

INTRODUCTION

1. In his book, *Sex Is Not the Problem, Lust Is*, Joshua Harris makes some insightful statements about why it is important that we keep ourselves accountable to one another. He says, “The Christian life is something we do *together*.”

In Ephesians 4:29, God tells us to build each other up with our words, and later He instructs us to ‘speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs’ (5:19).

We need other Christians to speak, sing, and sometimes shout the truths of God’s Word to us. We need others to pray for us when we’re in the midst of temptation. We need friends who will hold on to us when we’re ready to give up. We need friends who will challenge and even rebuke us when we’re indulging in sin” (p.134).

2. He’s right! All of us need to be accountable.
3. That is the purpose of the “one another’s” in the New Testament—genuine relationships and accountability.
4. When the New Testament uses the word “one another” (allelon) it is referring to “a reciprocal and mutual work on the part of believers toward one another.

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Galatians 6:1-2
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5. We find this phrase and concept used 58 times in the New Testament, excluding the Gospels”
(<http://mintools.com/bodylife4.htm>).
6. This is a reciprocal and mutual work toward one another.
7. As I said last time, If we all give ourselves to these one another’s then all of us will experience the one another’s and therefore experience “a meaningful dynamic deep caring concern for [each other]” (Ibid., mintools.com).
8. This is God’s answer to meaningful relationships and friendships.
9. This is what the New Testament refers to as “body life.”
10. We are members of one another and as such we are to responsible to each other.
11. Now we began our series just two weeks ago and first looked at the meaning of relationships or friendships.
12. We said that a true friend is one who is known well by another, shown affection to, trusted, and possesses the characteristics of loyalty, dependability, truthfulness, forgiveness, and sacrifice.

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Galatians 6:1-2
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13. We also stated in order to have this type of relationship, one must commit him or herself to another.
14. Because trust and affection is involved there is a sense of vulnerability but as the New Testament presents the one another's, vulnerability is key.
15. We do not automatically trust others.
16. The "one another's" help us to do just that.
17. We have already addressed the first one another and that was "love one another."
18. Tonight, we are considering a second, "bear one another's burdens."
19. So tonight, in the context of the one another's, I want to talk about *bearing burdens*.
20. Read Galatians 6:1-2.

I. Everyone Has a Burden (v.1)

Both the one who has fallen to it and the one who hasn't. Verse 2 says, "Bear one another's burdens," while verse 5 says, "For each one shall bear his own load."

A. What is a Burden?

1. A burden is "something that is carried; something that is emotionally difficult to bear; a source of great worry or stress; weight" (The American Heritage Dictionary).
2. The Greek word for "burdens" is *baros*, which when used figuratively refers to "a weight or a load" (Strong) or "that which is heavy" (Rienecker) or "hard to bear" (Wuest).

Kenneth Wuest says, "The word *burdens* has the following meaning: either "a burden that is desirable" as in [II Corinthians 4:17](#) (weight), or "one which is hard to bear" ([Acts 15:28](#); [Rev. 2:24](#)). The context indicates the specific meaning" (*Wuest's Word Studies in the Greek NT*).

Marvin Vincent says according to the context that it refers to "moral infirmities and errors, and the

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Galatians 6:1-2
Dr. Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher
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sorrow and shame and remorse which they awaken in the offender” (*Vincent’s Word Studies of the NT*).

B. How is this Applied?

1. Specifically, it has reference to the “trespass” in verse 1
2. The word “trespass” (paraptoma) means, “a fall beside, a false step, a blunder” (Wuest). It is a “lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness” (Falwell). In other words it is unpremeditated “sin” (Hereford).
3. Outside of this context, Jesus uses this word when referring to what people do toward us that we need to forgive them for. He says in Matthew 6:14 - “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”
4. In Matthew 18:35, He says, “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”
5. Paul says in Romans 4:25 that Jesus was “delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.

6. Paul even says in 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, “Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

7. So the word translated *trespass* or *fault* in Galatians 6:1 is a reference to “a fall beside, a false step, a blunder” (Wuest), a “lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness” (Falwell) or unpremeditated “sin” (Hereford).

Generally speaking:

II. Sin is a Burden We All Carry

- A. Paul Cried Out for Deliverance from It in Romans 7:24

He said, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”

1. His sin was something that He constantly fought against

He said in Romans 7:15 - “For what I am doing, I do

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Galatians 6:1-2
Dr. Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher
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not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.”

