

## LESSON 6

# Restoring the Fallen

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*Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted. Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone considers himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. Let each person examine his own work, and then he can take pride in himself alone, and not compare himself with someone else. For each person will have to carry his own load.*

— Galatians 6:1-5

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*A congregation loves by setting a fallen brother back in place, gently and with its own footing checked, because its gentle Lord carried the heaviest load first.*

## Introduction

TIMOTHY WAS TOLD TO BE STRONG IN THE GRACE THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS, 2 TIMOTHY 2:1, AND THAT STRENGTH WAS MEANT TO MAKE HIM USEFUL. What does usefulness look like once a brother or sister has already fallen?

Galatians is a letter to churches in trouble. False teachers had arrived, the congregations had split into camps, and Paul describes the result plainly: *if you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will be consumed by one another*, Galatians 5:15. Somebody in a church like that is going to sin. When he does, the church will either finish him or fix him.

Paul's instruction for fixing him runs through four things, and this lesson follows them. First, the paragraph the command stands on, which says who *the spiritual* are (5:13-26). Then the command itself: restore, gently, watching your own feet (6:1). Then the law of Christ and the burden it asks the church to carry (6:2). Then the honest weight every man carries alone (6:3-5). Finally, the lesson turns to Christ, who described Himself with the very word Paul uses for handling a fallen brother.

## Galatians 5:13-26 – Who the Spiritual Are

Chapter 6 opens by addressing *you who are spiritual*, and it is easy to hear that as a compliment reserved for the mature few. It is nothing of the kind. Paul has just defined the word.

*I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh*, 5:16. The spiritual person is the one walking by the Spirit. And what does that walk produce? *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*, 5:22-23. Read the eighth word again. Gentleness is fruit. Then the chapter closes: *If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another*, 5:25-26.

The chapter break was added centuries later, and it hides the argument here, because Paul warns against conceit in 5:26 and, in the next breath, tells the spiritual how to handle a fallen brother. The two belong together. A conceited man cannot restore anybody; he can only provoke.

One more verse belongs in chapter 6. *Serve one another through love. For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement: Love your neighbor as yourself*, 5:13-14. Hold that word *fulfilled*. Paul uses it again in 6:2, and the law of Christ is that same command put into practice.

## Who the Spiritual Are

Galatians 5:16-26 · Paul defines the word before he uses it

### WALK

Galatians 5:16

*Walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh.*

The spiritual person is the one walking by the Spirit. Nothing more exclusive than that.

### FRUIT

Galatians 5:22-23

love  
joy  
peace  
patience  
kindness

goodness  
faithfulness  
gentleness  
self-control

Gentleness is fruit. It grows on people walking by the Spirit before it is ever commanded of them.

### KEEP IN STEP

Galatians 5:25-26

*Let us also keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.*

A conceited man cannot restore anybody. He can only provoke.

One more verse to carry into chapter 6. *Serve one another through love. For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement: Love your neighbor as yourself*, Galatians 5:13-14. The word returns in 6:2.

*The chapter break hides the argument: conceit is warned against in 5:26, and restoration is commanded in 6:1.*

## Galatians 6:1 – Overtaken, and Set Right

*If someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing*. Paul assumes it will happen. The word *overtaken* pictures someone caught before he could get away, surprised by a sin that was faster than he was, and the word for *wrongdoing* is a false step off the path.<sup>28</sup> None of that excuses the man, but all of it shapes how the church looks at him. Sin caught him. He is a casualty as well as an offender.

Then the command: *restore such a person*. The verb is *katartizō*, the Gospels' word for mending nets: James and John were in the boat *preparing their nets* when the Lord called them, Matthew 4:21.<sup>29</sup> Doctors used it to describe setting a broken bone, and Paul uses it in 1 Corinthians 1:10 for a split church being put back together. Nobody mends a net by yanking it. Nobody sets a bone in anger. The aim is to get something working again, and the method must match the aim.

Paul says so: *with a gentle spirit*. This is *prautēs*, the fruit named a few verses earlier in 5:23.<sup>30</sup> Gentleness is strength under control. It does not mean the sin is small or the standard has moved; it means the person handling the break is thinking about the brother more than about the sin. It is also a test of motive. Is the restorer after this man's restoration, or his reputation?

