

## Galatians 6:1-6

### Intro:

In **5:16-26** Paul exhorted the Galatian believers to walk in the Spirit and not the flesh. He has encouraged the positive, discouraged the negative, and now teaches what life and love in the Spirit look like when fellow Christians sin against us or others. Paul sees the natural fruit of real life in the Holy Spirit in the context of interaction between believers.

### Verse 1:

--Paul now instructs us on how we are to deal with another Christian in sin. This is not the only passage in Scripture that instructs us but it is one of the main passages.

#### --**Brethren** . . .

--First, notice that Paul recognizes the Galatians as **brethren**. Every Christian who needs to be corrected should be considered a brother or sister in Christ.

--Paul didn't even question the salvation of the man sleeping with his stepmother! He called for church discipline *because* he was treating him as a brother in Christ. **\*1 Cor. 5 & 2 Cor. 2\***

--This is in contrast to hard-line lordship salvation and legalistic cults that easily give up on brethren. As Christians, we are our brother's keeper! For the very good reason that they are the family of God—which means all our relationships here carry over into eternity.

#### --**If a man is overtaken** . . .

--Second, notice that this correction comes when we see a brother or sister **overtaken**. The Greek word here for **overtaken** can mean *caught by surprise* or *detected in*. The context really fits both.

#### --**In any trespass** . . .

--Next, we must recognize what they are **overtaken** in—**in any trespass**. A trespass is disobedience to a clear command of God. It is known and obvious sin—what Adam and Eve did.

\*Same word as in: **Mt. 6:14-15; Rom. 4:25; Eph. 2:1+5 James 5:16\***

--We are not called to correct people so that they conform to our own personal preferences.

\*Circumcision/Eating meat sacrificed to idols/Shopping at Target/Watching Star Wars/Rooting for the Flyers/etc.\*

--We cannot even conform the weaknesses in ourselves to Christlikeness but we would sure like to form others into our own image! Too often we would like others to be perfect but certainly don't like others holding us to the standard of perfection.

--We must ask ourselves: *What is the sin that I am rebuking or correcting?*

**\*Luke 17:3: Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins (Or trespass KJV) against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.\***

--Notice as well, we don't only correct our pet-peeve trespasses but **any** actual sin. It is much better to crush the egg than try to kill the snake! We are often tempted to only address the things that make our personal life difficult, not what is actually harming others.

**--You who are spiritual. . .**

--Whose job is this? **You who are spiritual. . .** who are they? They are those who are currently walking in the Spirit and recognizing those walking outside of the Spirit. \*Certainly spiritual maturity will play a role in the ability to recognize sin but Paul is opening this work of correction to anyone who is a brother or sister in Christ!\*

--If we are walking in the Spirit and see another brother or sister in sin we are not to:

-Do nothing and hope it will go away.

-Turn away because it is not our business.

-Brush it off because they are "somebody".

-Refuse to get into it because we don't need the headaches.

-Ignore it because we simply don't want to be involved.

-Certainly we never fight sin with sin and respond with: gossip, slander, condemnation, or rejoice in their fall.

--Sadly, when all is said and done, and the need for brotherly correction in this life is over, this command will most likely have been broken much more than it has been obeyed.

**--Restore such a one. . .**

--So if we detect a brother or sister in a sin—seeing them out of the path of the Spirit—and we go to them, what are we to do? The practical process is spelled out in **Mt. 18:15-17** but here Paul gives us the *goal* and the *spirit*.

--The *goal* of correction is restoration—not castigation. The Greek word for **restore** was used of the disciples mending their nets or was used in the day for setting a broken bone.

--We do not correct others simply to defend our reputation, make our own life easier, or prove them wrong. The object of all godly correction is to see our brothers restored to full Christian life in the light of God.

**\*2 Timothy 2:24-26: A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.\***

--We are lovingly trying to help them get back to the place of healing and blessing in Christ.

--We fear correcting others because correction involves judgment, and in our day, all judgment is harsh, and therefore not understanding, and to not understand is to be bigoted or unforgiving. So there is huge pressure in our day to forgive wrongs by ignoring them, and by ignoring them in a hands-off fashion we seem to be understanding, and therefore not judgmental. \*Modern "understanding" excuses sin while correction amends it.\*

--Unfortunately, for our modern culture, the Bible doesn't state that all behavior is simply to be understood. God understands human behavior and He says that sinful behavior is to be corrected—in a spirit of gentleness—so that those in sin may be restored.

