

Burden Bearing
Galatians 6:1-5
May 15th, 2022

1. Bear one another's _____. (6:1-2)

a. We bear the burden of a brother or sister in Christ
_____ in sin. (Galatians 6:1a)

b. Burden-bearing restoration should be pursued by people
who are _____,
and _____. (Galatians 6:1b)

2. But you will bear your own _____. (6:3-5)

3. Applying the Word

a. We must walk _____ but we will stand
before God _____.

Questions for Discussion/Reflection on Galatians 6:1-5

1. Why do people get caught (stuck) in sin? What is it about sin that leads to people getting stuck in it?
2. What does the key word "restore" in v. 1 tell us about the end goal when someone is stuck in sin? What other words would have communicated a different/lesser goal?
3. If "spiritual" refers to someone walking with the Spirit and showing the fruit of the Spirit in their life, how would the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23 affect the way they help someone stuck in sin?
4. How does "the law of Christ" compare with Jesus' command in John 13:34?
5. What are some ways a person might be tempted themselves when they are helping someone stuck in sin?
6. What is necessary in a church culture for believers to effectively bear one another's burdens?
7. Why would Paul condemn boasting in 5:26 but then say we will have a reason for boasting in 6:4? What is the difference? What type of boasting is excluded? How does this relate to Romans 12:3?
8. How do we know if something is a "load" we need to bear alone or a "burden" we need help carrying?

Burden Bearing

Galatians 6:1-5

May 15th, 2022

Pray – P and G – car – dealing with bureaucracy – language, adding teammates – there is a slow hard work in cross-cultural missions that can't be skipped in favor of short-term gains.

Big idea: A Spirit-filled body will bear one another's burdens while recognizing individual accountability to God.

Intro

What does a Spirit-filled church look like?

Do you picture people using their spiritual gifts to build up the body? That's certainly true.

Do you picture people passionately and regularly telling others about Jesus? That's certainly true as the pattern in the book of Acts was that people would be filled with the Spirit and speak the Word of God with boldness.

But do you also picture a healthy church, marked by the fruit of the Spirit in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control rather than biting and devouring and boasting and jealousy?

Do you picture a church where someone who is stuck in sin is patiently and clearly helped as those who are spiritual walk with them to bear that burden together?

It's that picture of a spirit-filled church that we are given in Galatians 5 and 6.

After describing the need to walk by the Spirit and the fruit produced by the Spirit in chapter 5, Paul now describes how someone who is "spiritual" should bear the burdens of others in the local church.

It's still part of the long warning not to bite and devour one another in 5:15 and not to be boastful and envying in 5:26. Don't let the chapter break fool you.

1. Bear one another's **burdens**. (6:1-2)

a. The key idea in these first two verses seems to be that we are to bear one another's burdens. A specific burden is that of a brother or sister caught in sin.

i. Bear means more than pick up and put down – it is to carry over a prolonged period of time.

1. Imagine, if you are in good health yourself, and you see an older person or a child or a pregnant woman carrying a heavy bag. What would you do? Hopefully, offer to carry it to help them! Not just pick it up, say, "boy, you're right. Super heavy. Good luck!"

ii. We all have burdens to carry that we need help with.

1. College student anxious about the future.

2. Blended family working through the complications of past relationships, custody disputes, and divided parenting.

3. A mom with a baby and a toddler – a joyful and exhausting combination.

4. A man in his late fifties dissatisfied with his job but unsure he can find something else this late in his working years.

5. A woman in her forties struggling with chronic anxiety and depression.

6. We could go on and on and on – the variety of burdens are as widespread as the variety of people in a church.

iii. As we bear one another's burdens, we fulfill the law of Christ (v. 2b)

1. That isn't to replace the OT law of Moses with a new, parallel law.
 2. FF Bruce says it refers to "the whole tradition of Jesus' ethical teaching, confirmed by his character and conduct and reproduced within his people by the power of the Spirit."
 3. It's the opposite of the conceit and boastfulness at the end of chapter 5.
- iv. Ask yourself, whose burdens am I helping to bear?
1. If you feel like you have heavy burdens that you are carrying alone, ask yourself whether you are building burden bearing relationships with others. Ask whether you are making those needs known or you just assume others know and are upset that they aren't
- b. We bear the burden of a brother or sister in Christ **caught** in sin. (Galatians 6:1a)
- i. The specific type of burden is when someone in the body, someone who claims Christ, is stuck in sin.
 - ii. Caught in sin
 1. They are discovered to be in a pattern of unrepentant sin that they can't or won't get out of on their own. Every believer sins and daily, regularly turns from it. The person described here is stuck in it and requires outside help.
 - iii. The issue is unrepentant sin, as other passages we will look at make clear.
 1. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23)
 2. **1 John 1:8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.
 - iv. The goal is restoration
 1. The word for restoration was a medical term used of setting a bone that had been fractured. It is set so as to be made whole and fully functional again.
 - a. Personal note – seeing a broken arm in Russia that was badly out of place.
 2. God has given us instruction in His Word for how we can restore a brother or sister who is stuck in sin.
 - a. It isn't pleasant and it isn't necessarily easy, but it's good and right and loving.
 3. God's heart is for the restoration of people
 4. **Matthew 18:12-14** "What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? ¹³ "If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. ¹⁴ "So it is not *the* will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.
 - a. Notice the tenderness and compassion in this verse. Matthew 18 is known for the steps of church discipline outlined in the verses after this, but don't miss the context – God desires His wayward sheep to be rescued and He rejoices over their repentance.
 - v. When you get involved with a person caught in sin, it's time consuming, it's mentally draining, it may require sacrifice. And they may not even end up responding well in the end. But we must try.

