



HIGHER GROUND  
CALVARY CHAPEL

# SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

GALATIANS: FAITH VERSUS WORKS

Class 06

Final Instructions

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Let's begin Chapter 6

Paul is continuing with his summation of the fruit of the flesh vs the fruit of the Spirit.

We ended our last class with the fruit of the Spirit and, walking and living in the Spirit.

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In keeping with the theme of walking and living in the Spirit, Paul will discuss the Christian's relationship with brothers and sisters; the benefits for doing good vs. the consequences for doing evil;

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and, he declares there is a “rule” for every true believer and the church.

This chapter is all about application.

He not only wants the Galatians to apply what he has written previous to this closing portion into action, but also every believer.

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Last week I purposely left the last verse of chapter 5 (26) to be included tonight.

As I’ve said, this letter, in its original format, was not broken up into “chapters” or “sections.”

I believe 5:26 better belongs at the beginning of chapter 6.

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Chapter 6 can be divided into 4 sections:

- Spirit Living (5:25-6:1)
- Burden Bearing (verses 2-5)
- Sowers and Reapers (verses 6-10)
- Boast in Christ (verses 11-18)

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**Spirit Living**

Galatians 5:25-6:1

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Verse 25 leads us to verse 26,  
and 26 to 6:1.

That tiny word, *if*, is the key to  
everything that follows.

*If* refers to decision making.

Every decision we make leads  
to benefits or consequences.

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Paul uses this word three times in  
5:25-6:5 (4 times in the chapter).

Such a small word that bears vast  
rewards.

Another small word Paul uses  
three times (5 times in the  
chapter) is *let*, but each word is a  
different Greek word and always  
associated with another word.

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Notice in 5:25 that Paul includes himself.

He has called the Galatians his Christian brothers and sisters so by including himself he is saying that he is no better than they are, even as an apostle.

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The stipulation is this: if we live by the Spirit, then the natural way for us to walk is “in the Spirit.”

The natural way being in our *new nature*. Our old nature was crucified with Christ.

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Our former natural way to walk was in the world.

The old nature wants us to continue to live in the world (the law) which leads us to walk in the world (flesh).

Again, a person cannot walk in the new nature and the old nature.

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There is a term called “carnal Christian,” which refers to a believer who continues to sin. They believe they are saved and will go to heaven when they die, but they continue to live in the world and in the flesh.

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They claim to have “fire insurance” (saved from eternal hell). They are not living in the Spirit and therefore they are not walking in the Spirit.

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They may go to church once in a while, but they are doing nothing for Jesus or for anyone but themselves. They are neither living in the Spirit nor walking in the Spirit. I doubt they even know what this means.

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Thankfully, we are not their judge, but they will meet God one day.

Paul says, let us (also) walk in the Spirit; or let us walk in the Spirit

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This phrase, 'let us walk', is the Greek word stoicheō (stoy-kheh'-o) and means "to proceed in a row as the march of a soldier, go in order;" When used with walk it means "to direct one's life, to live."

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Vine's Expository Dictionary – to 'let us walk in the Spirit' is "an exhortation to keep step with one another in submission of heart to the Holy Spirit, and therefore of keeping step with Christ, the great means of unity and harmony in a church."

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Then Paul says, "Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."

The English word, let, means to allow.

The phrase let us (not) become is the Greek word ginomai (ghin'-om-ahee)

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"It means to become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be, receive being." (Strong's G1096)

The implication is that we don't instantly live and walk in the Spirit upon our conversion.

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When a child reaches the point to transfer from crawling to walking, he/she will fall many times.

It is a learning process

The same goes for walking in the Spirit.

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It is a learning process and falls will take place, but one continues to get up and continue walking.

Paul has already shown what the works of the flesh are and what the fruit of the Spirit is.

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When a person believes Christ crucified and the Holy Spirit indwells in him/her, the flesh (old nature) is crucified and they have become a new creation.

The new Christian begins crawling in Christ, learning the basics of Christian living.

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They learn to live the life that God desires for them

A life in the freedom of Christ and in the direction of the Holy Spirit, putting behind the things of the past life in the flesh.

