

# The Law of Love

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## Galatians 6:1-10

The fruit of the Spirit is most clearly demonstrated in our relationships with others. They are a visible and practical measure of our spirituality. In this passage, Paul describes how we should relate to the family of believers and all people.

### Read Galatians 6:1-10

#### 1. What should those who are spiritual do if someone is caught in a sin? (v. 1)

Those who are spiritual (or spiritually mature) should restore him gently.

If a fellow Christian is found to be in a sinful situation or habit, other Christians should be concerned. Paul is not talking about every kind of sin, but serious matters that demand correction for the sake of the brother or sister. Those who are truly spiritual will not have the conceited attitude Paul warned about in the previous verse (Gal 5:26).

The Greek word translated as “restore” (*kataritzo*) means to put back in order or to return to its former condition. The word was used as a medical term for setting a broken bone. It was also used in Mark 1:19 when the disciples were “mending” their nets.

The response to sin (especially to sins due to a weakness of the flesh) should be handled with a spirit of gentleness (a fruit of the Spirit). We often ignore it, reluctant to confront the offending Christian. Sometimes we handle it with harsh discipline and we may show ourselves to be hypocritical. Those who are doing the restoring must guard against the temptation of pride as well as the sin being dealt with.

#### 2. What does Paul’s warning to “watch yourself” to those who are spiritual indicate? (v. 1)

The possibility of falling into sin by the spiritual person is real. No one is exempt from temptation and everyone needs to keep their guard up against Satan.

Paul may have been speaking to legalists in particular. A legalist would not handle the situation with gentleness and he would be tempted to be proud of himself.

#### 3. What are these burdens we are to carry for each other? (v. 2)

Staying in context, these burdens would be struggles with sin. If a fellow believer is struggling with temptations, we should not act like he has leprosy and avoid him. We should be willing in love to reach out to him. We can be accountability partners or perhaps we can do something to lessen the occasion of temptation. We can pray with them and for them.

#### **4. What is the law of Christ and how is it different from the law we are free from? (v. 2)**

In John 15:12, Jesus tells the apostles that his commandment is to love one another. We have been freed from the regulations of the law of Moses so that we can be solely guided by this law.

As Paul wrote in Gal 5:13-14...rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

When we love one another we fulfill the law of Christ. This law involves submission to a person (Christ) rather than submission to a code of laws (the law of Moses). Paul is calling it a law because he is probably appealing to those who want to live under the law.

#### **5. What does spiritual pride have to do with the previous two verses? (v. 3)**

The one who has a high opinion of himself spiritually may think that he/she is qualified to restore a brother overtaken by sin. However, they are acting out of conceit and spiritual pride.

Pride, which is an attitude of self-importance, would prevent a person from carrying the burdens of others. It also would prevent people from allowing their burdens to be carried by others, because they are too proud to admit they have a burden.

#### **6. What is the appropriate way to assess one's own spirituality? (v. 4)**

The word "test" comes from a word used to describe the testing of metals to see if they are pure. A test of this sort reveals the hidden impurities. If we are lacking in humility, we may need to simply take a close look at ourselves with the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

Take a hard and honest look at how you treat others, how you produce the fruit of the Spirit, and how well you obey the teachings of Christ. Pray that your eyes be opened to the truth. You might even ask for the honest opinion of a trusted friend. Be humble in your assessment.

When the assessment is complete, be grateful for the Holy Spirit who has made you strong in certain areas, and be humbled as you acknowledge your sins and weaknesses. Pray for forgiveness and strength to overcome them.

#### **7. What is wrong with comparing yourself to others? (v. 4)**

Paul is telling us that taking pride in one's self is not wrong if there is something of worth. Even Paul "boasted" in his second letter to the Corinthians. He was proud that he fulfilled his call to preach the gospel. He felt satisfied in himself in Christ.

The key is not to base your pride on a comparison of yourself with others. This comparison is what makes you regard yourself as "better" or "more important" than a weaker believer. If you are to have a feeling of satisfaction, let it be in your Spirit-helped achievements and not in the failings of your fellow Christians.

