



**Galatians 6:1-5**  
**Connecting with the Family of Faith**

Summary: Walking in the Spirit produces harmonious, helpful, lives and relationships.

Last week we spoke of the difference between the works of the flesh and walking in the Spirit. If you missed, I want to strongly suggest that you go back and catch up, and although I can't think of another time I've said this, I want to encourage those of you who did hear it to go back and listen again as well, because I think there's a lot there for us to chew on.

This morning we're going to pick up where we left off and notice that walking in the Spirit not only makes us better individually, it leads to higher quality relationships as well – that walking in the Spirit helps us do three things if you're taking notes: it leads us to restore those who have wandered, relieve those who are weary, and reflect on ourselves.

So, look back at this passage from last week with me again:

**Galatians 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. 24 And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If these are the words that describe your life, if these words are characteristic of you – how could it not change the way you see yourself and the way you interact with the world?

Which is why, Paul went on to make the conclusion:

**25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. **26** Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Broken human relationships are often found downstream of a broken relationship with God because walking in the Spirit should lead us away from conceit, away from provocation, and away from it envy, and it should lead toward us helping others and developing a right view of ourselves instead, which is what we see as we move into Chapter Six.

**Galatians 6:1** Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you *who are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Now right away you need to know that man is generic for humanity, this isn't instruction for just one gender.

But what does it say? It says people *in the Church* can be overtaken in trespass and need to be restored by other people, *in the Church*. You see, here's what happens: as we are walking in the Spirit, living in the Spirit, trying to follow God's guidance and commands for life, sometimes we get out of step.

Christians often speak of this as backsliding – you're slipping back into old habits and patterns, you're starting to look more like the works of the flesh than the fruit of the Spirit. But it can also be that you're stuck in some area of your life – you're not necessarily sliding back, but you're not progressing forward, you're overtaken in a trespass – either way, you're out of step with God.

You might say to yourself – I feel trapped, I feel stuck, I keep falling back into this, or I can never seem to change. The solution may be for you to invite God into the situation – it could be that you're trying hard, but you're trying alone.

We've been talking about receiving direction from God and then pursuing that with both diligence and dependence. He gives you the spiritual armor, but you enter the fight. There's intense theological tension between your responsibility and God's sovereignty. We don't just sit back and wait for God to fix our situation, but we also don't go running off on our own without Him. Both are in play.

But notice, there's something else happening here – because sometimes, the way God wants to help us is through other Christians, in fact, notice that's who this Scripture is directed at – not the person who's struggling, *but the people around that person*. **Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.**

Now, when it says, **you who are spiritual**, that's not calling on the varsity team to go over and help out the JV squad. No, **you who are spiritual** is you who are living in the Spirit, led by the Spirit, walking in the Spirit – go over and help your brother or sister get in step.

But there's all kinds of danger in that, isn't there? Sometimes the person who's overtaken isn't looking for restoration or help yet. They're not convinced they need it and if you approach them too soon, it's not going to go well at all.

It's also not going to go well if you show up with the wrong attitude. Remember the warning of vs 26: **Let us not become conceited**. Sometimes we see someone struggling and we think we know just how to fix them, we know exactly what they need to hear or do or read. But this is directed to **you who are spiritual** – you who are in step with the Spirit, led by the Spirit, producing the fruit of the Spirit, like love, patience also called long-suffering - kindness, and gentleness – this is what has to characterize any intervention in the other person's life if it's going to be well received.

So can I take a minute and talk especially to parents about this? Because you're regularly in position to see things you feel need to be fixed or corrected in your children. You see them overtaken in a transgression, and you want to step in, which is good, but are you being

spiritual when you do it? Is your intervention in your child's life characterized by love that looks like [the fruit of the Spirit](#) – long-suffering, kind, and gentle? Remember back up in vs 26 again, [let us not provoke one another](#).

You find very similar instruction given to fathers in Ephesians 6:4 – children are told to obey their parents, but fathers are told, don't provoke your children to wrath.

Whenever you intervene in the life of a child, an employee, even a friend or co-worker – remember it's not just what you say, but how you say it, how you approach the issue. There is a time to step in firmly and shut things down with a hard stance. Absolutely, positively. But this passage in Galatians is not talking about that time. This is talking about someone who has been overtaken in a trespass. They've tripped. Took a bad turn. Failed to live up.

