

Be Responsible
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Our scripture today is Galatians 6:1-18. Turn there and let's go "verse by verse" through this final chapter of Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Let's Get Practical!

- If you go to Amazon.com and search for the word "advice" you find they have 607,695 printed books with some kind of "advice". Type in "practical advice" and you get 39,659 books. We must be hungry for PRACTICAL ADVICE
- In this chapter Paul get's PRACTICAL.
- We are FREE in Christ from the bonds of SIN and LEGALISM
- We have the POWER of the Holy Spirit in us to produce the Fruits of the Spirit
- NOW what are we going to DO with all this?

As Paul wrapped up his letter to the Galatian churches he did what he often did...he followed theology with practicality. And in this last chapter are some of the most famous verses in all of scripture on how we are to live as RESPONSIBLE BELIEVERS.

Galatians 6:1-18 (New International Version)

Galatians 6

Doing Good to All

¹Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

- The word "restore" is like "mending a net" or "setting a broken bone"
- We are to restore "gently" "meekly"
 - The opposite: Intense; Unkind; Loud; Proud; Stubborn; Domineering.
- What reasons would a person have for dealing "harshly" with someone who has "slipped" into sin?
 - Pride and arrogance?
 - Tearing another down to build themselves up?
 - A darker side of human nature: "We never feel so good about ourselves as when compared to how 'bad' someone else looks."
 - Why did Paul put that last sentence in there?

Warren Wiersbe said...

Paul presented a hypothetical case of a believer who is suddenly tripped up and falls into sin. The word *overtaken* carries the idea of being surprised, so it is not a case of deliberate disobedience. Why did Paul use this illustration? *Because nothing reveals the wickedness of legalism better than the way the legalists treat those who have sinned.* Call to mind the Pharisees who dragged a woman taken in adultery before Jesus (John 8). Or that Jewish mob that almost killed Paul because they *thought* he had defiled the temple by bringing in Gentiles (Acts 21:27ff.). (Legalists do not need facts and proof; they need only suspicions and rumors. Their self-righteous imaginations will do the rest.) So, in this paragraph, Paul was really contrasting the way the legalist would deal with the erring brother, and the way the spiritual man would deal with him.

- The Christian community has a bad reputation for “shooting our wounded”
- In Psalm 109, David is venting to God about people who are attacking him:

Psalm 109

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

¹ O God, whom I praise,
do not remain silent,

² for wicked and deceitful men
have opened their mouths against me;
they have spoken against me with lying tongues.

- Then he goes on to “vent” about what he’d like to see God do to these people. And it’s pretty tough stuff!
- Finally he reminds himself of how God deals with one who is wounded:

²⁶ Help me, O LORD my God;
save me in accordance with your love.

²⁷ Let them know that it is your hand,
that you, O LORD, have done it.

²⁸ They may curse, but you will bless;
when they attack they will be put to shame,
but your servant will rejoice.

²⁹ My accusers will be clothed with disgrace
and wrapped in shame as in a cloak.

³⁰ With my mouth I will greatly extol the LORD;
in the great throng I will praise him.

³¹ For he stands at the right hand of the needy one,
to save his life from those who condemn him.

Mart DeHaan writes...

Many among us have experienced the pain that David expressed in Psalm 109. When he was hurt and vulnerable, insensitive people took advantage of him. Certainly, if he had sinned, he needed their loving correction. What he didn't need was their scorn, gossip, and selfish neglect.

Who shoots his foot after stubbing his toe? No one in his right mind. Neither should anyone with the mind of Christ act unmercifully toward a wounded brother or sister in the body of Christ. Rather, we must "show mercy" (v.16). — [Mart De Haan](#)

He goes on to add: "A hurting person needs a helping hand, not an accusing finger."

- It's our responsibility to RESTORE GENTLY and not harshly

²Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

- The old saying is "many hands make light work"
- The picture here is helping others to lift a burden that is too heavy for them alone. If I have to move a chair I just move it. If I have to move a grand piano, I'm gonna need some help!

³If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, ⁵for each one should carry his own load.

It would almost appear that verses 2 and 5 contradict each other:

- "Carry each other's burdens" and "each should carry his own load"
- The Greek word for "burdens" in verse 2 indicates "heavy pressure"
- Verse 5 is speaking of the day to day "load" that each of us must bear

⁶Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

- Pastors and Staff should be paid fairly for the work they do
- How can you "pay" your Sunday School teacher? This group does it well!
 - Being engaged in the lesson that's been prepared and interacting

- Picking up a share of the load in other areas so the teacher can spend more time preparing to teach
- A little encouragement now and then doesn't hurt either...THIS GROUP IS VERY AFFIRMING!