They soon begin to walk, but the flesh keeps raising its ugly head.

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Paul has told the Galatians who they are and what they have become in Christ.

Now he's saying, "don't go back to those ways."

"You have learned to live and walk in the Spirit, don't relearn those things you have given up to have this freedom."

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Living and walking in the Spirit dictates and reflects our attitudes in our relationships with others within the church and outside of the church.

Don't allow your new selves to revert back to your old selves, which was: being "conceited, provoking one another, envying one another."

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These three are all the children of pride.

The Bible has much to say about pride and the destruction it brings.

The word, "conceited" is the Greek word *kenodoxos*.

It is used for the KJV *desirous of vain glory*.

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It means “glorying without reason, conceited, vain glorious, eager for empty glory” (Strong’s G2755).

The word “denotes those who have an opinion of themselves which is empty, vain and false (John R.W. Stott) <sup>1</sup>

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When we glory in ourselves, we provoke others and become envious of them.

To provoke someone is to challenge them, such as to a contest.

To be envious is to be jealous of another’s gifts, abilities or accomplishments.

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The Christian life is not to be a competition between brothers and sisters.

It is a unity of believers working together for the glory of God and the edification of the body of Christ.

Challenging others is to have a feeling of superiority over them.

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The attitude of, “I’m better than you are;” or, “I do this better than you do.”

The desire is for them “to know and feel our superiority.” <sup>1</sup>

Envy others is feeling that others are superior to us.

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We want what they have, their position, authority, knowledge and such.

Conceit develops a rivalry with others because of these high opinions one has of him/herself.

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Living and walking in the Spirit leaves no room for conceit, provoking or envy.

This is the way we were before Christ and this is the way our flesh wants us to continue to be.

The attitude and desire of the true Christian is to serve.

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However, Christians are not perfect and are prone to wander, even those who are mature and have been living and walking in the Spirit for many years.

Paul now addresses the wanderers in the church.

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*Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted (Gal 6:1).*

The word, man, is a generic word for a man or a woman

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Here he uses the word, *if*, again.

Should it happen that a brother or sister give in to temptation.

Overtaken means to be caught in a trespass.

Trespass is better translated as it is in the KJV, "fault."

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J.B. Philips paraphrase: “Even if a man should be detected in some sin.”

The Greek word means “a fall aside or misstep; to stumble.”

Whenever a true Christian stumbles or falls into sin, they are separated from fellowship with God.

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It’s “not the end of the world,” but it has great effect on our walk with the Lord and in the Spirit.

It’s like the example I have given of the person hiking and stepping off of the trail to look at something that is enticing.

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There is always a way back to the trail, but when one gets lost, they need help to get back to and on that trail.

They need to be rescued.

That is Paul’s next order.

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When a person gets off of the trail, when they slip or misstep, “those who are spiritual are to help that person.

Those who are spiritual are the mature Christians, not in age, but in their Christian faith.

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A true Christian could be 30 years old or 70 years old, but a fairly new believer.

On the other hand, a true Christian may have accepted Christ at a young age, is now 50, but has not experienced any growth in his Christian life.

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Neither of these people are what Paul says “are spiritual.”

There are pastors, elders and deacons in churches today that are about as “spiritual” as an empty bottle of soda.

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They do the deeds and act the parts, but the Spirit is not in them, or they don't allow the Spirit to lead them.

The spiritual person is one who is mature in the Lord, has experienced God's grace and mercy in his/her life;

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is living and walking in the Spirit and displays the fruit of the Spirit in their every day life.

Paul then uses the word, restore.

This word means to mend or repair that which is broken; to set a broken bone.

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The brother or sister who has fallen into sin has become broken.

Their relationship with the Father is broken.

Their spirit is broken.

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This person needs to have their brokenness repaired, or “set.”

The reason the mature Christian is called to do this is because they bear the fruit of Spirit gentleness/meekness.

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Someone who is not mature could very easily be judgmental, condescending and harsh.

Or, he/she may be tempted to join in the same or some other related sin.

None of us are immune to sin or the temptation of sin.

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Many people point their fingers to those who are in sin or have been caught in sin.