2. This was a constant burden. He said in 1 Cor.9:26-27: “Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

B. David was No Different - He Equally Acknowledged the Burden of His Sin

He said in Psalm 32:1-5 - “Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is* forgiven, *Whose sin is* covered. ² Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit *there is* no deceit. ³ When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. ⁴ For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah.”

Joseph Alleine, when referring to his sin, wrote, “And they are as mighty as they are many. The sands are many,

but then they are not great; the mountains are great but then they are not many. But woe is man, my sins are as many as the sands, and as mighty as the mountains. Their weight is greater than their number” (*The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations*).

So how are we to respond to this burden of sin?

III. We Are to Help Carry the Weight of this Burden (vv.1b-2)

Paul says in verse 1, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken”

“Overtaken” Gr.prolambano (verb, sub, aor, pass). It means “to take before” or in the passive “be overtaken or caught” (Friberg).

“This refers to the Christian himself being overtaken by the sin before he is aware that he has done wrong” (Wuest). Vincent says, “surprised by the fault itself.”

“Sudden temptation seized him unawares before he could escape” (KJV Commentary).

“The man does not commit the sin with premeditation but rather fails to be on his guard or perhaps flirts with a temptation he thinks he can withstand. Or he simply tries to

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Galatians 6:1-2
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live his life in his own power and fails, producing a deed of the flesh instead of the fruit of the Spirit” (John MacArthur, *Galatians*).

A. By Restoring the One who Has Fallen (v.1b)

This is what is meant in verse 2 when Paul says, “bear one another’s burdens”

You “lift, carry or take up” (Strong) their burden.

Kenneth Wuest says, “By bearing another’s burdens, Paul does not mean simply enduring of these burdens in an enforced, reluctant manner...but the assuming of those burdens in a willing, helpful, sympathetic way, despite the fact that the bearing of them may involve unpleasantness and heartache.”

Martin Luther said, “Christians must have strong shoulders and mighty bones, that they may bear flesh, that is, the weakness of their brethren” (Commentary on Galatians [Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997]. Ga 6:2).

This doesn’t work if you are a legalist. What is a legalist? Let me define that first by defining *legalism*. Legalism is “using any set of rules - bad rule, good rules, even God’s

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law – in a wrong way” (Joshua Harris, *Not Even a Hint*, p.49). It is seeking to “add to what Jesus did when He died and rose again.” It is “seeking to relate to God based on our work, instead of based on the work of our representative and mediator, Jesus Christ.” (Ibid., pp.49-50).

A *legalist* is someone who practices these things. He is the one who lives his life by his own standards and rules or as Joshua Harris says, “even God’s law – in a wrong way.”

Warren Wiersbe offers this insight about a legalist. He says, “The legalist is not interested in bearing burdens. Instead, he adds to the burdens of others.”

So if you are going to *carry* someone else’s burdens then you need to make sure you’re not adding to them with your own rules and standards. You need to bear their burdens according to God’s Word.

What does Paul say about that? He says you need to “*restore* such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”

“Restore” Gr.katartizo, “to repair” (Strong), “to mend” (MacArthur), “to correct” (Rienecker). “The word was

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Galatians 6:1-2
Dr. Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher
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used of reconciling factions; of setting bones; of mending nets” (Vincent).

John MacArthur says, “The first responsibility of a spiritual believer who seeks to restore a fallen brother is to help pick him up. When a person stumbles, his first need is to get up, and often he needs assistance in doing it. An integral part of church discipline, therefore, is helping a fallen brother get back on his feet spiritually and morally” (*Galatians*).

1. The instruction in Matthew 18:15-17 is aimed at restoring a sinning brother or sister not putting them out of the church. They are put out of the church only after you have made every opportunity to restore them.
2. Matthew 7:1-5 with Galatians 6:1 is provided so that no one seeks restoration without first looking at themselves.
3. When we seek to restore a fallen brother or sister we must first remember that this is a fellow Christian (v.1 - “brethren”)

Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:1-2, “Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father, the

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Galatians 6:1-2
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younger men as brothers, the older women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.”

This means we are to “set him right, bring him back, recover him from his errors and his faults” (*Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*).