1. May be practical and logistical (i.e. babysitting kids while mom and dad meet with a counselor, helping a single mom with parenting skills, providing temporary housing for someone who moves out of their boyfriend's apartment)
 2. It may be accountability – call me when you are tempted, let's meet up and read the word together
 3. In no way is this to make someone feel like they are left to deal with their sin on their own. In fact, it's the opposite. We are rushing to their side to bear their burden with them.
- c. Burden-bearing restoration should be pursued by people who are spiritual, gentle, and cautious. (Galatians 6:1b)
- i. Spiritual – walking in the Spirit and characterized by the fruit of the Spirit
 1. We are most likely to use this in a way that is pejorative, negative, or pharisaical – “they think they're so ‘spiritual’”
 2. In context it is the person in Gal 5:16, 25 who is walking by the Spirit and characterized by the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23) – that person who is not boasting, challenging one another, or envying one another (5:26) or biting and devouring one another (v. 15)
 3. Don't use that as an excuse to not go. Rather, walk by the Spirit and be characterized by the fruit of the Spirit.
 - ii. Gentle
 1. This instruction is necessary because the work of restoration can be done in a way that is bullish, lording, prideful, harsh, unmerciful, or unsympathetic. But it ought not to be.
 2. **1 Thessalonians 5:14** We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.
 3. Church discipline can be done poorly, abusively, clumsily – does that mean it shouldn't be done?
 - a. Many worthwhile things can be done poorly or well – surgery, home repair, discipline of children
 - b. Hear of medical malpractice where a surgeon's clamp is stitched up inside the body; does that mean you shouldn't have surgery if your appendix bursts?
 - c. Parents do abuse their children; does that mean you shouldn't discipline your children in loving, appropriate ways?
 - iii. Cautious
 1. Consider ideas of sin that never thought of before (Rob Green from message – I never even considered sinning in that way before – thanks a lot!)
 2. Temptation toward pride – “I would NEVER . . .”
 3. Requires humility, recognizing that we too could be tempted. No place for spiritual pride viewing self as above falling.
 4. No place for a sin sheriff to come in with his pistols blasting away at those sinners. Put your pistols away.

a. Walk in the Spirit, be gentle, be cautious. Do the work of restoration.

2. But you will bear your own **load**. (6:3-5)

a. Verses 3 and 4 make more sense if we start with verse 5.

- i. On the surface Paul may appear to contradict himself. We are to bear one another's burdens but we must bear our own load? You'll notice it's a different word – burden vs. load and a different idea in mind.
- ii. "Burden" and "load" are different words in English and Greek. Heavy load (burden) vs a soldier's backpack or a pilgrim's bag.
- iii. We each have a set of difficulties and circumstances and gifts that are a personal stewardship that God has given us.
- iv. Stott – So we are to bear one another's burdens which are too heavy for a man to bear alone, but there is one burden which we cannot share- indeed do not need to because it is a pack light enough for every man to carry himself -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.

b. Going back to v. 3, if we are inflated with pride and don't examine ourselves honestly, we might deceive ourselves.

- i. We might think we are "spiritual" but our lives don't bear the fruit of the Spirit.
- ii. A conceited attitude of self-importance will lead us to mess this up in several ways that are obvious in the passage.
 1. We will boast rather than help when we see someone else's burdens.
 - a. "I can't believe they got themselves into that spot." "My kids would never do that." "It must be something they did wrong."

2. We will act with harshness instead of gentleness.

iii. Instead we are to examine ourselves – do I see the fruit of the Spirit or the deeds of the flesh in myself? Am I in a position to help or will I contribute to the problem?

c. The description of boasting seems surprising but keep in mind what it is contrasting it with.

- i. Not boasting in regard to another – i.e. by comparing yourself to another.
 1. Not a boasting that looks at the burdens and weaknesses and sins of others and say, "by comparison, I'm doing pretty good!"
- ii. Instead, it's a self-examination that is honest about our own actions, thoughts, and attitudes, and when we see growth in those things that are our own responsibilities, we can be grateful.

3. Applying the Word

a. We must walk **together** but we will stand before God **alone**.

i. We are made for life together in the body.

1. Practically, you can't know everyone in this church let alone know everyone well.
2. This isn't a command to find a random person on the other side of the room and go unload your burdens on them after church.
3. But are you building relationships with some? Are you intentional with some?
 - a. Do for one what you wish you could do for everyone.

- b. Small groups are a great way to do that. Playing softball. Serving together in music or children's ministry or welcome team. Grabbing time after a service to talk rather than jet out. That's part of why we have created spaces that are more comfortable to pull aside.
- ii. But, our accountability before God is personal not corporate.
 - 1. You will stand before God and the accountability will not be about what your parents did, who your friends were, what the youth group was like, what the men's study was like.
 - 2. The most important question will be, what did you do with Jesus?



1

1. Bear one another's *burdens*. (6:1-2)

2

a. We bear the burden of a brother or sister in Christ *caught* in sin. (Galatians 6:1a)

3

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

4

Matthew 18:12-14 "What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?

5

Matthew 18:12-14 ¹³ "If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. ¹⁴ "So it is not *the* will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.

6

b. Burden-bearing restoration should be pursued by people who are *spiritual*, *gentle*, and *cautious*. (Galatians 6:1b)

7

1 Thessalonians 5:14 We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

8

2. But you will bear
your own load. (6:3-5)

9

3. Applying the Word

10

a. We must walk
together but we will
stand before God
alone.

11