

Galatians 6

Paul now explains various responsibilities that Christians have to one another. How does Paul recommend dealing with someone caught in sin (v. 1)? Restore him gently. Paul is not referring to a determined, hardened sinner. The idea is of someone who has fallen into sin, finding themselves trapped in a place they never thought they would be. "Sin" here is not referring to a habitual action, but an isolated act. Peter was overtaken by a temptation in the courtyard of the high priest and, before he realized what he was doing, he had sinned.¹ This plan of action stands in stark contrast to the Law which called down judgment on offenders.

What conditions should accompany restoration (v. 1)? Restoration must always be done in a spirit of gentleness, not by fledglings in the faith, but by the spiritually mature, with full understanding of *our own* weakness and corruption. Elsewhere the Greek word for restore, *katartizo*, refers to mending nets (Matthew 4:21) and setting a fractured or dislocated bone. The Lord Jesus restored Peter after he had stumbled egregiously. The picture here is helping such a one to his or her feet. A repentant heart should be a hallmark of the one being restored.

What does Paul direct us to do (v. 2)? v. 1 deals with restoration, and v. 2 with prevention. We fulfill the Law of Christ when we "*carry each other burdens*," which we can do by praying and perhaps counseling together. Human friendship, in which we bear one another's burdens, is part of the purpose of God for his people. So, we should not keep our burdens to ourselves, but rather seek a Christian friend who will help us to bear them.

What is the "law of Christ?" It boils down to loving God wholeheartedly and your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:36-40). Christians no longer live under the Mosaic Law; we live under a new code, the law of Christ (5:1).² Paul is helping his readers realize that freedom from the Mosaic Law does not mean freedom from all responsibility.

What sin or character defect is Paul referring to in v. 3? Pride. Pride prevents us from bearing one another's burdens and fulfilling the law of Christ. It is often pride that keeps us from ministering to one another as we should. It also stifles ministry in another way. Out of pride, people will refuse to *receive* help when someone else reaches out to help bear their burden.

What is the end result of pride (v. 3)? Deception. There are few things more self-deceptive than *pride*. To be proud is to be blind – blind to the freely given favor and gifts of God, blind to our sin and depravity, blind to the good in others, and blind to the foolishness of self-centeredness.

What is our personal responsibility (v. 4)? Instead of deceiving ourselves, we must conduct a careful and a sober self-examination of our own actions. We must take our spiritual pulse beat on a regular basis. And we should avoid comparing ourselves to others. Whenever we do, we usually compare ourselves to those who are lower on the spirituality ladder which enables us to feel good about where we are. Taking "*pride in himself*" means having joy at your own walk with the Lord. It is not the same as sinful pride.

What is Paul's point in v. 5? Every Christian is responsible to carry his own weight. We all have a load to bear, but it is comparatively light (Matthew 11:30). The burden(s) in verse 2 is an excessive burden. The "load" in verse 5 is our normal burden of responsibility.³

What is the responsibility of one who has received instruction (v. 6)? Those who are taught are expected to share with those who teach them which includes providing for their physical, financial and temporal needs (1 Corinthians 9:11, 14; Philippians 4:10-19).⁴ This is a basic, though sometimes neglected spiritual principle.

For those of who might be reluctant to share, what does Paul remind them of (v. 7)? God's principle of sowing and reaping. Their giving (to him who teaches) isn't like throwing away money; it is like planting seeds, and from whatever seeds a man sows, from them he will also reap a harvest. A farmer reaps the same as he has sown. If he plants wheat, wheat comes up. In the same way, if we sow to the flesh, the flesh will increase in size and strength. Each sower decides what his harvest will be.

What are the two results from the different motives for sowing (v. 8)? He who sows to please his sinful nature will reap destruction and he who sows to please the Spirit will reap eternal life. Eternal life is the present possession of every believer now (John 3:36) as well as at the end of his life here on earth (Romans 6:22).

What is the condition required for receiving the reward (v. 9)? We must hang on and not grow weary while doing good. The word picture is that of a bowstring that has become unstrung. Losing heart is what causes this sad

state. Giving up mentally leads to growing faint spiritually. And we need patience because the harvest does not come immediately after the seeds are sown.

What is the responsibility of v. 10? Christians have a responsibility to "*do good to all people*," including the unsaved. But we have a special responsibility to other Christians ("*those who belong to the family of believers*") as we "have opportunity," i.e. when we hear of a need and have the resources to help. Just like in a home, family needs come first, then those of the neighbors.

What were the motives of the Judaizers/legalists (vv. 12) They wanted to make a good outward impression by building up a large group of followers. They would look good and they could boast about their converts if they could convince the Galatian to be circumcised. Even as David had boasted in the two hundred foreskins of the Philistines he had killed, so these legalists wanted the allegiance of these Gentiles primarily as a trophy.

How could they "avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ" (v. 13)? The unsaved Jews, who were opposed to Christianity, would not likely persecute the legalists because they both held onto circumcision as necessary for salvation. "The cross of Christ" (v. 12) stands here for the whole doctrine of justification by faith alone that Paul had been defending in this epistle.⁵

There was nothing wrong with a Gentile being circumcised. There was everything wrong in *compelling* a Gentile to be circumcised, saying he could not be right with God without coming under the law of Moses.

What were Paul's motives (vv. 14)? Paul's heart cared nothing for the glory that came from fame, the glory that came from riches nor for the glory that came from status and power. He only cared about the glory of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What did he mean by the "world" and what was his relationship with it (v. 14)? The world was not the global earth; nor was it the mass of humanity (which God Himself loves ([John 3:16](#))). Instead, it was the community of sinful humanity that is united in rebellion against God. Paul considers himself dead/crucified to that world. The world could not have any influence over Paul if he were dead, and Paul could not respond to any influence from it if he were dead to the world. Because of the Cross, the world system had lost its appeal to Paul.

What was important and unimportant to Paul (v. 15)? Circumcision was unimportant. Only being a "*new creation*" in Christ mattered ([2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). Circumcision was a ritual that the Jews had observed for centuries. It played a major role in their daily life as well as their religious heritage. Circumcision was the foundation of Judaism. Now Paul sweeps it away with a flourish – circumcision counts for nothing! But then he goes on to say that uncircumcision is of no value either. What really counts is a new creation.⁶

How do we get to be a new creation (v. 15)? We don't make ourselves a new creation; God does it in us. At its very root, Christianity is something God does in us, not something we do for God.

What did Paul wish for "all who follow this "rule," i.e. faith apart from works (v. 16)? The double blessing of peace and mercy. They are those who are the true Israel of God, the descendants of Abraham according to faith. This title refers to saved Jews.

What was Paul's appeal in closing (v. 17)? Paul wanted to end the legalism/circumcision controversy that had caused him so much trouble. He cited the scars he had received as the target of persecution, in contrast to circumcision, as his final proof of his devotion to Christ. These scars contrast strikingly with the ritualistic and now meaningless mark (circumcision) the legalizers wished to impose on the Galatians.⁷

What was Paul's final wish for the Galatians (v. 18)? Grace. That they would know the grace of God and walk in a grace relationship with God instead of the legal, performance-based relationship that endangered them so.

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Galatians, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 88

² Ibid. p. 90

³ Ibid. p. 91

⁴ Ibid. p. 92

⁵ Ibid. p. 95

⁶ Believer's Bible Commentary, William MacDonald, 1995 Edition, (published by Thomas Nelson Publishers), p. 1897

⁷ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Galatians, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 98