“**Spiritual** believers **restore** a fallen believer first of all by helping him recognize his **trespass** as a **trespass**. Until a person admits his sin, he cannot be helped out of it. Once he has done that, he must be encouraged to confess his sin before God and turn away from it in repentance, sincerely seeking God’s forgiveness” (MacArthur).

4. Paul says the restoration is to be done in a “spirit of gentleness”

“Gentleness” Gr. *prautes*, “meekness, humility” (Strong). (see Gal.5:23)

Restoration is done “with a kind, forbearing, and forgiving spirit; Not with anger; not with a lordly and overbearing mind; not with a love of finding others in fault, and with a desire for inflicting the discipline of the church; not with a harsh and unforgiving temper, but with love, and gentleness, and humility,

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Galatians 6:1-2
Dr. Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher
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and patience, and with a readiness to forgive when wrong has been done” (Ibid., Barnes).

Adam Clarke says, “Use no severity nor haughty carriage towards him; as the man was suddenly overtaken, he is already deeply humbled and distressed, and needs much encouragement and lenient usage. There is a great difference between a man who being suddenly assailed falls into sin, and the man who transgressed in consequence of having Walked in the counsel of the Ungodly, or Stood in the way of Sinners” (*Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Bible*).

B. By Recognizing that Sin Catches All of Us (v.1c-2)

“Considering yourself lest you also be tempted”

“Considering” Gr.skopeo, “to observe, consider” “Paul uses a strong word in the present tense, which emphasized a continual, diligent attentiveness to their own purity” (MacArthur).

Albert Barnes says, “Remembering how liable you are yourself to err; and how much kindness and indulgence should therefore be shown to others. You are to act as if you felt it possible that you might also be overtaken with

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Galatians 6:1-2
Dr. Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher
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a fault; and you should act as you would wish that others should do toward you.”

1. Paul gives similar instruction in 1 Corinthians 10:12 where he says, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”
2. Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:16 to “Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.”
3. He said to the Ephesians elders in Acts 20:28, “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”
4. The church at Laodicea wasn’t willing to “consider” themselves. They said, “I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing.” Jesus says, “And you do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked” (Rev.3:17).
5. Restoring a fallen brother or sister with gentleness is what Paul means in verse 2 when he says, “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

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6. The Mosaic law could only condemn a person in sin but “the law of Christ” restores them. It takes them further than the law can.

Joshua Harris writes, “The law, and our obedience to it, could never make us righteous. It only reveals how sinful we are and how incapable of changing by ourselves. The law is a huge signpost pointing out the fact that we need a Savior” (p.50). On the other hand “the law of Christ” is the law of love.

Albert Barnes says, “The special law of Christ, requiring us to love one another...was the distinguishing law of the Redeemer; and they could in no way better fulfil it than by aiding each other in the divine life. The law of Christ would not allow us to reproach the offender, or to taunt him, or to rejoice in his fall. We should help him to take up his load of infirmities, and sustain him by our counsels, our exhortations, and our prayers. Christians, conscious of their infirmities, have a right to the sympathy and the prayers of their brethren. They should not be cast off to a cold and heartless world; a world rejoicing over their fall, and ready to brand them as hypocrites. They should be pressed to the warm bosom of brotherly kindness; and prayer should be made to

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Galatians 6:1-2
Dr. Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher
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ascend without ceasing around an erring and a fallen brother. Is this the case in regard to all who bear the Christian name?

R.C.H. Lenski concludes, “This is the law of love, John 13:34, the law of true Christian liberty. No law is able to produce this love, only the gospel can do it. James 2:8 calls it ‘the royal law,’ it is devoid of all slavishness” (The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians [Columbus, O.: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937]. 299).

CONCLUSION

1. It is extremely important that we carry one another’s burdens.
2. We are to restore those who have fallen with gentleness and humility.
3. We are to look to ourselves lest we too be tempted or fall.
4. Our ministry as a church is not only to confront sin but also to restore those who repent. It is only when one who has hardened his heart and who is refusing to repent do we enter a fourth step in Matthew 18:17 and treat him like a “heathen and

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Dr. Steve Hereford, Pastor-Teacher
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a tax collector.”

5. My prayer is that we who are walking by the Spirit will help those who fall to the lusts of the flesh and that we will pick them up and not throw dirt on the hole they have fell in.