**--In a spirit of gentleness. . .**

--The *goal* is restoration and the *spirit* is meekness. The word for **gentleness** here is the same as in **5:23** and again is most often translated *meekness*.

--Today we may be doing the correcting and others are being restored, but tomorrow I may be the one receiving correction and in need of restoration. Horribly mean correction is often—not always but often—a caricature.

--If we do lose it in terms of correction, it is usually because the wrong or sin has been directed against us personally. What an example Christ was in this matter of personal correction! With: His family, His town, John the Baptist, the religious leaders, Judas, His own disciples fleeing, the cross, Saul/Paul, etc.

--We must not ignore sins nor are we to be heavy-handed or in a wild outrage over the sins of others. \*Paul is an incredible example of godly and loving correction in this epistle as well as those of 1 & 2 Corinthians, Philemon, etc.\*

--Not all “hurt” in correction is from the lack of gentleness or meekness in the one doing the correcting. Many times it is simply because we are so prideful and insecure.

*\*Fenelon (Let Go): “It is a good sign of real, God-produced humility when we are no longer shocked by the corrections of others, nor by the resistance within. Like little children, we know very well that those correcting us are right, but we also humbly acknowledge the fact that we cannot, by ourselves, make the necessary corrections. We know what we are, and we have no hope of becoming any better except through the mercy of God. The reproofs of others, harsh and unfeeling as they may be, seem to be less than we really deserve. If we find ourselves rebelling and getting irritable, we should understand that this irritability under correction is worse than all our other faults put together. And we know that correction is not going to make us any more humble than it finds us. If we have inner resentment at being corrected, that just shows how deeply correction is needed. In fact, the sting of correction wouldn't be felt at all if the old self were dead. So, the more correction hurts, the more we see how necessary it is.”\**

**--Considering yourself lest you also be tempted.**

--Paul makes it clear that we must have an understanding that those walking in the Spirit today might be those trespassing in the flesh tomorrow. If God has us lovingly correcting others today, praise Him for the chance to help a brother or sister, and don't be deceived into thinking you will never fall!

--You and I are called to live in the body of Christ and bear the burdens of sin, weakness, and the trials of this world with all our brothers and sisters in Christ. **Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.**

--We all need correction in our lives. You will not be perfect and neither will I. Most often, the correction is necessary because we cannot change, or see, or comprehend the sin ourselves. Sin that has begun privately has not been personally judged and is now spilling out publicly. We need others to help us!

--I dare say, the humble man or woman will even come to love correction. \*David & Abigail + Apollos with Priscilla and Aquilla\*

**\*Proverbs 25:12: Like an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold, is a wise rebuke to an obedient ear.\***

--We all need to be corrected by others but no one wants to do it! So if we all need it, but no one wants to do it, we should be very grateful to the few who dare to love us by correcting us—but we so often are not! \*Sometimes the gratitude will come way later\*

### **Verse 2-3:**

--**(2)** The connection here is that we cannot think we are above needing help from others. God has placed us into the family of God, the Body of Christ, and made us a single building of living bricks. Certainly we are called to cast our cares on God (**Ps. 55:22; 1 Peter 5:7**) but part of God's provision is through one another.

--The word for **burdens** in the Greek is *baros* which simple means *a weight*. So what weight is weighing down my brother or sister in Christ? I am meant to be a help.

--If Jesus wasn't called to live in this world unburdened by the sin of His followers than neither are we! Jesus remarkably shared tasks, work, and even asked for prayer from the disciples! He was baptized by another. He is our example of life in community.

--Our strengths are meant to make up the weaknesses of others. We cannot be shocked to find imperfections in otherwise godly people—(Paul w/ Peter). Just be careful that you don't pull up the wheat with the tares!

--Don't hide your burdens from others for fear of correction, or reputation, or sheer pride. We are called to help one another in all our burdens both physical and spiritual—Needs, Hurts, Marriages, Prodigals, Health, etc.

--This is the type of love that becomes evident even to the outside world—**John 13:34-35**. Paul carried his own burdens, as well as cast them on the Lord, and also humbled himself enough to allow others to bear his burdens with him and sometimes even for him. What balance!

