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Galatians

But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. Galatians 6:4

Paul's words here are an admonition to not make evaluations about our own life and conduct in comparison to others. When we see another fall and say, "I've never done that," we tend to get smug and self-confident. Rather, he exhorts us to "each examine his own work." We are to use a set standard of who we are which does not include others. Our standard should then be that which comes from God, which is Scripture.

As God is the ultimate standard, and as His word has been given to us for the rule and guide of our conduct, then we can examine ourselves impartially in relation to it. The word "examine" gives the idea of "proving by testing." If we have gold, we prove it by melting it down and checking for impurities. When the impurities are taken away, we have proved the purity of the gold.

When we prove ourselves against the word of God and then remove the impurities it identifies, then we "will have rejoicing" in ourselves alone. We will be able to say, "I have aligned my life and my actions with the true standard which is above all others." This is where our sure rejoicing, or glorying, will lie.

In testing ourselves against another, there will always be fault, because all others are faulty. No matter how many times we look better than those around us, we can never truly know

how secure we are against the ultimate standard. But when we prove ourselves in relation to Christ and His word, we can make positive corrections towards that which is pleasing to God.

Life application: Without Scripture, we truly are ships without rudders. We are cast about in a raging sea of confusion. But when we align our lives according to the true manual for mankind, we find purpose and direction for our wayward souls. Keep your nose in Scripture!

For each one shall bear his own load. Galatians 6:5

Here we have Paul explaining the previous verse which told us that each person should “examine his own work.” He said that, “then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.” The explanation is that “each one shall bear his own load.” In this, he uses a different word than was used in verse 2 for “burden.”

In verse 2 it was *baros* – a weight; burden. “Figuratively it is real substance (what has value, significance), i.e. carries personal and eternal significance” (HELPS). In this verse, he uses the word *phortion* - a burden; the freight of a ship. “Properly, a burden which must be carried by the individual, i.e. as something personal and hence is not transferrable, i.e. it cannot "be shifted" to someone else (HELPS).

The verb in verse 2 is present imperative; “you shall surely do this now.” The verb in this verse is future indicative; “you shall bear.” The latter is the antithesis of the former. While the first is given for each of us to sympathize with others in their troubles, the second is given to show that we each will answer to God for the loads we have carried. We cannot transfer our load to another for judgment, but we can take on the burden of those around us for their relief.

Life application: If we are willing to take on the burdens of those around us, then our own loads will be lessened on that Great Day when the actions of our lives are presented before the Lord. Do we want the light burden of assisting others now, or do we want the heavy burden we must carry to the Bema Seat of Christ? Choose wisely.

Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches. Galatians 6:6

There is a conjunction at the beginning of this verse in the Greek, *de* or “but,” which has not been translated by the NKJV. Some other versions include it, such as the BSB –

“However, the one who receives instruction in the word must share in all good things with his instructor.” Berean Study Bible

The conjunction is not superfluous, but is given as an exception to the previous verse which said, “For each one shall bear his own load.” Paul has admonished that all will bear their own load, but he doesn’t intend that this means we shouldn’t think of the needs of others, and particularly concerning the needs of ministers. In their case, Paul highlights an exception.

“Let him who is taught the word” includes any who receive instruction from a minister of the word. If they do, they are included in this verse. For them, they are “to share in all good things with him who teaches.” In other words, what their lives are blessed with should become the same things that the minister of the word is blessed with.

If the recipient of the word is blessed with grain, they should share their grain with their instructor. If they are blessed with oranges, they should also share their oranges. And if their income is of money, then they should be willing to share of that income with their minister. This is because the minister is fulfilling a job which also takes of his time, his efforts, and which is a part of his devotion to God.

Having explained this, Vincent’s Word Studies disagrees that this verse is speaking of blessing a minister with the temporal blessings which the student provides to the minister. Rather, his analysis says –

“...that the disciple should make common cause with the teacher in everything that is morally good and that promotes salvation. The introduction at this point of the relation of disciple and teacher may be explained by the fact that this relation in the Galatian community had been disturbed by the efforts of the Judaising teachers, notably in the case of Paul himself; and this disturbance could not but interfere with their common moral effort and life.”

In other words, Vincent's deems this verse as one of participation in the same conduct as the teacher of the word, rather than one of giving to a minister of the word. If this is so, then the one so participating is susceptible to being led down the primrose path.

One goes to an instructor for instruction. If the instructor provides faulty instruction, then the one participating in that faulty instruction has only the faulty instruction of the instructor to be instructed by! To "share in all good things with him who teaches" would then require discernment and follow-up study by the one being taught.

This analysis actually fits with the tenor of the coming verses quite well though and is not to be discarded, though it is a minority opinion.

Life application: The first analysis of this verse, that of caring for one's minister, is something which is certainly appropriate to do. However, the second analysis is given so that a contrasting, yet valid, view can be considered. Always study to show YOURSELF approved after listening to the instruction of the instructor. Sound doctrine doesn't end with his instruction, it only begins there.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

Galatians 6:7

The previous verse spoke of sharing "in all good things with him who teaches." As noted, Vincent's Word studies says that this is speaking of students sharing in the sound teachings of instructors and not getting swayed by false doctrines. Paul now directs his thought to the attitude of the heart by saying, "Do not be deceived." The words are especially important and are intended to call out for the reader to pay heed. As Albert Barnes notes, "The sources of the danger were the corruption of their own hearts, the difficulty of knowing their true character, the instructions of the false teachers, etc." Paul was asking them not to rely simply on the evaluation made by the heart which is so wicked that it ranks among the greatest of deceivers.