We have to remember that's a real category. The flesh is strong. Temptation is strong. Our satanic enemy is real. We're up against a LOT in this life and we need to remember, sometimes people just get spiritually ambushed or slip out of alignment. And before we go ripping into them or writing them off, we need to consider two things. First, what's really happening here – are they being openly flagrant, rebellious, and defiant, or are they just getting beat up by the world, the flesh, and enemy?

And second, are we being spiritual in our response, or are we overtaken ourselves by anger, frustration, envy, conceit, or any of the other works of the flesh that can creep back into our lives and corrupt our relationships? Tom Schreiner's commentary rightly noted: "Our correction of others will smell like conceit unless we sense that we ourselves are deeply flawed and are as prone to sin as anyone."<sup>1</sup>

We need to reflect on that because if my intervention, my reaction, to the other person's conduct weakens or threatens our relationship, then I'm missing the whole purpose of the intervention, which is restoration – to repair and hopefully strengthen their relationship with God and with others. [Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.](#)

The word restore is used in other places to describe medical procedures like setting bones or putting a dislocated limb back into place, it was used to describe the process of mending fishing nets, and even resupplying an army with provisions. In each case you're putting things that were broken or depleted back into working order, getting things back where they belong.

So, when you restore those who have wandered make sure your approach doesn't get in the way, because notice what comes next:

[2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Shreiner, 363.

We are meant to be together – locked into relationship through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Walking in the Spirit leads us directly into relationship with other people, even other people who occasionally slip up and offend, hurt, or embarrass us – and God says, go over there and help them, relieve those who are weary. Oh, and by the way, you’re not always the one helping, there are going to be plenty of times when you’re the one being helped. It’s meant to flow both ways. **Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.**

So what is **the law of Christ**? It’s the great commandment – to love God and love others. God is always calling us into deeper and more substantial relationship with Himself and with others in the Church of Christ – Scripture says we are a family with God as our Father; we’re a body with Christ as our head; we’re individual bricks forming a temple that the Holy Spirit dwells in with Christ as the cornerstone; but over and over again the Scriptures tell us – you’re in this TOGETHER.

And as we go through it together, we discover, there are some loads that are too heavy to carry alone, so God says, bear them together.

But we struggle to accept that. Most of the time we want to handle things ourselves. We don’t want to be a burden to anyone else, we don’t want to show weakness, so we keep things to ourselves because we’re self-sufficient, and we can. You feel the burden, and there are times when you’re just exhausted from carrying it all or keeping it all in or trying so hard.

But it would be doubly embarrassing to open up and reveal that you’re struggling because then not only are you facing the burden, but you’re facing the fact that you couldn’t handle it on your own. And who wants that? In a perfect world you wouldn’t know what I’m struggling with because I’d just be crushing it by myself.

When I can’t do that, I have another option that lets me keep up my reputation and that is, I take it straight to God. After all, Psalm 55 tells me to cast all my cares on Him. 1 Peter 5 tells me the same thing. We even have a sign right outside on the wall with a quote from Jesus who said everyone who was weary and heavy laden should come to Him.

So, sometimes we take our hidden burdens to God and ask for help. And that’s good, we should do that, but what if God then wants to use someone else in the Church to help you? Are you ready for that? Or do you just say, well, I wouldn’t want to be a bother or they’re probably already busy. Too often the fact is we just don’t want to be embarrassed, we don’t want people to know we need help.

But here’s the funny thing – the Bible says you do need help! Look around at church and you’ll see a bunch of men, women, young adults, teens, retirees, singles, widows and widowers, young families, and you know what they all have in common? *They all need help.* And you know what else they have in common? Most of them don’t want to ask or be honest about it but the Bible says, right here, that it’s true: we have burdens and we should be bearing together.

So what are those burdens? Well, they can be all kinds of things – that’s what’s great about this passage, it’s so generic and open-ended – your burdens, or my burdens can be anything, and they tend to change over time. So, at times, I’ve got the strength and space to help you and at times I need your help, it all just depends.