--**(3)** This is a warning to the person that feels no need to help their brethren or receive help from their brethren. Like **5:26** our conduct toward others is conditioned or controlled by our opinion of ourselves, and Paul makes it clear, that if I feel like I don't need the body of Christ and the body of Christ doesn't need me, I am deceived. \*A solitary lamb is lost, sick, or dying.\*  
**\*Ecclesiastes 4:9-10: Two are better than one, because they have good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up.\***

#### **Verses 4-5:**

--Paul is not contradicting himself here. He is directly speaking to what burdens we can share and what burdens we cannot share. There are two different words used in the Greek for the burdens referenced. The first word in **2** (*baros*) describes a heavy load, and the second word in **5** (*phortion*) describes a single man's pack.

--Paul is warning these believers that they cannot measure themselves by the actions or lives of the people around them. We don't measure our need for help or correction by looking at how much help or correction people around us need.

**\*2 Corinthians 10:12: For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.\***

--Everyone will have to bear his own burden—or pack—of responsibility before God. That burden—the burden of individual responsibility—cannot be shared like our weaknesses here on earth can. \*This warning is good for those who would seek to abuse the love of others.\*

--We need to see ourselves honestly before God. This is a call to healthy introspection. We can often help others most by correcting our own faults and not fault-finding in others.

--That said, we don't have to be trespass hunters. It is enough to simply and honestly and maturely deal with what comes to us. If we do, in love to God and our brethren, who knows how far God will take a simple correction!

\*F.W. Boreham (The Drums of Dawn): *"It would be easy to demonstrate, by a score of examples, the operation of this intricate law in everyday life. There is, for example, the story of the Haldanes. In his earlier years, James Haldane commanded a man-of-war, the Melville Castle. One day, in the heat of action, he ordered a fresh set of men to take the places of those who had been killed by a broadside from the enemy. The men, seeing the mangled bodies of their comrades, instinctively recoiled and shrank back.*

*"James Haldane poured forth a volley of oaths, and included a terrible and blasphemous prayer. A Christian seaman, whose name nobody knows, went straight up to his captain and respectfully but fearlessly asked him how he would like his awful prayer to be literally answered. The captain was smitten through and through. From that day he was changed man. He lived for fifty-four years to preach the gospel.*

*"His own brother, Robert, who all the world knows as an able and learned commentator, was one of the first-fruits of his ministry. Robert, in turn, went to Geneva, and, while there, was the means of the conversion of a band of young men which included Felix Neff, the enthusiastic evangelist of the High Alps; Merle Daubigne, the historian of the Reformation; and Frederick Monod, one of the pillars of the Evangelical Church in France.*

*"And so the action of a quiet able-bodied seaman in rebuking his captain's blasphemy, by an indirect but distinctly traceable line of influence, shook all Europe and still moves the world."\**

**Verse 6:**

--This command seems a bit out of place here but I think Paul is using this as an encouragement not to give up on those who are directly tasked with correcting us—particularly the elders of this Galatian church!

--Constant, godly correction and exhortation is one of the primary jobs of a faithful minister!

**\*2 Timothy 4:2: *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.\****

--Paul, had appointed elders in every church (**Acts 14:23**) he taught the support of those ministers as a command of Christ numerous times (**Lk. 10:7; 1 Cor. 9; 1 Tim. 5:17-18**).

Remarkable man that he was, he was almost always sharing this truth to make sure others were supported, while he willingly supported himself.

--The sharing here was a mutual dependence and loving exchange of what each had in Christ—material and spiritual. Certainly, they were to share as they were able, which would look different at different times and in different parts of the world.

**\*1 Corinthians 9:11: *If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?\****

--The material support of ministers was a particular need in these smaller, poorer, and persecuted fellowships.

--Unfortunately, there is much abuse of this all throughout the world in our day. The idea of mutual sharing should exclude those:

1) Profiting or “living large” off the flock. \*Wolves and extortioners of the prosperity gospel!\*

2) Lazy ministers that do not provide the spiritual food and care that should be given. This is seen in many denominational systems that offer housing, salary, and pension. All is provided no matter how the ministers “care” or “labor” for the flock.

3) Those that are hirelings. The pastoral hireling is only there because they absolutely *need* the money to keep their present lifestyle. They would leave the ministry in a minute if they could financially.

**\*1 Peter 5:2: *Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly.\****

--I would like to take a moment to personally thank our fellowship for their sharing in all good things with me and my family for almost my entire life. I hope that you can tell, by the grace of God, I worked and did my best not to waste your support so that I would have something to give back to you spiritually. And by the grace of God, I will continue to do so.