

Galatians Chapter 6

Galatians 6:1 "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

“Overtaken”:

This word may imply the person was actually seen committing the sin or that he was caught or snared by the sin itself.

“In a fault” (or, “by some transgression”):

The sin in view is a deliberate overstepping of divine boundaries.

“Ye which are spiritual”:

This refers to those who walk by the Spirit (5:16), in whose life the fruit of the Spirit is found (see 5:22-23).

The “man” who is “overtaken” by willful sin is also a Christian, but he has not been walking by the Spirit.

Those believers who are walking in the Spirit (see note on 5:16), filled with the Spirit (see notes on Eph. 5:18-20; Col. 3:16), and evidencing the fruit of the Spirit (see notes on 5:22-23).

“Restore”:

sometimes used metaphorically of settling disputes or arguments, it literally means “to mend” or “repair,” and was used of setting a broken bone or repairing a dislocated limb (Heb. 12:12-13; see notes on Rom. 15:1; 1 Thess. 5:14-15).

The spiritual brethren are to “restore” the erring brother.

This word is used of mending fishing nets (Matt. 4:21) and of people mending their ways (see 2 Cor. 13:11).

Restore means therefore to bring a person back to his former moral condition.

The words were also used in secular Greek for the setting of broken bones, which has to be done very gently.

“Spirit of meekness” (see note on 5:23; 2 Cor. 2:7; 2 Thess. 3:15).

So, the church is to restore the lapsed “in the spirit of meekness” (i.e., gentleness).

The grievous and sensitive wounds caused by sin must be handled delicately.

“Considering thyself”:

Meaning those restoring the fallen must individually keep constant watch over their own lives.

In other words, a spiritual man can be morally dragged down as he contends with the sins of this carnal counterpart.

Also observing, as the Greek form strongly emphasizes a continual, diligent attentiveness.

This is speaking of the brothers and sisters in Christ.

Just as in the parable of the 100 sheep, where one was lost was speaking of Christians.

The one that was lost was a sheep the same as the ninety and nine that did not get lost.

It is (not impossible), for a Christian to make a mistake and sin in the process.

It is very important for that person to be restored to the group as soon as possible.

If they repent of the sin, we are not to keep on bringing it up, or remembering it.

These who are stronger in their walk, because of the Spirit of God within them, should lead the way in forgiving them.

Who knows, the next temptation that comes, may be this spiritual man's.

The person who sinned, must repent and turn from that sin.

He cannot go on committing that same sin.

Galatians 6:2 "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

“Bear ye one another’s burdens”:

“Burdens” are extra heavy loads, which here represent difficulties or problems people have trouble dealing with.

“Bear”:

This connotes carrying something with endurance.

Contextually, the “burdens” are the moral faults of verse 1, but can have wider application to other kinds of burdens.

“The law of Christ”:

This is the sum of all of Jesus’ teachings and desires; it is Christianity itself.

This brings to mind the black man who carried the cross for Jesus.

We must carry the burdens of those around us, if we are Christians.

The law of Christ, spoken of here, is love your neighbor as yourself.

The load can be much lighter, if we help carry that load.

“The law of Christ”:

The law of love which fulfills the entire law (see notes on 5:14; John 13:34; Rom. 13:8, 10).

Galatians 6:3 "For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."

“For”:

This gives a reason to bear the burdens of others (verse 2).

When “a man” [thinks] “himself” to be morally above reproach, he has no sympathy with the flaws of others.

The mutual bearing of others’ moral burdens which helps a person retain a sober, ethical estimate of himself.

This is speaking of a conceited person.

Paul, is perhaps speaking of some of the Galatians, because of their being Jews who thought themselves to better than others.

The thing that would make them nothing in this case, is the fact that they are still looking to the law instead of grace.

Let others elevate you up.

It looks conceited, if you do it yourself.

Galatians 6:4 "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

“Prove”:

Literally “to approve something after testing it.”

Believers first must be sure their lives are right with God before giving spiritual help to others (Matt. 7:3-5).

