

Mini Study – Galatians 6

Bear one another's burdens

Slaves of one another in love. That is what we have been freed in Christ to be. Not serving ourselves, but in love bearing one another's burden and so fulfilling the law of Christ. A life of love now possible for all who are in Christ through the power of the Spirit who dwells in us.

Let's turn now, in this our final study in our mini-study series on Galatians, to look at this in more detail.

OBSERVE

READ Galatians 5:25-6:5 and:

- underline every reference to *Spirit*.
- circle every reference to *bear*.

²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. **6** Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ²Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵For each will have to bear his own load.

KEEP IN STEP WITH – STRONGS 4748 (stoicheō) - to proceed in a row as the march of a soldier, to direct one's life.

DISCUSS

5:25 – What are we who live by the Spirit to do?

5:26-6:1a – How are we exhorted to keep in step with the Spirit?

v26 -

v6:1a -

RESTORE – STRONGS 2675 – (katartizō) to mend or rebuild.

GENTLENESS –the word gentleness / meekness in the Bible carries the meaning of strength under control – one example of which is not responding harshly to others' failures, but instead encouraging and helping them to grow in Christlikeness through speaking the truth in love and living in accordance with it too (Eph. 4:15-16).

READ Matthew 12:20a (speaking of the *gentleness* of Jesus):

²⁰a bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not quench,

BRUISED REED - ‘...those brought to see their sin, which bruises most of all...’

SMOULDERING WICK - ‘[those in whom] there is but a little measure of grace, and that little mixed with much corruption...’ – Richard Sibbes.

V20a – What beautiful picture are we given of how Jesus deals with our sinful failures?

RESPOND

Who is the Spirit prompting you to respond with gentleness to?

DISCUSS

V6:1b – What must we do as we restore? Why? What kind of attitude does this require?

6:2a – What is gently restoring a brother or sister an example of?

What other types of burdens can we bear for one another?

6:2b – What happens as we do so?

LAW OF CHRIST – “The “law of Christ” is equivalent to the law of love (5:13-14), so that when believers carry the burdens of others, they behave as Christ did and fulfill his law. In this sense Christ’s life and death also become the paradigm, exemplification, and explanation of love.” – *Thomas Schreiner*

RESPOND

Whose burden is the Spirit directing you to carry?

DISCUSS

6:3 – How is the conceited person deceived?

How might such a person respond to the failures or successes of others? Who are they serving?

6:4a – What antidote to pride are we given?

6:4b – What reason does Paul give for doing so?

READ Galatians 6:14-15:

¹⁴But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

DISCUSS

How can we now live as new creations who serve one another in love?

Who then should we boast in for any spiritual fruitfulness in our lives?

6:5 – Ultimately, what will we each have to bear responsibility to God for on the day of judgment?

“There is one burden that we cannot share...and that is our responsibility to God on the day of judgment. On that day you cannot carry my pack and I cannot carry yours.” – John Stott

REFLECT

These are challenging verses – aren't they? Ones that cut right to the heart of our attitude toward one another. Not being spiritual 'big heads' who look down upon the failures nor envious of the successes of others, who like emotional 'black holes' draw others in to serve our own interests and glory.

Rather, as those justified in Christ, and beloved children of the Father, we are now free to serve one another in love. Those who through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ have been delivered from the present evil age and empowered by the Spirit to live as new creations. All to the glory of God.

This is freedom! This is Good News!