It is often the sin that one sees in someone else that they themselves are in.

Matthew 7:3-5

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The mature Christian will not point out the error, will not condemn or accuse.

He/she will need to be on alert as well.

The devil likes to camouflage sin, making it look attractive and enticing.

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Jesus said to be watchful and pray. We are to pray for the one who has sinned and needs to be restored.

At the same time we are to be watchful for the attack of the enemy, at all times, but particularly functioning as the doctor who sets the broken part of the believer.

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**Burden Bearing**

Galatians 6:2-5

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Paul now moves from restoring a brother or sister to burden bearing – a brother’s or sister’s burdens and our own burdens.

We have Christian brothers and sisters who have so many burdens:

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economic/financial, physical, mental, sociological, habitual, loss (of a loved one – parent or spouse), and spiritual; to name a few.

I believe there are small burdens, big burdens and everything in between.

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Burden “size” is different for each person.

So what do we do with these burdens?

How do we handle them so they don’t consume us?

God’s Word gives us a threefold cord, one that is not easily broken.

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Three strands of a cord that God not only holds together, but that give us instruction and hope when we carry a burden. Paul writes about 2 of these, but I will go over all three.

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1. The first is found in Psalm 55:22: *“Cast your burden on the Lord, And He shall sustain you;”* The Hebrew word for burden is *y<sup>o</sup>hāb* (ye-hawb) and means, “that which is given”.

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Some Bibles may have the word gift in the margin. So, this verse could be rendered as, *“Cast your gift on the Lord, and He shall sustain you.”*

What at first may seem to be an oppression of heaviness and disdain is now transformed and blessed.

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What we may have thought to be evil and had the effectiveness of harm, we may now see as a blessing from God; not evil but good, and designed to help us move forward, not to hinder our progress.

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Sometimes these burdens may be physical, like Paul talked about.

3 times he asked the Lord to remove the “thorn in his side” and the Lord did not remove it. Instead, the Lord gave him grace and he was kept humble.

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Just as Paul needed the burden, we too need these types of burdens, though not always physical.

They are for our good. They keep us humble and lead to growth in the Christian life.

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They give us opportunity to prove God's sustaining and sufficient grace, and with those we find that the load grows lighter.

Many times the Lord places burdens on our hearts. It may be that of a brother or sister, a ministry, a desire to serve, support of a mission, or something else.

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What a beautiful gift and promise from the Lord. He gives us the burden and promises to sustain us.

There are also burdens that are not gifts from God and we are not to bear.

They are weights hindering us on our journey and we need to unload them.

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A child saw a picture of Atlas holding the world on his shoulders and with some sympathy asked her father, "Why doesn't that man lay that thing down?"

The father replied, "Why, that man, like so many others, thinks he has to carry the world on his shoulders.

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But I think with you, that he had better lay it down.”

We would do well to lay those burdens down which cause us to groan. They are not necessary and useless, and perhaps, even harmful and should not expect God to give us grace to bear them.

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Such burdens are worry, anxiety and fear and not a burden the Lord has given us. Be anxious for nothing... (Phil 4:6) & God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind (2 Tim 1:7).

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Isaiah 63:9 says that God carries all our afflictions and Isaiah 46:4 tells us that God bears for us and carries us. If He carries us, He also carries our burdens. So, why should we continue to carry them.

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2. The second is found here in Galatians 6:2 – *“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*

This is a duty Christians owe to one another. Job 5:6-7 tells us, *For affliction does not come from the dust, Nor does trouble spring from the ground;*

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*7 Yet man is born to trouble,  
As the sparks fly upward.”  
These are heavy burdens to bear making us to continually need sympathy and help.*

It is for our own good and happiness that we enter into sympathy with others.

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The example of Christ teaches us to be concerned about others; that we are our brother’s keeper; that we are not to live for ourselves, but for Jesus who died for us.

And we live for Him when we minister to our brothers and sisters.

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Jesus has assured us of His favor when one day in the future judgement He will say, *“Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me”* (Matt 25:40).