Now, let me start off by saying, I think we do a good job loving one another in this church. I’ve seen signs all over the place of the affection and awareness we have for each other. I watch meals come in and go out to people in need. I watch people take other people’s kids so mom and dad can do whatever is needed. I see people show up and offer rides. Our youth show up and rake people’s lawns. I’ve watched families let other families live with them for a season while housing issues get sorted out.

So let me start by saying, there are some things we do well, and you should be encouraged.

But those things we’re good at sharing and helping each other with – they’re often just the outer ring. They’re mainly things that happen to us. Life events, and, they’re often of a short-term nature. We just had a medical emergency, so we need a hand for a minute. Or this thing was just dropped in my lap and if I could get a hand for a minute, I’ll be able to get it all back under control and move forward again on my own.

Now, those are good things to share, and thank God we do, and we’re there for each other, we’re willing to admit: I could use a hand for a minute.

But what about the burdens we carry on the inside? What about the things happening within us, as opposed to the things that happen to us?

Let’s talk about a few.

It came up last week, so let’s go back to it - what about the burden of sexual brokenness? Whether it was something that happened to you, or something you’re involved in; whether it’s something you can’t break free of, or something you can’t believe your loved one has gotten into; whether it’s someone or something you find yourself attracted to – anything that you know is not God’s best, but it’s happening, or it’s happened, it’s a burden to you. How are you carrying it? Do you dare to share it with anyone?

Here’s the thing – more people are dealing with sexual burdens than you think or are willing to admit. As a pastor I’m still struggling to figure out how to bring it up tactfully and deal with it in church, but it’s all over the place in the culture and chances are almost 100% that there either has been, will be, or is right now, sexual brokenness in your home either in your heart and mind or the heart and mind of someone you love. Who is helping to carry these burdens?

We have people in this church who have been ensnared by pornography. We have people that wrestle with same-sex attraction. We have people that experienced an abortion. We live in a broken world, full of broken people where the lust of the flesh is strong, the pull of

temptation is real, and so is the satanic opposition to our soul – how could we not expect to see any of that in Church, or in our homes?

But brothers and sisters, you are not alone. Someone else has faced what you face. Take your burdens directly to God, yes, but also be open to sharing them, at the right time, in the right way, with the right person in the Church, [and so fulfill the law of Christ](#).

We're not yet where I want to see us be on this issue as a church. It's an area where we can grow in terms of the resources and help we provide. But I still want to encourage you – push us to grow. If you're tired, defeated, and embarrassed because you've been trying to carry your burden on your own, maybe it's because you weren't meant to carry it on your own. Find someone you can talk with.

But, let me put up some boundaries – share the least amount of detail possible. One way I put it is, just tell me we're talking about ice cream; I don't need to know all the flavors and toppings. Just give me a rough outline; I don't need a 4k Ultra High Definition replay of your struggles.

While we're being personal – let's talk about another one – how about racial tensions? Do you know that in this church, in our church, we have people that carry tremendous burdens related to the color of their skin and the topic of racism? And I mean people on both sides of the issue. We have people that feel the burden because they know it first hand by experience, they've had people make comments to them in this church that showed at best ignorance or ambivalence and at worst hostility over matters of skin color and culture or why we would sing a song with Spanish lyrics during worship.

And then we have people who are equally burdened from the other side, they don't see what all the fuss is about. And they can't believe this stuff is getting so much attention in the press. They're afraid BLM is taking over the country and all the woke folk are ruining our institutions. So they're worked up, they're angry, and they think it's not fair. And let's be very clear – the BLM organization, as an entity, has a horrendously anti-Christian foundation that is impossible to ignore.

But the idea of black lives mattering, the ideas that our own brothers and sisters in Christ have a different experience on the basis of the color of their skin, or the fact that someone with any color of skin might feel like an outsider at times in their own country because they speak another language at home, is something we should all be interested in, it's a burden we should all be willing to help carry.

I need you to hear me on this - I'm not interested in being a woke church. I'm not interested in socialism or being known as a social justice warrior. But I'm interested in the burdens people carry and trying to understand whether I should, and how I can, help them carry them, [and so fulfill the love of Christ](#).

