πνεύματι πραΰτητος). *Prautēs* is the same fruit of the Spirit listed in 5:23 — so the mending is not a technique the flesh can perform; it is the Spirit's own gentleness operating through a person. Note too that Paul writes this immediately after warning against the legalists' harshness (5:26).
3. The motive is self-watchfulness — "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted" (σκοπῶν σεαυτόν). The believer has a tendency to sin, more than be a help. This should be kept in mind. Pride gets the believer in trouble here and he becomes unusable as a participant in God's work. The restorer stands beside the fallen one, not above him — which is exactly why the next verse warns against thinking yourself "something" (6:3).

So the act is active — but it is Spirit-sourced, gentle, and humble. That is the opposite of self-reliance. Paul commands the believer to restore, in the only place the NT uses *katartizō* as an active command from one person toward another. The command is not a summons to human self-sufficiency: it is Spirit-filled, gentle, and humbled by self-examination. The mechanism is burden-bearing love, which is what "fulfilling the law of Christ" means — and which mirrors the way Christ bore our burden first. Bringing the New Commandment to the practical forefront of Christian living.

Eph 4:12 perfecting

Paul here describes the actual purpose of the church. God gave gifts, so that the church could be perfected. We see the work of God as He works through the church in this passage. God gives the gift, empowers the saint to exercise the gift, then leads the believer in the carrying out of that

process through the Spirit. The believer has the choice to use his gift apart from love (1 Cor 13) or not to use his gift at all. God has made possible the opportunity for the saint to be perfected. He has also ordained a process by which other saints can participate in that process. The verses that we have studied lay out that process beautifully. The result is the believer being transformed into the image of Christ (Eph 4:13). The maturity of the believer is Christ being formed in the believer. Holiness is Christ in the believer. The believer directing his gift towards Ephesians 4:12 gives the purpose of the church and our word is included.

1. The gift is given to the individual for the Body — by Christ himself. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets... and some, pastors and teachers" (4:11). The subject is αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν — "he himself gave." The pastor-teacher is not a self-appointed professional; he is himself a gift, presented by the ascended Christ to the church (the Psalm 68:18 citation in v.8). A gift given to a body exists for that body. Paul states the fact that God uses believers as tools to mend others, as the ground of the whole passage.

2. The pastor/teacher's stated function is exactly the mending we have been studying. Paul's own gloss on *katartismos*: Equipping has the idea of "to put right". God uses the pastor-teacher, but every gifted believer to accomplish this task. So the pastor-teacher's job description is the *katartizō* task — the same mending Galatians 6:1 commands every spiritual believer toward a fallen brother. The office is not a different kind of work; it is the same work, done with a teaching shepherd's steadiness.

3. Paul's uniform doctrine is that every gift is for the Body's profit. It is evident in scripture that every believer is intended by God to be used in this manner.

1 Cor 12:7 — ***"the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal"***

1 Cor 12:12–27 — the body has many members, and ***"the members should have the same care one for another"*** (v.25)

Rom 12:6–8 — gifts are to be used, ***"according as God hath dealt"*** them

1 Pet 4:10 — ***"as good stewards of the manifold grace of God"***

4. The clincher is verse 16 — the Body builds itself. The purpose chain doesn't end with the leaders:

v.12 equip the saints → v.12 for the work of ministry → v.12 for the edifying of the body → v.13 till we all come to the unity of the faith... to a perfect man → v.14 no longer children, tossed to and fro → v.15 speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him → v.16 ***"from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."***

Read that last clause carefully: "*edifying of itself.*" The body edifies itself — by what every joint supplies. The leaders' gift exists to make that happen. The church leadership does not perform this alone, it is equipped to facilitate this and to aid in the training and application of these gifts. The church leadership is not heroic individuality, but a team of firefighters, allowing believers to perform the work that they were equipped to do.

Conclusion

These passages reveal the premise that we gave in the introduction. God is doing the work, and He is allowing believers to participate by exercising their gifts to direct love towards the Body of Christ. This process perfects the saints.