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In ministering to others in the spirit of Christ, we fulfill the law of Christ, and the law of Christ is the law of love. He gave us a new commandment in John 13:34 to love one another.

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To bear one another's burdens is to put the law of love into practice. It means to love not in word, but in deed and in truth.

There are many opportunities before us to exercise this love today, as there are many who are burdened for which we may help lighten and bear.

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Some of these burdens that we may help to bear are: poverty, affliction, opposition and ridicule, or even persecution.

There are those who have strayed from the path and are burdened with a sense of sinfulness; there is a burden of sorrow and grief for those who have lost a loved one; and there are others.

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Paul said in Romans 15:1-3 *“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. <sup>2</sup> Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. <sup>3</sup> For even Christ did not please Himself.”*

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Jesus came to minister and taught us that true greatness consists of humbly serving others.

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*“Love alone makes heavy burdens light and bears in equal balance things pleasing and displeasing. Love bears a heavy burden and does not feel it, and love makes bitter things tasteful and sweet.”* Thomas a Kempis - a late Medieval Catholic monk

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On the flip side of this, I believe it is a sin to not let a brother or sister bear a burden you have. When we reject help from a brother or sister who truly desires to help in the name of Jesus, we are essentially rejecting help from Jesus Himself.

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Is it not Him who sends those to help others?  
Jesus gave a command to love one another and so it is in this love that help is offered and to reject it is to reject God's love and to miss out on a blessing from Him.

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Verse 3 - *For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

I believe Paul is referring back to what he said in verse 1; *“considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”*

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Not just tempted to join in a sin, but tempted to think that one is above helping another with his/or burden.

Even Christians can have this sense of being above doing a particular thing for someone else.

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We know Satan is the one who deceives and tempts.

When a person has this kind of attitude, they have fallen into the devil’s trap of conceit.

Jesus said that without Him we can do nothing (John 15:5).

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In ourselves, we are nothing.  
In Christ we are all He wants us to be.

Having this sense of being above someone else is not having the attitude of Christ.

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Paul then says in verse 4: *But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*

The Greek word for 'examine' is *dokimazō* and means: "to test, examine, prove, scrutinise (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals" (Strong's G1381).

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Paul is not speaking of being proud of our own work.

He is saying that each believer needs to prove his own work and not be concerned with a brother's or sister's work.

It is more of checking our attitudes for the work we are doing for which we have been called.

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Our rejoicing is not in our action, but in the completed work that Christ has done through us for someone else. We will one day be held accountable for the works we have done in the name of Jesus Christ.

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We are not held accountable for the works that other people are to do. Our rejoicing will be when the Lord says, "Well done, good and faithful servant." So, examine our motives and attitudes in the works we are doing for God.

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3. The third strand of this cord is in Galatians 6:5 - For each one shall bear his own load. Some burdens are not transferable. It seems strange that Paul first says to bear one another's burdens and then here he says that every man shall bear his own burdens, doesn't it? It does, but it is not.

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The Greek words translated burdens and burden (load) are two different words.

The word, *burdens* in 6:2 is *baros* and means weight or heaviness, while the word *burden (load)* in 6:5 is *phortion* (for-tee'-on) and means responsibility.

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Therefore, we are to bear one another's burdens, but every man is to bear his own responsibility.

We cannot shift our burden of responsibility upon the shoulders of another.

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Such a burden is that of a parent raising and protecting their children; a business owner; a pastor; a boss and an employee.

And, even each of us as individuals – every man shall bear his own burden, the burden of his own individual responsibility.

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God places before every man life and good, death and evil, and every man must choose for himself what his life and destiny will be.

We are each responsible for the work we do and we will personally appear before God to answer for our work.

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Romans 14:12 - *So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*

So, we see that every man must bear his own burden which relates to his own individual responsibility.

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A burden that cannot be transferred to others, and a burden which others cannot bear for us.