I'm also interested in understanding the perspective of those who feel like this country is being stolen from them – understanding the frustration and anger they feel as they watch a

massive cultural shift take place in a very short span of time. Anyone in this church over the age of 50 has a perspective that those of us under that age don't understand - we can't fathom the change they have seen and how disorienting it all must be. It's a burden that we have an obligation to understand, and to help carry, [and so fulfill the love of Christ](#).

There are more burdens we could discuss. We don't have time to explore them all, but I'll name a few. What about political burdens – what about people concerned about the direction the country is headed, or what's just been through? We touched upon it briefly as it relates to race-related issues, but that's only a part of what's happening. We have people, in the church, carrying tremendous, politically-shaped burdens.

And what about issues of the home and heart? What about the burden of raising kids? No one talks to you about hard it is to have multiple little ones running and crawling around the house while you're trying to advance your career, enjoy your marriage, and earn that advanced degree or certificate.

No one tells you in advance about the changes that can happen to a woman's thyroid or her emotions, hormones, and body during and after childbirth, or how it can all flip 180 degrees with the next kid.

What do you go to when you're having problems with your teenager, or when you're a teenager having problems with...well, everything and everyone? Who's there to carry your burdens [and so fulfill the law of Christ](#)?

Last one – where do you go with the burden you feel when you're trying to figure out the meaning and purpose of life? We have teenagers looking at what they see online and asking, "What's the point?" When you see kids your age with millions of followers, making a name for themselves and living what looks like a dream life, how are you ever going to catch up to that? And what is life about really, if you're never going to become that?

Over at the other end of the spectrum we have retirees asking the same question – what's my life about? What am I here for? The world says I'm a dinosaur, or gives me a derogatory "OK, Boomer" when I talk about the past or question the present or future. What am I supposed to do, sit in the corner in a rocking chair wearing my Depends, sipping my Ensure and spending my Social Security check? Or is there more to life?

Meanwhile, we've got millennials and Gen Xers wondering if they'll ever be able to afford a home, or pay off their loans and when their job will be replaced by AI or automation. It's not a pretty world we live in, people are carrying burdens, they're carrying them in the church, and we're supposed to be helping one another *as we walk in the Spirit*.

But here's what gets in the way of us carrying these internal, long-term, burdens – it's the fact that we have our own burdens and issues and sometimes I can't see yours because I'm so busy looking at my own.

And that's why this passage goes on to help us by putting things in perspective.

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

4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load.

Now, if you're paying attention you should have just said, hold up, wait a minute. If we've been talking all this time about helping each other, then why does it say I should just look at me and mine and shoulder my own load?

Well, here's what's happening – God is cutting off the cancerous roots of comparison that grow in our hearts.

Go back up to chapter 5 where we started this morning:

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

One of the biggest sources of frustration and disappointment in our lives is comparison – comparing what I have, or my experience with yours and wondering why I got the short end of the stick, or feeling good about myself because I'm doing better than you.

And God says knock all that off. Don't feel good about yourself because you're better than others. Don't feel bad about yourself because you think you're worse. Examine your own work, look at what God is doing in you – praise Him for the growth you see inside or talk to Him about the struggles you face. Because, remember, we all face judgment alone - God doesn't grade on a curve or class average.

We've all been a given our own load to carry, and we're all tasked with helping each other bear burdens. Those are actually two different words in the original Greek – in verse 2 the burdens you see are a weight, the kind of thing you could move together. The load mentioned here in verse five is more like a backpack – a personal weight of responsibility. There are some things we can and should carry alone, and other burdens we must share – there is both personal responsibility, and collective contribution as we walk in the Spirit.

So, where do we go from here? We pray. We ask God to help us make sense of all this – we ask Him to help us walk in the Spirit, be led by and directed by the Spirit – that we might produce the fruit of the Spirit for His glory and the good of others as we restore those who have wandered, relieve those who are weary, and reflect on ourselves.

Let's pray.

God, would You:

Send people to restore those who are caught in a trespass

Send people to us, if we're the ones who are caught, and help us to hear and receive them when they come

Send someone to help those who are struggling with their burdens  
Help us to see those who need a hand

Show us where we're thinking too much or too little of ourselves in comparison and how to focus on simply looking at You and how we measure up in Christ  
Give us strength to bear carry our own loads with increasing strength and joy