Then the sentence turns inward. *Watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted.* The command to restore is plural; the warning is addressed to each one.<sup>31</sup> The man reaching down to lift a brother checks his own footing first, because the ground where a brother slipped is not firm. That check keeps him upright, and it keeps him gentle. A man who knows how close he stands to the same fall does not handle the fallen roughly.

## Mend the Net

Galatians 6:1 • four beats in one verse

|                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>OVERTAKEN</b></p> <p><i>if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing</i></p> <p><b>prolambanō</b><br/>caught before he could get away; a false step</p> | <p><b>RESTORE</b></p> <p><i>restore such a person</i></p> <p><b>katartizō</b><br/>mend a net, set a bone (Matthew 4:21)</p> | <p><b>GENTLE</b></p> <p><i>with a gentle spirit</i></p> <p><b>prautēs</b><br/>the fruit named at 5:23; strength under control</p> | <p><b>WATCH YOURSELF</b></p> <p><i>watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted</i></p> <p><b>skopōn</b><br/>check your own footing first</p> |
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**Restore** is plural, addressed to the congregation. **Watching out** is singular. Paul gives the church the task and each member the caution.

*Nobody mends a net by yanking it, and nobody sets a bone in anger. The method has to match the aim.*

## Galatians 6:2 – The Law of Christ

*Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

The verb is *bastazō*, carry, and it runs through the whole letter: the troubler will carry his own judgment (5:10, where the CSB renders it *will pay the penalty*), carry one another's *burdens* (6:2), carry your own *load* (6:5), and Paul at the close, *I bear on my body the marks of Jesus* (6:17).<sup>32</sup> Carrying is this letter's picture of what love costs.

What is the burden? The word is *baros*, a weight, and the context has just named one: the aftermath of the fall in verse 1. Sin does not stop when it is confessed. It leaves a marriage strained, a reputation dented, a habit that still pulls, a shame that keeps a man in the back row. Restoration is only half finished until somebody helps carry that, which means getting involved in a messy life and staying involved after the first week.

The burden is wider than sin, of course. Grief is a weight, and so are a diagnosis, a prodigal child, or a failed business. A congregation that carries burdens looks for what a brother is carrying before he must set it down in public. And carrying it *fulfills the law of Christ*. Go back to 5:14, where the whole law is *fulfilled* in loving your neighbor. The law of Christ is that same command as Christ Himself kept it: *the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me*, 2:20. He did not admire burdens from a distance. He got under them.

Now we who are strong have an obligation to bear the weaknesses of those without strength, Romans 15:1. It's the same verb. Strength in a church has one job: to be spent on someone weaker.

## One Verb, Four Times: Carry

Galatians 5:10 to 6:17 · bastazō is this letter's picture of what love costs

|                 |                |                                                                              |                                       |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>JUDGMENT</b> | Galatians 5:10 | whoever it is that is confusing you will pay the penalty                     | the troubler will bear his judgment   |
| <b>BURDENS</b>  | Galatians 6:2  | Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. | baros: a weight too heavy for one     |
| <b>LOAD</b>     | Galatians 6:5  | For each person will have to carry his own load.                             | phortion: a pack, assigned to one man |
| <b>MARKS</b>    | Galatians 6:17 | I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.                                        | Paul's own carrying, at the close     |

**baros**  
6:2 · a crushing weight. The aftermath of the fall in verse 1: a strained marriage, a dented name, a habit that still pulls.

**phortion**  
6:5 · a pack. Your obedience, your answer to God, and the command of verse 2 itself. Nobody carries it for you.

Verse 5 does not take back verse 2. The word has changed: a burden crushes, a load is assigned.

## Galatians 6:3-5 – An Honest Weight

*For if anyone considers himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

Why say this here? Because nothing keeps us from carrying another person's burden like the private conviction that we are above it. Conceit was the warning in 5:26; this is the diagnosis. The verb for *deceives himself* is a mind-cheating word, built on the root of the *thinking* words in Romans 12:3 that Lesson 2 traced.<sup>33</sup> A man who thinks past his measure ends up lying to the one person he cannot get away from.

The cure is honest measurement. *Let each person examine his own work*, 6:4. *Examine* is the word for testing metal or coin to find out whether it is genuine, and the test has one subject, his own work, and one thing it rules out, comparison. Measured against the brother who fell, a man always comes out ahead, which is exactly why that measurement is worthless. The only pride Paul allows is the quieter kind that survives an honest look at what God has done through him.