*“Do not free a camel of the burden of his hump; you may be freeing him from being a camel.”* G.K. Chesterton

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We see a progression from  
5:25 to 6:5

Those who are truly living and  
walking in the Spirit will love  
others more;

Loving others more will lead to  
carrying the burdens of others;

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Carrying the burdens of others  
will lead to a willingness to  
restore a brother or sister who  
is in sin.<sup>1</sup>

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**Sowers and Reapers**

Galatians 6:6-10

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Paul now flips this burden sharing “coin” to the other side, which is blessing. Those who are being taught the Word of God are to share in the good things with the one who is teaching.

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Most commentators believe this to mean that the church is to support the pastor monetarily. No doubt, we are to do this, but I believe this has another meaning.

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Why would Paul be talking about sharing one another’s burdens, taking care of our own burdens and then out of the blue say, “And pay your pastors who are the ones that are teaching you?”

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We are all in the body and part of the body of Christ.

This includes the pastor(s).

No one is above another in regards to social status within the church.

We are all equal

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There is, however, a hierarchy: God, pastor(s), elders, deacons, ministry leaders, the remainder of the congregation.

*Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.*

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This is the second “let” in this chapter which signified “and, or but.”

If we were to apply monetary payment to those in the church who are teaching, the church would be paying a lot of people.

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The word, *share*, is the Greek word *koinonia*.

Most of us are familiar with the word as we use it in the church for fellowship.

The Men's Bible study is ending in another week and we are having a "koinonia" to close out the study.

103

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We are gathering together in fellowship to eat a meal and participate in an activity related to our studies.

Paul is speaking of the relationship that takes place between those being taught and the one teaching.

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He is comparing it to the *koinonia* (fellowship) we have with the Holy Spirit (Phil 2:1).

Since all good things come from the Father of lights, it is only right for us to share in the good things with those who teach us.

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That is to say, when we learn from a pastor or teacher and we are able to apply that to our Christian lives, we need to share that experience with him/her. When a child memorizes a Bible verse and shares it with the Sunday School teacher, that teacher is so blessed.

106

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When a man or woman takes a nugget from the pastor's message and does something good with it, they are to share that with the pastor. Not for his ego or to raise him up on a pedestal, but to encourage him and to bless him.

107

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It truly blesses a teacher when a student shares an experience they have had when applying what they hear to life situations. Paul says we are to share in *all* good things.

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This could include an invitation to dinner, or including them in an activity you all may enjoy. Whatever it is, it brings glory to God and both parties are blessed.

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Paul then jumps right into sowing and reaping, which is very applicable to all that he has been saying to this point. But before making that statement, he says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked."

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What does he mean by this? First of all, from the beginning Paul has been saying that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone. Works of the law cannot be included as there is no room for them.

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But then in chapter five we see that he brings up *faith working through love*, which is not works at all, but as I said last week, “true faith will always manifest itself in and through love.” Now Paul has been putting the fruit of the Spirit to work.

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If the fruit of the Spirit is the manifestation of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then good works are the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. This has nothing to do with salvation.

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This has everything to do with completing our salvation. Paul said that every believer is to work out his/her own salvation (Phil 2:12). Part of the works of our salvation is doing for others.

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Paul told the Galatians that they are to share one another's burdens.

This is one way believers work out their salvation.

Just as we exercise our faith, we exercise our salvation by serving others.

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But the deceiver wants to tell us that our works are useless and have no meaning.

God doesn't really care what we do or don't do.

He most certainly does, otherwise He would not have given spiritual gifts through the Holy Spirit.

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God will not be mocked.

The Judaizers were mocking God by their insistence of adding the law and works to His salvation by grace alone and through faith alone.

Paul says that whatever you sow, that is what you will reap.

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The concept is related to farming; the sowing of the seeds and the reaping of the harvest.

Paul puts it in terms of human and Christian works.

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“The Christian life is likened to a country estate, and the flesh and the Spirit are two fields in which we may sow seed.

Further, the harvest we reap depends on where and what we sow” (John R.W. Stott). <sup>1</sup>

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The Galatians had the choice of sowing to please the flesh or to please the Spirit.

Every true Christian has the same choice.

Sowing to please the flesh is giving it what it craves; gluttony, indulgence; coddling and such.

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It is not crucifying it.  
These seeds are mostly deeds  
and thoughts.  
Any time we do what is not  
pleasing to God we are sowing  
to please the flesh.