“Then shall he have rejoicing”:

If a believer rejoices or boasts, it should be only boasting in the Lord for what God has done in him (2 Cor. 12:12-18), not for what he supposedly has accomplished compared to other believers (see note on 1 Cor. 1:30-31).

The self-delusion of (verse 3), is caused by an inflated comparison of one’s moral life with the known faults of his Christian brother.

To prevent this, “every man” is to “prove” (examine), “his own work” (i.e., life, virtues, deeds).

Then his “rejoicing” shall be “in himself alone, and not in another:”

Joy comes not from comparing one’s moral strengths with the weaknesses of others, but in realizing that one measures up to God’s standard by God’s help.

If your work is of God, it will prove itself.

Do your best, work hard, and know in your heart that you are doing the very best that you can.

Regardless of the outcome, you can be proud within yourself that you have done your best.

Galatians 6:5 "For every man shall bear his own burden."

“Bear his own burden”:

This is not a contradiction to (verse 2).

“Load” has no connotation of difficulty; it refers to life’s routine obligations and each believer’s ministry calling (Matt. 11:30; 1 Cor. 3:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:10).

God requires faithfulness in meeting those responsibilities.

In justifying “and not in another” (of verse 4).

“For”:

This tells why one must not compare himself with others.

Each believer must shoulder “his own burden” (i.e., that specific task and responsibility divinely assigned an individual).

Instead of comparing one's virtues with the moral blemishes of another, one is to only compare himself with his own achievements against the backdrop of the responsibilities that have been given him by God.

No contradiction exists between (verses 2 and 5).

The Greek work for burdens (in verse 2), is baros, there meaning moral weakness, a burden too heavy for a person to bear alone.

The word for burden (in verse 5), is phortion, meaning a personal responsibility that can and should be borne by the individual.

Whatever job God gave you to do, it is yours alone.

You should not try to push off your work on someone else.

You are the best for the job God gave you to do.

Galatians 6:6 "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

"Communicate":

Or, share:

Christians are to share their material possessions with their teachers.

Ministers must of necessity be compensated for the loss of income sustained in fulfilling their pastoral responsibilities.

"All good things":

Although this expression could refer to material compensation, the context suggest that Paul is referring to the spiritually and morally excellent things learned from the Word, in which they fellowship together.

Paul uses this same term to describe the gospel (Rom. 10:15; Heb. 9:11).

This is saying, if God has shown you something about the Word of God, you are to share it with other teachers, so they can teach the truth also.

This is also saying, that those taught are to help with the day to day needs of the teacher.

Galatians 6:7 "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

“Mocked” (outwitted, outfoxed):

To disobey God’s commands and then escape divine punishment would be to outwit God, thus making a mockery of Him and His Word.

“Soweth”:

This means (does; practices).

“Reap”:

This could also be said (be requited; recompensed).

Contextually, the Galatians cannot disregard the command to support their Christian instructors (verse 6), and escape divine discipline.

“Whatsoever a man soweth ... reap”:

This agricultural principle, applied metaphorically to the moral and spiritual realm, is universally true (Job 4:8; Prov. 1:31-33; Hos. 8:7; 10:12).

This law is a form of God’s wrath (see note on Rom. 1:18).

You cannot plant an English pea, and get a stalk of corn.

Whatever you sow, is what your crop will be.

On judgment day, we will receive according to what we sowed on this earth.

God is keeping the account book.

We cannot fool Him.

Galatians 6:8 "For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

“For”:

This expands the principle of verse 7 to a wider application.

“Soweth to his flesh”:

This means to conduct oneself by the evil dictates and desires of the sinful nature, thus practicing the deeds of the flesh (5:19-21).

“Soweth to his flesh”:

See notes on 5:16-19; Rom. 7:18; 8:23.

Here it means pandering to the flesh's evil desires.

“Corruption”:

From the Greek word for degeneration, as in decaying food.

Sin always corrupts and, when left unchecked, always makes a person progressively worse in character (Rom. 6:23).

