

Galatians

Chapter 6:1-18

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In this last chapter, Paul brings his letter to an end by giving some final exhortations and reiterating a number of major points made in the letter. Primarily he deals with the attitude that we should demonstrate between each other and then pronounces a blessing upon those who walk in such a way.

1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load.

- The heresy of the Judaizers was obviously providing for many disputes and dissensions within the church. Given that Paul typically will give instruction where instruction is necessary, we can conclude that this instruction was very applicable to the church. From verse 26 in chapter 5, we can see that there was conceit, provocations and envy among the people in the churches. Just as he previously said that heresy is a work of the flesh so too these works were a result of the brethren giving into their flesh.
- Although this section is not intended to be an exhaustive instruction on church discipline, Paul does give three primary principles upon which all discipline should be based. We don't have one rule for correcting people at church and something completely different for correcting the people in our home; we must administer discipline with these attitudes.

Restorers must be spiritual.

- The spiritual person is frequently not the one who was wronged unless they can do so in a spiritual manner. This is accomplished by having your motivation for the correction be first obedience to the command of God. Secondly, we must be motivated to keep the purity of the church as the primary benefit of the obedience. Finally, they must have a genuine desire to see the person restored. If you are very enthusiastic about administering the discipline, then you are probably disqualified from doing so. Those who do so for righteousness sake rather than seizing the opportunity to deliver vengeance are the ones who are qualified.

Restorers must be gentle.

- This is an obvious application of the golden rule. When you go to a brother for the purpose of correcting him, you must go to him in humility, kindness and gentleness. Your anger or wrath will not accomplish the righteous objectives of God.

Restorers must introspective

- By introspective I mean that you should examine yourself spiritually first before considering the correction. We must remember that we were all corrupt and dead spiritually at one time and God has delivered us from much. Too frequently it is an easy thing for us to be hard line and demanding of those who are tempted by sins that we aren't and then when we deal with someone who is tempted similarly to us, we will soft-pedal the sin. If we are not clean before the Lord we are absolutely prohibited from being the one to administer the discipline.
- If we compare verse 2 with verse 5 we can see two different purposes. Each person is responsible for carrying their own weight. The responsibility rests with them. But if someone becomes unable to do so, then we have a responsibility to have a sense of love and community to bear each others burdens. This will look differently in different cases. If something terrible happens in a family where the people are living Godly lives and carrying their burden, we should jump in and help. However, if someone has lived foolishly and has taken others for granted or is lazy, you may be helping the most by not carrying the burden; we would in love refuse assistance.
- We are to have a proper understanding of the gifts or talents that God has to us. God has apportioned these gifts as He has felt best. With these gifts there comes a temptation to believe that we are somehow spiritual by having these gifts. Paul rebukes a competitive spirit in comparing gifts or abilities. We must also avoid a false or understated value of ourselves. This admonition is that we should have a proper understanding not a low understanding.

6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for

whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

- In this section Paul discusses doing good things. He equates doing good with sowing to the Spirit and not doing good with sowing to the flesh. Paul identifies three manifestations (although there are certainly many more) in doing good.
- The first pertains to the sharing of good things with those who teach the word. Remember the context of this book; The Galatians were being tempted and harassed by heretical teaches. The reason why there is so much heresy out there in our world is because Godly teachers are not supported yet the ungodly teachers continually shear their sheep. Have you ever noticed that the ungodly teachers have no remorse for pleading for money over and over again? However, the Godly teachers are embarrassed to talk about it like Paul was in Phillipians.
- The second attitude in doing good is perseverance. We shouldn't get impatient for fruit from the crop. When you plant and sow according to the Spirit you will reap according to the Spirit. We may not be able to see it now, but persevere; you will see it one day.
- It is fascinating that in this section, Paul states that discrimination is a virtue. We are to treat our children better than others and we are to treat fellow Christians better than others. Does this mean that we are rude to non-Christians? No, notice Paul's command, we are to do good to all but especially to Christians.

11 See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! 12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. 14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

- This verse provides another clue as to the specific physical ailment that bothered Paul. It is apparent that Paul had a secretary to whom he dictated the letter. At this point he wants to emphasize the instruction but perhaps also testify to the authenticity of the letter. The fact that he uses large letters could reinforce the speculation that the ailment was one inflicting his eyes.
- There are some people in the church at large who think that if there is controversy then something must be wrong. There are also those who thrive on controversy. There is a great way to ensure that the church and the world leave you alone; just import a small amount of human merit into the gospel. You can still use words like grace and salvation and sovereignty but remember the carnal man hates grace. But if you proclaim that salvation is of the Lord from first to last, you will be persecuted. This is precisely what Paul says that the Judaizers were doing. They wanted the Galatian Christians to become circumcised so that they wouldn't suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.
- Paul's warning is that you can't import a tiny amount of human merit into the Gospel. If you do, you are bound to keep the entire law perfectly. As we have discussed before, this is not a means of salvation. The only thing which comes about by walking down this road is destruction as self deception.
- Paul gives us the proper way to boast in our salvation, in the cross of Christ. We should glory in and frequently proclaim the wonderfulness of Christ and His completed work on the cross.

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. 17 From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. 18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. (NKJV)

- Paul gives a benediction or a blessing to those who walk this way. Notice also that the true Israel is not those who are the physical descendants of Abraham but rather are those who walk this way.