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Having a bad thought about  
someone; considering to gossip,  
or even just doing it without  
considering it is sowing to  
please the flesh.  
What is it that one reaps when  
sowing to please the flesh?  
A rotten crop for sure.

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Nothing good can come of it.  
We Christians and children of  
God are supposed to be  
achieving holiness, though we  
will not fully achieve it until we  
are in the presence of the  
Lord.

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Peter quotes Leviticus 11:45 when he says, “but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup> because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy’” (1 Peter 1: 15-16).

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Sowing to please the flesh will not result in a harvest of holiness.  
It will only result in a harvest of corruption and separation from the fellowship (koinonia) with the Father and in the Spirit.

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Sowing to please the Spirit will always result in a harvest of everlasting life.  
Sowing to please the Spirit includes using the spiritual gifts He has given to us for God’s glory and the edification of the body of Christ; living and walking in the Spirit and producing the fruit of the Spirit.

126

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All of this will result in eternal life.  
Verses 9-10 *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

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“let us not grow weary” are two Greek words.

‘Let us’ and ‘grow weary’ are the same Greek word and it focuses on the word weary. It means to be utterly spiritless, to be wearied out, exhausted.

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In verse 10 we have the 4th let in this chapter – let us do (good)

Here it focuses on the word do.

It means to work, or to labor.

We also see the word if for the third time.

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Here the word is part of the phrase, “if we lose heart” (KJV faint).

It speaks of the soul, “in discharging responsibilities in obedience to the Lord” (Vine’s Expository Dictionary).

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I believe this has a two-fold meaning.

First, it means that we are not to over-do-it in our Christian service.

We are to share in the burdens of the church.

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Every true Christian has been given gifts to use in the body of Christ.

We use our gifts in order to relieve the burden upon the pastors, elders, deacons and ministry leaders.

The pastors can’t do all of the work.

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Elders are to oversee the various ministries to take that burden from the pastors.

Deacons are to be workers, usually ministry leaders and they take the burden of doing the works from the elders.

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The rest of the people in the congregation are to be the ministry workers, dividing the duties of each ministry among themselves in order to relieve the burden from the ministry leaders.

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When this works, which is seldom ever, the body of Christ (a church) will have an amazing ministry as a whole.

But, if this is not taking place, then the pastors, elders, deacons and ministry leaders can grow weary, become tired, discouraged and “burned out.”

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The other way one can become weary is when a person loses the heart to be doing what they have been called to.

I have heard that there is no retirement plan in God's work.

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But there comes a time when a person's heart is no longer in it and they have become weary and just want out.

This can happen to anyone, pastors included.

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This can also happen to a ministry leader who doesn't have the help that is needed to operate that ministry.

If one or two people are doing the work of 5 or 6, they can easily lose heart and desire to lead or work in that ministry.

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They have become weary to the point of dropping out of ministry altogether.

But, when we persevere in sowing, then we will reap a bountiful harvest at the proper time.

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What would happen if a farmer became tired after sowing only half the field and never finished?

He would only reap the portion of the field he sowed.

There are times when we will get tired when serving God.

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It is a human physical issue.

We must take time to rest and sleep, but we mustn't be lazy.

After the farmer sows the field he doesn't wake up the next day to a crop that is ready to harvest.

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It takes time for the land to yield the crop.

We also wait patiently for the fruit of our labor to develop and become ready for the harvest.

Whatever it becomes, it is from the sowing of good works in the church and community.

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Sowing to please the Spirit will always produce good results.

It will bring good to those whom are being served and it will bring good to the one who is doing.

The ultimate reward is received in heaven

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And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men (Col 3:23).

Matthew 6:1, 3-4

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As we have opportunity.  
If we ask God for opportunities to do good for others (and not just our Christian brothers and sisters), He will do it.

Paul says in Ephesians 5:15-16  
*“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise,*

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*<sup>16</sup> making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”*

We must act on every opportunity God brings us to witness to someone and serve one another; to do good.

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**Boast in Christ**

Galatians 6:11-18

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We don't really know what Paul meant when he speaks of writing with "large letters."