Such a person “shall ... reap corruption,” that is, be requited with eternal destruction.

“Soweth to the Spirit”:

This means to live by His enabling help in accord with the Spirit's prompting and leading, thus cultivating the fruit of (5:22-23).

Such a person “shall ... reap life everlasting”:

That is, be rewarded with eternal life.

To walk by the Holy Spirit (see notes on 5:16-18; Eph. 5:18; John 8:31; 15:7; Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 2:6; 3:2).

With whatever measure we measure to others, God will measure back to us.

A person who lives for self will die lonely.

The actions we take in this life toward others are like a seed sown that we will reap in heaven.

Jesus said; in as much as you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me.

A Christian's rewards are not for this world, but are for heaven.

If we live a fleshly life, we will reap the whirlwind.

Matthew 19:29 "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

Sowing good here on the earth means that we are storing up treasures in heaven.

Whatever we plant is the crop we will get.

Galatians 6:9 "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Since it is only a matter of time before the Christian shall "reap" divine reward (verse 8), then he is "not" to "be weary in well doing."

1 Corinthians 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

The truth of the matter is that Christians never seem to tire of doing good.

That is what separates them from the rest of the world.

The world is selfish.

Christians are thoughtful of others.

When the Lord returns for His own, we must be found working to get one more saved, before it is too late.

I have said it before, but it bears repeating, the only way some people know Jesus is by seeing Him in the actions of His believers.

Galatians 6:10 "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all [men], especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

"Opportunity":

This Greek word refers to a distinct, fixed time period, rather than occasional moments.

Paul's point is that the believer's entire life provides the unique privilege by which he can serve others in Christ's name.

Owing to the certainty of being divinely rewarded (verses 8-9); believers are urged to seize each "opportunity" to "do good."

Contextually, doing good refers to the ministry of restoration (verse 1), bearing one another's burdens (verse 2), supporting teachers (verse 6), sowing to (living in accord with the leading of), the Spirit (verse 8), and general perseverance (verse 9).

Believers are to minister first "unto them who are of the household of faith" (Christians), and second, to the rest of the world.

"Especially ... the household of faith":

Our love for fellow Christians is the primary test of our love for God (see notes on John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:10-13; 1 John 4:21).

You are not responsible for all the people in the world who have a problem, but you are responsible to help those whose needs come to your attention.

If a neighbor is out of food, take him some food.

We are supposed to help all who we come into contact with, who have a need.

This says, especially your Christian brothers and sisters.

If God has blessed you with more than is necessary for you to live on, share with someone who is less fortunate.

Be quick to distribute to those in need.

It is better to give them an opportunity, then it is to give them a hand-out.

They keep their self-esteem when you give them an opportunity.

Verses 11-17

This closing section of the letter is Paul's final rhetorical attack against the Judaizers' doctrine (see notes on 1:7-9), and motives.

It is also a positive statement of his own godly motives in preaching the true gospel.

Galatians 6:11 "Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand."

"See how large a letter":

This can be interpreted in two ways:

- (1) Paul's poor eyesight forced him to use large letters (4:13, 15); or
- (2) Instead of the normal cursive style of writing used by professional scribes, he used the large, block letters (frequently employed in public notices), to emphasize the letter's content rather than its form.

It was a visible picture that contrasted his concern with the content of the gospel for the Judaizers' only concern: appearances.

The expression served as a transition to his concluding remarks.

“I have written ... mine own hand”:

The verse could be rendered:

“Note with what large letters I am writing you with my own hand.”

As a good translation of the Greek verb, this indicates that Paul wrote the entire letter by his own hand, not merely penning a brief statement at the end of dictation to a secretary as he did other times (1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17).

Paul wrote this letter himself to make sure the Galatians knew he, not some forger, was writing it, and to personalize the document, given the importance and severity of its contents.

Many times, the actual writing of Paul's letters was done by someone else, but he says here, that he wrote this himself.

Galatians 6:12 "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ."

