

# Knowing Him

## Lessons from Paul's Life and Ministry

### Lesson 6 Galatians 6

The area of personal relationships is arguably the most challenging in terms of living out the practical instructions and principles Paul lays out in the book of Galatians. Following Paul's teaching on the believer's freedom in Christ and the importance of walking in the Spirit, learning to live peaceably with all men—Christian and non-Christian alike—is where the real tests will come.

Paul warns about the attitude he describes in this chapter—pointing out the sin of others when we ourselves may also be tempted. The way to avoid this pitfall is to practice walking in the Spirit (chapter 5) while reaching out in love to those around us.

**Read Galatians 6:1–18**     Free to Bear Others' Burdens

#### **At a glance**

Learn to put yourself in someone else's shoes before you judge them or turn your back on their need. The mature Christian will whenever possible help to restore a brother or sister who falls to temptation or needs help carrying their load. God's grace frees us from self-centeredness to genuinely reach out in love! Can you think of a recent example in your life when you've been able to do it the Lord's way?

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The path through the Christian life is a share journey; we do not walk the path alone but alongside many others. Paul is about to share some helpful hints for making that journey together much more enjoyable.

1. Notice who Paul first addresses in verse 1; how is this person to deal with a believer who is caught in sin? Why?

The word *restore* means *to mend, as a net, or to restore a broken bone*. The way we are to go about dealing with a brother or sister who is in sin is “gently,” the same word Paul uses in 5:23, speaking of the fruit of the Spirit.

**Selah**

(Pause and think it over . . .) Contrast the outcome of dealing with a sinning brother or sister in a harsh legalistic way versus doing it gently and lovingly. If you were the one in sin, which way would you prefer? Please explain.

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2. What takes place when we help to address the burden of someone who has fallen into sin? v. 2 (See also 5:14 and John 13:34.)

Here Paul addresses the danger of comparing ourselves with the one who is in sin—we always feel better!

3. What is the obvious danger involving our heart attitude when we do this? v. 3
  - a. Rather than pointing fingers and looking down on someone else, what should we do? v. 4
4. What is the remedy to feeling superior when comparing ourselves to someone else? v. 5

The word Paul uses for “load” in verse 5 actually means *backpack* (or soldier’s pack), speaking of the responsibilities each of us carry through life. Our goal is not to form our perspective of how we are doing by comparing ourselves with others, but to carry our load, be responsible for our own needs and, whenever possible, help another with theirs.

**Memory verse:** “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.” Galatians 6:7



Learn to view your circumstances through the lens of God's truth rather than looking at God's truth through the eyes of your circumstances. Practice this with the *In focus* word search below and then with the *Up close & personal* look to follow.

**In focus:** Write a definition for the following words, using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.).

tempted (Galatians 6:1) \_\_\_\_\_

sow(s) (6:7–8) \_\_\_\_\_

reap(s) (6:7–9) \_\_\_\_\_

**Up close & personal:** We're aware that when we point a finger at others, we have a few pointing back at us! It is sobering to realize that the fault we see in someone else can also be visible in our lives. Paul says restore in gentleness; James puts it another way. What do you learn about this principle from James 5:19–20?

As believers, it behooves us to remember that guiding and correcting others should be in the spirit of gentleness, which is also in the Spirit of Christ. We should handle others with the same loving concern that we would like shown to us, always keeping in mind that the goal is not to condemn but to restore.

### **Galatians 6:6–10**

### **Free to Share Our Resources**

The same gentleness that is required to bear another's burdens and restore the one caught in sin is also needed regarding our financial duties. Paul taught a spirit of giving among the believers in the churches he had founded, particularly regarding those who were in teaching ministries.

1. What does Paul reveal about this principle in Galatians 6:6?
2. Paul elaborates on this same point in other passages; what main point do you learn from the following? See 1 Corinthians 9:3–14; 2 Thessalonians 3:7–9; and 1 Timothy 5:17–18.

3. What serious warning does Paul issue next? v. 7

The word *mocked* means *to turn up one's nose* or *treat with contempt*. Normally we would not deliberately choose to act that way toward God, but how often do we forget to include Him in our daily choices? Every one of our choices—including what we do with our finances— results in the natural consequence of sowing and reaping.

4. Finish the following from verse 8; personalize it and share an example.

a. *If I sow to the flesh I will*

- Example:

b. *If I sow to the Spirit I will*

- Example:

While the principle of *sowing* and reaping applies to all aspects of life, Paul emphasizes here that God expects His children to financially support their spiritual teachers. Those who fail to do so are courting the consequence; those who give what they are able and live accordingly can expect the reward in verse 9: *“For in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.”*

5. When is the believer expected to do good toward others? Where is the priority placed—why? v. 10

- Personal: How do *you* measure up? Please share your thoughts.

### **Galatians 6:11–18**

### **Free to Minister with Pure Motives**

Paul now stops dictating his letter and picks up the pen to write in his own hand (v. 11). He writes with large letters both to emphasize his words and to prove that the document is truly his.

Paul concludes his letter by referring again to the Judaizers, the false teachers who were causing the problems to the Galatian believers.

1. How does Paul refer to their actions in verse 12?

The phrase *good showing* is the same as *good impression*, but the interpretation here is that the intent was not genuine. The Judaizers were trying to persuade the Galatian believers to be circumcised to avoid persecution and to preserve their sect of Judaism against the political activists of the day. Their motives were impure; they had their own agenda.

2. In contrast to the Judaizers, what was Paul's motive? v. 14

Verse 14 tells us the world was crucified to Paul and he to the world. To Paul, the world was as good as dead—it meant nothing; and he was as good as dead to the world (Galatians 2:20).

3. What was the most important thing to Paul? v. 15
4. In Paul's closing blessing, what does he say is available to those who believe in salvation by grace? vv. 16–18
  - a. What personal comment does Paul make in verse 17?
  - b. According to Paul's concluding remark in verse 18, what did he hope would be the end result for his readers?

**Be transparent**

Paul's body visibly reflected the length to which he was willing to go for the sake of the gospel. It was what he endured that helped shape his perspective and motivated him to encourage others. What discomfort are you willing to endure so that someone else can hear the message of salvation? Please share your thoughts.

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*"It is easy to talk about the fruit of the Spirit while doing very little about it. So Christians need to learn that it is in concrete situations, rather than emotional highs, that the reality of the Holy Spirit in their lives is demonstrated."* James Boice

# A Clear Perspective

*“ . . . It pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me . . . ” Galatians 1:15-16a*

As God writes your story, use this page to let Him highlight and clarify what He revealed to you this week. Revisit the points that stood out to you and note your findings below.

1. As you studied God’s Word this week, how did your viewpoint change?

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2. What word of truth came into sharper focus for you?

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3. In what way have you grown closer to the Lord?

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4. What relevance is there between this week’s memory verse and your daily life?

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**Memory Verse:** Write out this week’s verse from memory.

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