There are a number of possibilities. He has already commented on having problems with his eyes so it is possible that he wrote in big letters so he could see what he was writing.

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Many commentators, though, believe that he deliberately wrote in large letters for one of two reasons: Either because he was treating them as children (rebuking their childish behavior – spiritual immaturity – by using "baby" writing), or simply for emphasis, similar to the way we use capital and bold letters or underline words.

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Another suggestion is that Paul was not a "skilled" writer such as the scribes or a secretary which we know he used to write many of his other epistles.

Also, he was likely used to writing in Hebrew and may have struggled with writing the Greek language.

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Whatever the case, he is stating here that he is the one writing the letter so it makes it that much more personal.

In business today, CEOs, CFOs, COOs presidents, vice presidents and even managers have secretaries that do their letter writing and they just sign them.

151

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If a letter is dictated it has a little more personal touch than if it is a generic type letter.

I can always tell when I get a generic letter in the mail, or even an email.

There is no personal touch and the signature is generally from a stamp.

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Paul is so concerned for the Christians in Galatia that he wants them to know that he is taking the time to personally write this letter to them.

Many Christians prefer to take the easy road, the one that's well groomed and has no potholes or bumps.

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Just “smooth sailing” through this life.

These people are compromising their Christianity.

This is what the Judaizers had done.

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Their compromised Christian life may be free of persecution for the “cross of Christ,” but they would be spiritually dead.

Any time a believer compromises their life in Christ, the Holy Spirit cannot work in or through them.

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R.C. Sproul writes, “One of the reasons the Jewish authorities were persecuting Christians is that, from the outside, it appeared that Christianity was simply a sect of Judaism. The Jews wanted to repudiate that belief.”<sup>2</sup>

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Like in many parts of the world today, anyone who believes the gospel of Christ and refuses to rescind their Christianity are risking physical torment and possibly death.

For those in Galatia, it was refusing to add the works of the flesh to salvation that brought persecution and possible death.

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More specifically, for those who identified with the gospel Paul was preaching; Christ crucified, salvation by grace alone and through faith alone.

But their compromise was embracing the Jewish ceremonial law along with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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This compromise would free them from any persecution from the Jewish leaders.

Then Paul makes a very valid point – that even those who are circumcised don't keep the law.

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There wasn't, and still is not, a living person who is able to obey the whole law of Moses. The Judaizers could not obey the moral law, but they were insisting on observing the ceremonial law.

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If a person disobeys one portion of the Mosaic law, they disobey the entire law. And then, these Judaizers wanted to boast in the Galatian's flesh. In other words, the Judaizers wanted to take credit for bringing these Christians under the law.

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As if they would receive rewards for causing any of the Galatian Christians to be circumcised for the law's sake. They may have received an earthly reward from someone, but they likely only received judgment when they met Jesus.

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Any time someone wants to add any outward bodily act to salvation, they take away from the whole purpose of the cross, of Christ crucified.

God poured His grace upon mankind through the cross.

The only baptism is spiritual, that of the Holy Spirit.

163

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Those who teach that water baptism (or any other work) is required for salvation have reduced the complete work of the cross to an incomplete work.

Not only that, they boast or brag about this work.

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They say, "we baptized into salvation x amount of people this month or year."

They are proud of their "work."

This is what the Judaizers would be doing.

"We circumcised this many Christians this month."

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In Psalm 94:4 the psalmist speaking of the wicked says, "They utter speech, and speak insolent things; All the workers of iniquity boast in themselves." How does one then boast in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 14)?

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Remember when Paul addressed those who were boasting of the one they were following in 1 Corinthians 1:12? *Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ."*

167

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The Corinthian believers were "boasting" or bragging about the one they were following or the one who they had heard and received the gospel from. Even those who had said, "I am of Christ" were boasting in what they did, not what Christ did for them.

168

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They were acting like children who say, "My dad's better than your dad."

Paul says that he boasted only in the cross of Christ.

It is because of the cross that we have salvation.

169

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Had Jesus been stoned to death (John 10:33) or thrown over a cliff (Luke 4:29) it would not have had the same results, which is one reason He was taken away from the crowd who wanted to stone him and from those who wanted to throw him over the cliff.