Fair show”:

The Judaizers were motivated by religious pride and wanted to impress others with their external piety (Matt. 6:1-7).

“Constrain you to be circumcised”:

See notes on 2:3; 5:2-6.

“Should suffer persecution”:

The Judaizers were more concerned about their personal safety than correct doctrine.

By adhering more to the Mosaic law than to the gospel of Jesus, they had hoped to avoid social and financial exclusion from other Jews and maintain their protected status as Jews within the Roman Empire.

The Judaizers want to make a good outward appearance (“make a fair show in the flesh”), by circumcising the readers.

The reason is so that they will not “suffer persecution” caused by the gospel.

The gospel was somewhat tolerable for orthodox Jews if accompanied by circumcision and obedience to their law.

So the Judaizers, wanting to hold to the gospel, can disarm Jewish hostility by preaching both grace and law.

The legalists have their own interest at heart, not the Galatians'.

These Judaizers wanted to look good to their Jewish friends.

This circumcising is a show for flesh worship.

It appears that even though they have proclaimed Jesus as their Savior, they are not willing to suffer the ridicule from their Jewish brothers.

They were not willing to suffer for Christ.

Galatians 6:13 "For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh."

“Circumcised”:

Specifically, in this case, the Judaizers (see notes on 2:7-8; Acts 10:45; 11:2).

“Glory in your flesh”:

They zealously worked to win Gentile converts to the law so they could brag about their effective proselytizing (Matt. 23:15).

They are trying to prove how religious they are by telling that they are circumcised.

They do not even keep the law themselves, but want to impose this custom on others to show their religion.

They thought they might avoid being classed with the Christians, if they themselves continued to practice circumcising.

They were trying to stay in both camps.

They wanted everlasting life that Christianity offered, but they kept this ordinance, so as not to lose their place with the Jews.

Galatians 6:14 "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

“Save in the cross”:

Paul glories and rejoices in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:1-3; 1 Cor. 2:2; 1 Pet. 2:4).

Unlike the Judaizers, who brag about their religious accomplishments, Paul takes pleasure only in Jesus' atonement and all the spiritual blessings it brings.

This is the world system.

Paul has renounced his old life and all its ways, along with its values and religious accomplishments in which he used to boast.

“The world”:

The evil, satanic system (see notes on 1 John 2:15-16; 5:19).

“Crucified unto me, and I unto the world”:

The world is spiritually dead to believers, and they are dead to the world (see notes on 2:20; Rom. 6:2-10; 1 John 5:4-5; Phil. 3:20-21).

Paul was not interested in anything bringing him personal glory.

Paul was rejoicing in the salvation that he received by Jesus when He gave Himself on the cross.

Paul is saying that he glories in his salvation.

Nothing in this world offered anything to Paul.

He was waiting for that glorious day in heaven with Jesus.

Paul was saying; I am in the world, but this world means nothing to me.

My home is in heaven.

Paul, like all believers, had the hope of the resurrection.

Galatians 6:15 "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

“Circumcision ... nor uncircumcision”:

See notes on 5:6.

“A new creature”:

The new birth (see notes on John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17).

In God’s sight “neither” the external “circumcision” of the flesh “nor” its omission (“uncircumcision”) “availeth” (profits).

Only being divinely transformed into “a new creature” (creation), this is, a morally new and different person, benefits one spiritually.

Nothing in the flesh means anything.

We will discard this house of flesh and receive our spiritual body.

The thing that does matter is that we are born again.

We are a new creature in Christ.

Christ liveth in us.

This world is not our home.

We are a stranger in this land.

Our home is in heaven with Jesus.

Galatians 6:16 "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace [be] on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

“As many as walk according to this rule”:

This could also be stated, “All who follow this principle” (namely, the principle of the new creation of verse 15).

The verse’s final “and” seems to distinguish between Gentile Christians “as many as walk”, and Jewish Christians (“the Israel of God”).

The word canon originally meant “reed” (a measuring rule), and came to signify a standard for determining which books were Scripture.