**8. Does this verse contradict verse 2? Why or why not? (v. 5)**

It does not. The Greek word used for “burden” is not the same for each verse. The “burden” of verse two is *baros*, which means “heavy, having great weight.” This word was used in the sense of a burden that a person needed help to bear. The “burden” of verse five is *phortion*, which is the common word for one’s usual freight or cargo. It was a common word for baggage or backpack.

Why the different words? Because the one here in verse five refers to each person’s responsibility before God. Because the Greek future tense is used, it may refer to when we must give account before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Therefore, in the end, we will be held responsible for our own work, but we should help others by carrying their burdens.

**9. What sort of “good things” are to be shared with those who teach? (v. 6)**

“Good things” refers to financial support or supplying physical needs. This payment is for the instructor who has given up other employment in order to devote himself to full time preaching and or teaching.

The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should make their living by the gospel (1 Cor 9:14). See also Philippians 4:14-19.

**10. How is sharing all good things with your instructor a fulfillment of carrying each other’s burdens? (v. 6)**

The mutual carrying of each other’s burdens is played out when an instructor teaches the truth of the gospel, encouraging and gently admonishing toward holiness. The congregation, in turn, shares in the material support of the teacher, thus relieving his burden of physical needs.

**11. In what way were the Galatians potentially mocking God? (vv. 7-8)**

The word translated as “mocked” means to “turn up one’s snout at.” Paul was warning those who thought they could get away with living how they pleased (according to the sinful nature). He warned them that they cannot turn their noses up at God.

The Galatians must not think they can ignore the preaching of God’s word. It is worth their money and material support, but even more, it is worth their lives.

A spiritual law of harvest is involved here and they must pay close attention. Do not treat the gospel with contempt!

The same principle of sowing and reaping is given in 2 Cor 9:6 with specific application to the giving of money. The Spirit must control every area of our lives, including our finances. We cannot hold any area back from His control, thinking God isn’t going to see.

The choice he makes concerning what and where to sow determines his destiny.

## 12. How does Paul contrast the sinful nature with the Spirit in verse 8?

He uses the metaphor of planting seeds and harvesting what the seeds grow to produce. The sinful nature seeds will produce destruction. As Paul said in Gal 5:19-21, anyone who lives like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

By sowing according to the sinful nature, he is living according to Self and his own natural urges and instincts. Just as the flesh itself will someday decay, all who sow to the flesh will reap corruption. The god Self will lead them to an eternal place where the worm of decay will never die (Mark 9:48), and the fire of destruction cannot be quenched.

We sow to the Spirit by investing all our resources in Him. Our time, talent, treasure—and our very selves—are placed fully at His disposal. Our primary goal is to fill our life's storehouse with the fruit of the Spirit.

## 13. Why would we become weary of doing good? What thought keeps us going? (v. 9)

In addition to the dangers of choosing self or living an immoral life, there is the danger of growing weary of doing good so that we do nothing. We are more susceptible to this danger if we encounter difficulties or backlash and whatever good we accomplish seems to be in vain.

The promise of reaping a harvest of righteousness inspires us to keep going. If we lose heart and quit, all our work comes to nothing.

## 14. How would you describe the phrase “lose heart”? (v. 9)

The phrase for “lose heart” is the picture of a muscle straining hard at a task. Finally, fatigue sets in, and the muscle lets go and becomes limp. This is what we must not do!

## 15. To whom should we do good as we have opportunity? (v. 10)

We should do good to all people—especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

The church and individual Christians have a responsibility to help people regardless of their station in life, their morality, their ethnicity, etc. But our primary concern should be for those within our faith and fellowship.

Paul mirrors this in a slightly different context in 1 Timothy 5:8: “If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

It is interesting that the same word in verse nine for the “proper time” is now used for “opportunity.” So, Paul is saying, as we are presented with the perfect time for serving others, let us continue to do good.

Look for those opportunities!

**16. Why do you think Paul called the church “the family of believers”? What might happen if we *don’t* “do good” especially to our fellow believers? (v. 10)**

Paul occasionally calls the fellowship of Christians the household of God. Since all Christians are considered God’s children, it stands to reason that we all belong to the family of God. Our relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ should be as close as that of a family.

As noted in the previous question notes, Paul uses some pretty strong language in describing what happens to anyone who does not take care of the members of his immediate family. He says they have denied the faith and are worse than an unbeliever. Surely this would apply as well to any failure to help those within the family of God.