Then verse 5, which sounds like it takes back verse 2: *each person will have to carry his own load*. It does not, because the word has changed. The burden of verse 2 is *baros*, a crushing weight; the load of verse 5 is *phortion*, a pack, the amount assigned to one man for the march. Nobody can carry your pack for you, and nobody was asked to. Your obedience, your stewardship, your answer to God are yours. And every man's pack includes the command of verse 2. Carrying a brother's burden is your load, and refusing it is a way of setting your own pack down.

## Looking to Christ

Paul reached for the word *gentle* because the Lord had already used it of Himself. *Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light,* Matthew 11:28-30. The word the CSB renders *lowly* is *praus*, the very word behind Paul's *gentle spirit* in Galatians 6:1. Restore a fallen man gently, because that is how the Lord met you.

Look at who He is speaking to. The *burdened* are people who have had something heavy loaded onto them, and Jesus knew who was doing the loading. *They tie up heavy loads that are hard to carry and put them on people's shoulders, but they themselves aren't willing to lift a finger to move them,* Matthew 23:4. That is the church Paul fears Galatia will become, and the two words in that verse are the two words of Galatians 6: *loads* is *phortion*, and *heavy* is the adjective built on *baros*. They piled on the weight and carried none of it.

Then the Lord's own word for what He offers: *my burden is light*. That is *phortion* again, the load of 6:5. He assigns a pack too, and it is light because He carries everything else. *He himself took our weaknesses and carried our diseases,* Matthew 8:17. *Carrying the cross by himself, he went out,* John 19:17. Both verbs are *bastazō*. Before Paul ever wrote *carry one another's burdens*, Christ had carried the heaviest one Himself.

So, the law of Christ is a pattern. He was gentle with the overtaken. He never loaded anyone. He carried what would have crushed us. A congregation restoring a fallen brother is doing, in miniature, what its Lord did for every one of them first.

## He Carried It First

Matthew 11:28-30 · the Lord used Paul's words of Himself

**THE LOADERS** *They tie up heavy loads that are hard to carry and put them on people's shoulders, but they themselves aren't willing to lift a finger to move them,* Matthew 23:4. **phortion** and **baros** in one phrase.

### LOWLY

Matthew 11:29

*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart.*

### **praus**

the word behind gentle spirit, Galatians 6:1

### LIGHT

Matthew 11:30

*For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

### **phortion**

the load of Galatians 6:5. He assigns a pack too, and it is light because He carries the rest.

### CARRIED

Matthew 8:17 · John 19:17

*He himself took our weaknesses and carried our diseases. Carrying the cross by himself, he went out.*

### **bastazō**

the verb of Galatians 6:2 and 6:5, with Christ as its subject

The law of Christ is the love command as Christ kept it: *the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me,* Galatians 2:20.

*The law of Christ is a pattern with a Person in it. He was gentle, He never loaded anyone, and He carried what would have crushed us.*

## Conclusion and Application

One line for each point.

- The spiritual are people walking by the Spirit, and gentleness is on the list of what that walk grows (5:16-26).
- Restoration is mending, done gently, by someone watching his own feet (6:1).
- Carrying a brother's burden is how the love command gets fulfilled, because that is how Christ kept it (6:2).
- Honest self-examination kills comparison, and the pack God assigned you includes the man beside you (6:3-5).
- Christ named Himself gentle, carried what would have crushed us, and left a light load: the same law, kept first by Him.

Now bring it home. Somewhere in your congregation a brother has been overtaken, and the church half knows it. Will he be finished or fixed? Which conversation happened about him this week, the one that mended or the one that devoured?

And then the nearer question. What are you carrying that nobody in your congregation has been told about? The command in verse 2 has two ends, and one of them requires you to let a burden be seen. Who has carried something of yours? Whose burden is within your reach right now?

## For Discussion

1. Read Galatians 5:13-26 before 6:1. Who are *the spiritual*? Why does it matter that gentleness appears in the list at 5:23 before it appears as a command in 6:1?
2. Paul assumes someone in the church will be *overtaken*. What does that assumption tell you about how a congregation should prepare for sin among its members, rather than react to it?
3. The verb *restore* is used for mending nets and setting bones. What does the picture rule out? What does it require?

