

Galatians Bible Study: Lesson 6 Galatians 6:1-18

Lesson Outline

Welcome/Prayer

Objectives of Lesson:

- To see that freedom/liberty in Christ involves responsibility toward others and our own selves.
- To appreciate the principles involved in "sowing" and "reaping", especially as it pertains to the flesh and Spirit.
- To understand the importance of becoming "a new creation" in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 6 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

6:1-10

Freedom to Fulfill Responsibilities (6:1-10)

"So where do we go from here? What practical steps can we take to resolve this crisis?" The couple asking these questions had taken a long time just to understand the crisis they were facing in their marriage. But now that they had gained some insights into the reasons for their conflict, they were ready to work to put things right.

So far Paul has led the Galatian believers to understand **the historical and theological background for the crisis in their churches** and given them general principles about life in the Spirit. Now he spells out specific responsibilities for those who are led by the Spirit so that they can rebuild their broken relationships.

The responsibilities of those *who are spiritual* (v. 1) are directly related to the problem of division in the Galatian churches. We have already noted that

when Paul describes the problem in the churches, he speaks of "biting and devouring each other" (5:15) and "provoking and envying each other" (5:26). The false teachers' campaign to force all the Gentile believers to become Jews would have divided the churches into hostile groups: the Jewish Christians who zealously campaigned for the necessity of circumcision and observance of the Mosaic law, the Gentile believers who zealously pursued the goal of living like Jews, and the Gentile believers who were not willing or able to live by the Mosaic law. Paul's list of responsibilities in this section shows how those who are truly led by the Spirit can bring healing and unity in their divided churches. **The responsibilities include both the believers' corporate responsibilities to one another and the individual believer's personal accountability before God.** Our public care for one another must be matched by integrity in our private walk before God.

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6 My friends,^[a] if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. ²Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill^[b] the law of Christ. ³For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves. ⁴All must test their own work; then that work, rather than their neighbor's work, will become a cause for pride. ⁵For all must carry their own loads.

⁶Those who are taught the word must share in all good things with their teacher. ⁷Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for you reap whatever you sow. ⁸If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit. ⁹So let us not grow weary in doing what is

right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, whenever we have an opportunity, let us work for the good of all, and especially for those of the family of faith.

Questions:

1. What does it mean when someone is detected in a transgression?
2. Why is 'having received the Spirit' important when you are attempting to restore someone overcome by a sin? Can we assume that the person caught in the transgression hasn't received the 'Spirit'? Why or Why Not?
3. According to Sam K. Williams, author of a book entitled, "Galatians", "Bearing the burden of another is indeed, a metaphor of grace". What does he mean?
4. Since August, we have experienced record breaking weather conditions in the U.S.; commonwealth of the U.S. and among Atlantic neighbors. The devastation and lives loss has been catastrophic. How do we bear the burdens of the people in those places?
5. What is verse 6 describing?
6. What is Paul suggesting will be the outcome of not participating in this support?

6:11-18

Summary (by Mark A. Copeland)

Paul's concluding remarks include an insight into the motivation behind those seeking to compel circumcision. While such people may seek to glory in the flesh, Paul himself will only glory in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ (**11-14**). Summarizing his whole epistle in one verse, Paul reasserts that circumcision is inconsequential, and that in Christ Jesus becoming a new creation is what really matters (**15**). With a plea for no one to trouble him since he bears in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus, Paul closes this epistle with a prayer of peace, mercy, and grace upon those who walk according to his teaching, and upon the Israel of God (**16-18**).

¹¹ See what large letters I make when I am writing in my own hand! ¹² It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that try to compel you to be circumcised—only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ Even the circumcised do not themselves obey the law, but they want you to be circumcised so that they may boast about your flesh. ¹⁴ May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which^[c] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For^[d] neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything! ¹⁶ As for those who will follow this rule—peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

¹⁷ From now on, let no one make trouble for me; for I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body.

¹⁸ May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters.^[e] Amen.

Questions:

1. Why is Paul writing this portion of the letter in his own handwriting? Why do you suppose he's making mention of 'the large letters' he's using?
2. What three things is Paul reiterating in this closing?
3. How are we sometimes like the Galatians?