

Galatians
May 18, 2008
Galatians 6:1-18

I. What is the Hardest Thing about Serving Others?

II. Behavior Based on the Spirit

The first part of this chapter gives great advice on how one should behave in Christ when relating to others:

- Watch yourself
- Carry each other's burden
- Compare yourself only to yourself
- Carry own load
- Share with instructor
- Do not deceive
- Do not become weary
- Continue to do good

III. When Our Brother Fails/Please Don't Fall Too!

Gal 6:1-5

6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, 5 for each one should carry his own load.

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- Verse 1 Three possibilities for tempting are:
1. Spiritual pride...I am better than the sinner
2. They might be tempted by the same thing as tempted the sinner.
- Verse 2 The mature believer might have to be involved in restoring fallen brothers, but everyone can help in carrying a burden too heavy for one or too heavy for many.
- Verse 3 Remember that Gal. 5:26 spoke of being conceited.
- Verse 4 The big question is what we can do. Others can do more, and some can only do less. We should not allow this to get in the way of our contribution. The goal is to live up to the potential that God has given to us.
- Verse 4 How would you reconcile this verse with Gal. 6:14?

Verse 5 Notice that burden (verse 2) and load are two different words in the Greek. “Burden” would refer to a very heavy load that cannot be carried alone. The second would be a more normal load such as a soldier’s knapsack or a pilgrim’s backpack.

Although outdated, Ron Blue wrote: “Your checkbook reveals all that you really believe about stewardship.”

IV. Share with Others

Gal 6:6-10

6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. 7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

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- Verse 6 The word “share” could be translated as “communicate” or “fellowship.” “All good things” could be financial support, but does not have to be.
- Verse 7 Throughout this chapter, we have seen Paul point out that we need to do our share, including with money or other benefits per the preceding verse. While we should evaluate ourselves (6:4), we should know that God knows what we are thinking. So, if we are really not doing what we can, then God will know.
- Verse 9 Given the nature of this letter, one wonders as to whether Paul was feeling a little weary. Perhaps this advice has arisen out of his struggles with the Galatians. Remember also that the Galatians were infighting. As such, many of them probably have ample opportunities to do wrong.
- Verse 9 The work is for the Lord, and our reward is from Him, not from other people. Of course, we have to wait for the appropriate time as determined by the Lord.
- Verse 10 “Opportunity” is really *kairos*, or time, and represents a play of words on time in the preceding verse.
- Verse 10 While we might have to wait for the correct time to receive our reward, the opportunity or time is always correct for doing good.
- Verse 10 We should be doing good to all people, not just the family of believers. Since we might have limited resources to help, such

as for financial concerns, we should prioritize the family of believers higher than others.

V. “With My Own Hand”

Gal 6:11

11 See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

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Paul does this in other letters:

1 Cor 16:21

21 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand.

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Col 4:18

18 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

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2 Thess 3:17

17 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.

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The big letters have been discussed a lot. The illness of Gal 4:13-15 and the affliction of 2 Cor. 12 have been used to suggest that he wrote in big letters because of poor eyesight. We do not really know the cause of these maladies; also, we do not know why he wrote in big letters.

VI. Concluding Remarks

Gal 6:12-18

12 Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. 13 Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh. 14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation. 16 Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God. 17 Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

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Verse 12 If the people attempting to make a good impression were to promote Christ, then they would be prosecuted for Christ as well. By keeping to being Jews, they are not prosecuted for Christ. This might betray a motivation for Judaizers. Some of them, at least, might have been attempting to keep Christianity in good standing with traditional Jews by attempting to have Christian converts to become Jews.

Verse 14 To the Paul only the benefit of the cross was important to him. Of course, this verse relates back to Gal. 2:20.

1 Cor 1:31

31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."

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Verse 16 This rule probably refers to the previous verse, but also to everything that Paul has argued up to now...that the gospel is all that is needed for salvation.

Verse 17 Paul has the marks (*stigmata* in Greek) on him for defending/promoting the sake of Jesus that the Judaizers were attempting to avoid.

Verse 17 If the Judaizers cause the church at Galatia trouble, this will cause Paul trouble. Also, with this statement, he is asking the Galatians not to let this false prophecy cause any difficulty at Galatia. Paul has confidence that the Galatians will obey him. Perhaps, he has this from God, or perhaps this is only his personal belief.

VII. Question

Have you ever been discouraged in a ministry for the Lord? If so, how did you react? Did you become weary and give up? Did you continue to do good? What can we learn from these past experiences to help us with our work for the Lord in the future?

VIII. Question

What sacrifices are you willing to make for the sake of Christ? Are you really going to make those sacrifices? Jesus says:

Luke 14:33

33 In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

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