4. Paul commands gentleness without lowering the standard. How can a church be gentle with a fallen brother and still call the sin what it is? Where has that balance gone wrong in your experience, in either direction?
5. *Watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted.* How does an honest sense of your own weakness make you more useful to a fallen brother, rather than less?
6. What burdens does verse 2 have in view? List three that a fallen brother carries after the sin itself is dealt with. Which of the three is your congregation best at helping with? Worst?
7. Explain the difference between the *burden* of 6:2 and the *load* of 6:5. Why do both belong in the same paragraph?
8. Verse 4 rules out comparison. Why does comparing yourself with the brother who fell make you worse at restoring him?
9. Read Matthew 23:4 beside Galatians 6:2. In what ways can a church become the loaders of burdens rather than the carriers?

10. Jesus says *I am lowly and humble in heart*, and the word is the one Paul uses for *gentle* in 6:1. When the Lord restored you, what did His gentleness look like? How should the way you were handled shape the way you handle someone else?

## Looking Ahead

### Lesson 7 – Grace in Speech, Colossians 4:5-6

Nearly everything this lesson asked for happens with words. A brother is restored by what is said to him, and he is devoured the same way. So the next lesson listens to the words themselves. *Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person*, Colossians 4:6. Paul writes that line to a church surrounded by outsiders, and it turns out the rule for speaking to them is the same rule for speaking to one another. Read Colossians 4:2-6 before class, and notice that the command to speak graciously comes right after a command to pray and a plea for an open door. Watch how those three relate to each other.

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<sup>28</sup> *Prolambanō*, "to take beforehand, overtake, surprise," BDAG, s.v. προλαμβάνω. The passive here pictures a person caught by the sin before he could escape it. The noun *paraptōma*, "false step, transgression," BDAG, s.v. παράπτωμα, is the Ephesians 2:1 word for the trespasses in which the Ephesians were once dead.

<sup>29</sup> *Katartizō*, "to put in order, restore, mend," BDAG, s.v. καταρτίζω. It occurs thirteen times in the New Testament, including Matthew 4:21 and Mark 1:19 of nets, 1 Corinthians 1:10 of a divided church being united, Hebrews 13:21 *equip you*, and 1 Peter 5:10, where God Himself is the subject: *the God of all grace ... will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you*. The restoring Paul commands is something God does first.

<sup>30</sup> *Prautēs*, "gentleness, humility, courtesy," BDAG, s.v. πραΰτης, occurs twelve times in the New Testament, including 2 Corinthians 10:1, *the meekness and gentleness of Christ*; 2 Timothy 2:25, in the letter Lesson 5 studied, of instructing opponents; and Colossians 3:12, in the text of Lesson 10. The adjective *praus* is used of Christ at Matthew 11:29 and 21:5.

<sup>31</sup> *Restore* (*katartizete*) is a plural imperative addressed to the congregation; *watching out* (*skopōn*) is a singular participle. Paul gives the church the task and each member the caution.

<sup>32</sup> *Bastazō*, "to carry, bear, endure," BDAG, s.v. βαστάζω, occurs twenty-seven times in the New Testament and four times in Galatians: 5:10; 6:2; 6:5; 6:17. *Baros*, "weight, burden," BDAG, s.v. βάρος, is used of a load too heavy to carry alone; *phortion*, "load, burden," BDAG, s.v. φορτίον, was used of a soldier's pack and a ship's cargo (Acts 27:10). *Phortion* occurs six times in the New Testament: Matthew 11:30; 23:4; Luke 11:46 (twice); Acts 27:10; Galatians 6:5. Matthew 23:4 sets *phortion* beside the cognate adjective *barys*, "heavy," the only place the two roots meet in one phrase.

<sup>33</sup> *Phrenapataō*, "to deceive one's own mind," BDAG, s.v. φρεναπατάω, occurs only here in the New Testament; the related noun *phrenapatēs*, "deceiver," appears at Titus 1:10, in the letter Lesson 9 will open. Both are built on *phrēn*, the mind, the

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root behind the fourfold *phronein* wordplay of Romans 12:3. *Examine* is *dokimazō*, "to test, to prove genuine," BDAG, s.v. δοκιμάζω.