In so doing, they would be liable to mocking God, but "God is not mocked." The verb here literally indicates sneering with the nostrils flaring in contempt. We have been given the word of life in the explanation of what Jesus did. In turning back to the law for our justification, it is

an act comparable to mocking God. And so we have a choice as to whether we will follow such false teachers who insist on living by deeds of the law, or we will follow the truth of the word which says that our justification comes solely by the merits of Christ.

To show us that we cannot have it both ways, he says, "...for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." This is a truth which he conveyed to the Corinthians as well –

“But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” 2 Corinthians 9:6

Paul is using a material concept to make a spiritual application. If a farmer sows a great deal of good seed, he will generally reap a great harvest. If he only sows a little, or if he sows bad seed, then he will reap sparingly. The same is true with spiritual matters. If a person teaches as the Judaizers taught with their false doctrines, there will be a harvest of bad doctrine. If a person teaches the word of the apostles (today it is the Holy Bible which records their words), there will be a harvest of sound doctrine.

The word “that” in “that he will also reap” is emphatic – it is that and nothing else. Good doctrine for life cannot be reaped if bad doctrine is sown into it. And sound doctrine will be reaped when sound doctrine is sown. In the end, it is a sober choice, but one which God is carefully watching over as the Day of Judgment draws near.

Life application: Garbage in; garbage out. If we fill our lives with those who teach false doctrine, we will be filled with false doctrine. God is not mocked. Let us not fill ourselves with garbage. Cling to the cross of Christ, and to that alone, for your right standing with God.

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. Galatians 6:8

Paul gave the contrasting means of sewing either in the flesh or in the Spirit in previous verses. In 5:19-21, he listed the works of the flesh. He then contrasted those with the fruits of the Spirit in verses 22 & 23.

In his words here, he shows the difference in effort wrought between the carnal man and the spiritual man by using the terminology of sowing and reaping. Though a carnal, unregenerate man can only sow to his flesh, a saved believer can sow either to the flesh or to the Spirit. When one sows to the flesh, they “will of the flesh reap corruption.” Whether a non-believer or a saved believer, the same holds true. If we fall back into sin, such as over-drinking, we will further corrupt our flesh. The liver will fail, the body will degrade, and then we will eventually die of our addiction. The same is true with any such sowing of the flesh.

On the contrary, “he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” This is where the difference between a believer and a non-believer lies. The non-believer can only sow to the flesh because they have never called on Christ and received eternal life. However, a saved believer, can sow to the Spirit. When they do, they will receive rewards for their efforts. The difference falls in the judgments of believers and non-believers.

The saved believer in Christ will be judged at the Bema Seat of Christ. This is detailed in 2 Corinthians 5:9, 10. Those who are unsaved will stand at the Great White Throne judgment recorded in Revelation 20:11-15.

Life application: If you have called on Christ, your eternal rewards will be based on what you do for Christ during this extremely short walk of life. Be sure to consider this wisely and work for those things which will spring up to great rewards. Don't squander your time, but seek out the Lord and His will every moment of your life.

And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Galatians 6:9

Taken with the previous verse, the thought is more fully developed –

“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.”

What becomes apparent is that sowing to the Spirit does not necessarily mean an immediate harvest. Instead, perseverance is required. This then indicates that the past few verses have, in fact, been referring to the doctrine of teachers as they sow. In other words, Paul is exhorting the teachers in this verse by saying, “And let us not grow weary while doing good.”

A sound teacher will often face many overwhelming challenges. There is an abundant amount of work to be accomplished each week, there are demands on time, there are requests for donations from open hands at every side as well. Along with this come constant attacks against a sound teacher’s doctrine. There is ingratitude for his efforts; there is a using of him until he is spent, and then he is cast off as newer targets are identified. John Bunyan gives heartfelt words concerning such a person –

“His own people know no voice like his. He does not need to bribe and flatter and run after his people. He may have, he usually has, but few people, as people go in our day, and the better the preacher, sometimes, the smaller the flock. It was so in our Master's case. The multitude followed after the loaves but they fled from the feeding doctrines till He first tasted that dejection and that sense of defeat which so many of His best servants are fed on in this world. Still, as our Lord did not tune His pulpit to the taste of the loungers of Galilee, no more will a minister worth the name do anything else but press deeper and deeper into the depths of truth and life, till, as was the case with his Master, his followers, though few, will be all the more worth having.” John Bunyan

Paul asks us (meaning those who are doing the sowing) to not weary in these good efforts. His words are not without personal experience. Instead, he was a forerunner of all those he now instructs who would face such a challenging duty.

In 2 Corinthians 11:22-29, he goes through a long list of his own trials to show that perseverance is needed in order to meet the challenges as they arise. And it is that harvest season which should be the goal. This is reflected in the words, “...for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.” The time of harvest will come, but awaiting it is bound to be beset with countless trials. This is reflected in his words to the Romans –

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we

stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. ³ And not only *that*, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; ⁴ and perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

Romans 5:1-5

Life application: Anyone who is a teacher of proper doctrine, whether an ordained minister or simply someone who loves sharing the word with others, can expect hardships and trials as he sows in sound doctrine. It is inevitable. But with perseverance, a harvest will eventually come. Don't tire in your efforts, but redouble them with each setback. The Lord will be pleased with your labors.