

The Book of Galatians

Lesson 12: Doing Good to All; Bearing Burdens -- Galatians 6:1-10

It is one thing to talk about love in the abstract and another to live in a room with people who fail. Paul has spent a whole chapter describing the fruit of the Spirit, and now he sets that fruit down in the messy middle of real community, where someone gets caught in a sin, where burdens grow too heavy to carry alone, where people get tired of doing good. This is where love either becomes real or stays a nice idea.

Picture the moment a brother or sister stumbles badly, caught in a transgression everyone can see. What happens next reveals everything about a church. Some communities pounce, eager to judge, secretly relieved it was someone else. Paul calls for something harder and far more beautiful: those who are spiritual should move toward the fallen one, not to condemn but to restore, gently, the way you would set a broken bone. And he adds a warning to keep us humble: watch yourself, or you may be the next one caught.

Then Paul gives us one of the most tender commands in all his letters: bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. We were never meant to carry life alone. There are loads too heavy for one set of shoulders, and the family of God exists in part so that no one has to stagger under them by themselves. To get underneath someone else's weight is to do exactly what Jesus did for us.

And running through it all is a law as certain as gravity: we reap what we sow. God is not mocked. A life sown to the flesh brings a harvest of corruption; a life sown to the Spirit brings a harvest of eternal life. So Paul urges us not to grow weary in doing good, because the harvest is coming for those who do not give up. As we read, ask what kind of seed you are scattering, day by day, into the field of your one and only life.

Group Discussion: Paul says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (6:2). What keeps us from both carrying others' burdens and letting others carry ours, and how could our congregation grow into a community where real burden-bearing happens?

Personal Reflection: Paul warns us to watch ourselves even as we help a fallen brother, "lest you too be tempted" (6:1). When you see someone else fail, does your heart move first toward judgment or toward humble, gentle help, and what does that reveal about you?

Read Galatians 6:1-10

Study Questions

1. Paul says, "if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness" (6:1). What is the goal and the manner of dealing with a fellow

believer who has fallen into sin, and how does this differ from how people often respond to others' failures?

2. Paul tells us to keep watch on ourselves when we help the fallen, lest we too be tempted. When someone around you stumbles, does your first instinct tend toward judgment, gossip, or gentle restoration, and what would it take to grow in the latter?
3. Paul commands, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (6:2). What is the law of Christ, and how does the practical work of carrying one another's burdens actually fulfill it?
4. Paul calls for mutual burden-bearing. Are you more comfortable helping carry others' burdens than letting others help carry yours, and why is it often so hard to admit that we need help?
5. Paul says "each will have to bear his own load" (6:5), just after saying we should bear one another's burdens (6:2). How do shared burden-bearing and personal responsibility fit together rather than contradict each other?
6. Paul warns, "if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself," and tells each to "test his own work" rather than compare with others (6:3-4). Where are you tempted to measure yourself by comparison with others, and how would honestly testing your own work before God change that?
7. Paul says, "let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches" (6:6). What does this teach about a believer's responsibility to support the teaching of God's word and those who give themselves to ministry?
8. Paul urges, "let us not grow weary of doing good" (6:9). In what area of doing good are you most tempted to grow weary or give up right now, and what would help you persevere?
9. Paul gives a solemn principle: "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap ... the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life," adding that we will reap "if we do not give up" (6:7-9). What does the law of sowing and reaping teach about how seriously our daily choices matter, and how does it connect perseverance in sowing to the Spirit with reaping eternal life?
10. Look back across the whole passage. Paul calls us to do good to everyone, "and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (6:10). Name one specific way Jesus is calling you, this week, to sow to the Spirit by doing good to someone, beginning with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Matthew 18:15-17, the path of seeking to restore a brother; James 5:19-20, turning a wanderer back from sin; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, sowing generously and cheerfully; Hebrews 12:1-3, running with endurance and not growing weary; 1 Corinthians 9:11-14, the support of those who labor in the gospel.