⁷Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature^[a] will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

- Sowing and reaping: I learned verse 7 in the sixth grade. Now, 36 years later I can still say it from memory (in the KJV). They planted a seed!
- The law of sowing and reaping is so basic all can understand.
- Jesus talked about it:

Let's look at Luke 6:43-44 (New International Version)

A Tree and Its Fruit

⁴³"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. ⁴⁴Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars.

- What does it mean to "sow to the Spirit"?
- What does it mean to "sow to the Flesh"?
 - No one says: "I think I'll go out and plant some weeds in my flower beds!"
 - But, do we do it every day without thinking? What goes into our mind.
 - Sometimes we don't PLANT the weeds we just leave them to flourish.

Look at verse 45 of Luke 6:

Luke 6:45 (New International Version)

⁴⁵The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.

- We have a responsibility to PLANT WITH PURPOSE and WEED WITH A VENGEANCE so we can REAP what is good.

⁹Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

- Old saying: "When it stops being fun...we're done!"
- Nehemiah 4:1-23. Remember the story? Rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. Remember the working conditions? Verse 17: *"Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other,¹⁸ and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked."* You think YOU have it hard!

- But they PERSEVERED: Nehemiah 6:15-16: ¹⁵ *So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days.* ¹⁶ *When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.*
- Why do some people “throw in the towel” and quit doing God’s work BEFORE HE RELEASES THEM FROM THEIR CALL?
 - Some very human reasons: Fatigue; Discouragement due to lack of results (Brian the missionary in China) Discouragement due to criticism;
 - Some selfish reasons: Wrong motives in doing the work; Pride or arrogance: “I’ll take my Bible and go home!”
- Remember: The “proper time” of our harvest may not all be in this life. No doubt only in Heaven will we know about the harvest of seeds we might not even remember planting. That’s why...
- We have a responsibility, as Believers who are doing Kingdom work, to PERSEVERE as long as God has not released us from our call.

¹⁰Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

- “As we have opportunity” – we need to pray for sensitivity to know when we’re presented with an opportunity to do good.
- Notice it says “to all people” and “especially to believers”. Clearly we are to do “good works” and “acts of kindness” for both believers and non believers but “especially” believers.
- Story from the book “The Power of Small” and a young woman’s response to a homeless man.

Not Circumcision but a New Creation

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

- It appears that Paul had been “dictating” this letter to someone else and now he takes the quill in his own hand
- The “big letters” were possibly because of poor eyesight...but certainly for emphasis (no highlighters or bold fonts in those days!)
- He writes:

¹²Those 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. ¹³Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh.

- This passage can be a little confusing. Let’s put it in every day language.
- Eugene Peterson’s PARAPHRASE (not translation) The Message renders it:

“These people who are attempting to force the ways of circumcision on you have only one motive: They want an easy way to look good before others, lacking the courage to live by a faith that shares Christ's suffering and death. All their talk about the law is gas. They themselves don't keep the law! And they are highly selective in the laws they do observe. They only want you to be circumcised so they can boast of their success in recruiting you to their side. That is contemptible!”

- Now the Power paraphrase: “They don't care about you! You're just ‘notches on their Spiritual gun belt’. Something for them to boast about!
- Then Paul puts “boasting” in proper perspective:

¹⁴May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which^[b] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.

- We have a responsibility to CHECK OUR MOTIVES in what we do for the Kingdom. Are we doing it to gain glory or recognition or are we doing it because of what Christ did for us on the cross?
- Finally, Paul leaves them with a call to seek peace among themselves.

¹⁶Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

¹⁷Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

- We have a responsibility to seek peace for our churches, for others, and for ourselves.
- We should avoid conflict where possible and resolve it quickly when it does arise.
- We should be peacemakers rather than prideful self seekers.

Here's the “take away”:

- Being responsible Christians includes:
- Assisting others and carrying out what we alone are to do.
- Being good to others, especially to other believers.
- Avoiding selfish motives in what we do as believers. And,
- Seeking peace for our churches, for others, and for ourselves.

There are some practical steps on page 57 of your book under “What About You?”

- Pray about specific actions you can take to help restore a fellow believer who has strayed into sin.
- Pay careful attention to church members and/or neighbors who are burdened, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you in how you can assist them.
- Plan ways to express appreciation to ministers and other leaders in your church, including Bible Study leaders.
- Be a peacemaker in your family, church, and community.