The books placed in Scripture:

- (1) Were considered inspired;
- (2) Gave evidence of containing revelation;
- (3) Gave evidence of apostolicity; and
- (4) Were uniquely used by the Holy Spirit.

When the church finally collected the 66 books into a “canon,” it did not make the books become Scripture: the church was only recognizing what God had done.

The books were Scripture the moment they were written.

Not all of the Christian literature of the first century was included in the canon, only those which were inspired.

The church at Ephesus was one of the first to collect the books of the New Testament, and it carefully examined them before endorsement (Rev. 2:2).

As Christians read the Scriptures, they should walk according to their rule (see Exodus 19:5; Galatians 6:16; Psalm 119:18).

“Peace ... and mercy”:

The results of salvation: “Peace” is the believer’s new relationship to God (Rom. 5:1; 8:6; Col. 3:15), and “mercy” is the forgiveness of all his sins and the setting aside of God’s judgment (Psalm 25:6; Dan. 9:18; Matt. 5:7; Luke 1:50; Rom. 12:1; Eph. 2:4; Titus 3:5).

“Israel of God”:

All Jewish believers in Christ, i.e., those who are both physical and spiritual descendants of Abraham (see notes on 3:7, 18; Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6-7).

Paul is making a difference in Israel in the flesh and Israel in the Spirit here.

Christians, who walk according to the Spirit, are the Israel he speaks of that will have peace and mercy.

Romans 9:6 "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they [are] not all Israel, which are of Israel:"

Galatians 6:17 "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

“Marks of the Lord Jesus”:

The physical results of persecution (scars, wounds, etc.), that identified Paul as one who had suffered for the Lord (Acts 14:19; 16:22; 2 Cor. 11:25; see notes on 2 Cor. 1:5; 4:10; Col. 1:24).

Unlike the Judaizers who make much ado about the now irrelevant, insignificant mark of circumcision, Paul bears bodily “marks” which do mean something.

They are the wounds and injuries incurred in serving God, the results of having willingly accepted “the persecution for the cross,” which the legalists seek to avoid (verse 12).

Paul had born many stripes, because he would not renounce Jesus Christ as Messiah.

Paul is explaining to them, whether they believe him or not, he belongs to Christ.

His message brought to them was as an apostle of God.

He is saying, he does not need their confidence in him to let him know he belongs to Christ.

He says, "Leave me alone".

Galatians 6:18 "Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with your spirit. Amen."

Even Paul's final benediction implicitly extols the superiority of the gospel of grace over any man-made system of works righteousness.

This whole book has been about the unmerited favor of God on his people.

The one word is grace.

Paul speaks to their spirit man and asks grace.

"Amen" means, so be it.

To close, I would like to say that it is evident that salvation through Jesus Christ is a free gift.

We do nothing to earn our salvation.

It is just as evident that we must remain steadfast in the salvation we received.

Law and grace are like oil and water; they will not mix.

Choose life in the grace of God.

Galatians Chapter 6 Questions

1. What are Christians to do, when a brother is overtaken in a fault?
2. What did the parable of the lost sheep have in common with this?
3. Who should lead the way in forgiving them?
4. Bear ye one another's _____.
5. What is the law of Christ spoken of in verse 2?
6. What kind of a person is verse 3 speaking of?
7. Let every man prove his own _____.
8. Who is the best person to do the job God gave you?
9. Verse 6 is saying, for those taught in the Word to do what?

10. Whatsoever a man _____, that shall he reap.
11. What does 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 58 tell us about the way we should act?
12. What should we be doing when the Lord returns?
13. You are responsible to help whom?
14. Why is it better to give them an opportunity than a hand-out?
15. Who was it that kept wanting them to be circumcised?
16. What is the only thing Paul would glory in?
17. What is better than circumcision in verse 15?
18. What are the two Israels?
19. What did Paul mean when he said, he bore in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus?
20. What was the benediction he spoke at the last?
21. What one word summarizes this lesson?