170

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Besides the fact that it wasn't His time, neither of these were the Father's plan and His prophecy would not have been fulfilled.

Between every person and the world lies the cross of Christ.

People either run away from (around) it or they run to it.

171

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The hymn, "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus," has a line in the lyrics; "The world behind me, the cross before me, no turning back, no turning back."

The cross is before the believer every single day and we can boast in the work that was completed on the cross and the One who completed that work, Jesus Christ.

172

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That work was salvation by grace alone, through faith alone.

The world is dead to Paul and all that matters is life in Jesus Christ.

Because of Christ, those who believe are now separated from the world, that is the ways and laws of the world.

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Therefore, circumcision is of no matter to Christ.

"Circumcision served as a badge signifying that you belonged under the Abrahamic covenant" (J. Vernon McGee)<sup>3</sup>

Many people wear pins, badges or patches these days to identify some group they belong to.

174

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These things can often become meaningless, much like circumcision.

The word, *avail*, in verse 15 means; to be strong, to have power or to be a force (Strong's G2480).

Vine's: "to be of force, to be effective, capable of producing results."

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So neither circumcision nor uncircumcision are effective when it comes to salvation.

They are nothing

The only result is a new creation.

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*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (2 Cor 5:17).*

Our old nature was crucified with Christ and we are now in Christ.

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The Holy Spirit has given us a new nature.

Paul calls this a “new rule” and those who walk in the new nature will have peace and mercy upon them.

The Greek word for “rule” is *kanōn* and means; a measuring rod or rule; a carpenter’s line or measuring tape.

178

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He says that this same peace and mercy will be “upon the Israel of God.”

What is the Israel of God?

Those who follow this rule and the “Israel of God” are one and the same.

So, the Israel of God is the church.

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The “rule” is the cross of Christ and the new creation.

All of Christian life is measured by the cross of Christ and the new creation.

It is following this rule that brings the church peace and mercy.

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Now Paul says that he's just really tired of the Judaizers and he doesn't want to hear from them or about them anymore.

Here we have the 5th time Paul uses the word 'let.'

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This time, the word is associated with the word trouble, which means to bring or give; "to give, bring, cause one something either favourable or unfavourable, to occasion" (Strong's G3930)

182

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"From now on, no one trouble (bring this upon me) me."

His trouble, though, is not over.

By the time he wrote this letter, it is obvious that he had been beaten.

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In Acts 14 Paul was stoned and left for dead outside the city of Derbe, which is in the region of Galatia.

God did a miraculous healing upon him, but he still carried the marks of this beating.

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In 1 Corinthians 11:22-30 Paul tells of wounds and imprisonment he has accumulated and suffered for the sake of Christ.

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Countless beatings, thirty-nine lashings five times from the Jews, beaten with rods three times and stoned once. He writes of shipwrecks, imprisonments, perils in the wilderness and in the sea and so much more.

186

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And what does he say he boasts in?

“If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity (1 Cor 11:30)

“Paul bore the marks of Jesus on his body and the grace of Jesus in his spirit” (John Stott) <sup>1</sup>

187

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He closes the letter the way he opened it, leaving his brothers and sisters in Christ to the grace of God.

It is no strange coincidence that we have this letter, or any of Paul’s letters for that matter, available to us today.

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I wonder how many of his letters were not discovered.

I also wonder what became of these Galatians.

Did they stand firm against the Judaizers or give in to them?

We are not told, though Paul made 2 more missionary journeys through Galatia.

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<sup>1</sup> *“The Message of Galatians”*, John R.W. Stott, 1968, Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, pp.123, 128, 134,145

<sup>2</sup> *“For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free, Galatians” Galatians: An Expository Commentary*, R.C. Sproul, 2022 by R.C. Sproul Trust, p. 137

<sup>3</sup> *“Galatians”* by J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible Commentary Series: The Epistles*, 1991 Thru The Bible, p. 128

*“Burden Bearing,” Maurice G. DaMetz (my Grandfather)*

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## QUESTIONS



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