

## LESSON TWELVE

### (6:1-10)

#### **Bear One Another's Burdens (6:1-5)**

*1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if any one thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. 5 For each man will have to bear his own load.*

The man who lives the liberated life does not live for his own flesh, but for his brothers and sisters (5:13). Paul now gives us some practical instructions on how to live for others. When we are led by the Spirit to live this kind of life, we fulfill the law of Christ - the only law we are under.

**V. 1 Brethren** - This final chapter begins and ends on this note. The first ten verses deal primarily with brotherly love. It is written on the assumption that at least some of the Galatian readers have accepted their correction concerning law and grace, and are ready for teaching about living the free Christian life.

**If A Man Is Overtaken** - As in the situation that later developed in Corinth (I Cor. 5:1), sometimes a fellow Christian may be caught or detected in a serious trespass. Whenever this happens other Christians should be concerned. They must not have the conceited and arrogant attitude mentioned in the verse just before this (5:26), but should be genuinely interested in restoring a brother.

**In Any Trespass** - A trespass is a misstep, or a falling along the way. It is not intended that a self-appointed vigilante group should hound other members about any and every shortcoming. Paul is talking about a serious offense that demands correction.

**You Who Are Spiritual** - Notice that there are three requirements for those who are to help the fallen brother:

1. Must be spiritual
2. Must have spirit of gentleness
3. Must watch themselves, lest they be tempted.

A Christian congregation should be able to determine who has demonstrated spiritual maturity. The wisdom of the whole body should take precedence over the ambition of the self-appointed watchdog, as well as over the reluctance of a spiritually qualified man with false humility.

**Should Restore Him** - The Greek word for "restore" is used for mending what is broken (Matt. 4:21), for teaching (Luke 6:40), and for equipping and training to bring to full maturity (Eph. 4:12). In most instances the elders of the congregation would be the logical ones to restore the broken or dislocated member of the Lord's body.

**In A Spirit Of Gentleness** - This fruit of the Spirit is necessary in the one who is to correct a brother. It is very easy to become overbearing and offensive.

**Look To Yourself, Lest You Too Be Tempted** - Just because a person is spiritual he is not immune to temptation. The power of Satan is all too real, and we can never safely let down our guard.

**V. 2 Bear One Another's Burdens** - In this immediate context the burdens we must help carry are the temptations to sin. If a brother is struggling with a certain temptation we should not act like he has leprosy and avoid him. We should be all the more eager to reach out to help him.

**Fulfill The Law Of Christ** - And what is the law of Christ? His commandment is that we love one another (John 15:12). We have been freed from the law of Moses so that we can

apply all our energies to this law. This single command fulfills all the earlier law (5:14), and goes far beyond that law.

**V. 3 For If Any One Thinks He Is Something** - This ties back to 5:26 again. The man who takes himself too seriously is operating from self-conceit and will act on the level of the works of the flesh. He will have nothing but contempt for the brother who is overtaken in a trespass. Being without sin, he will gladly cast the first stone.

**When He Is Nothing** - One of the greatest lessons we can ever learn is that we are only sinners, and will never deserve the grace of God. God's greatest men learned this. (See David in Psalm 51, Paul in I Tim. 1:15, and John in I John 1:8-10). It is only when we admit our spiritual bankruptcy that we shall see God (Matt. 5:3-12).

**V. 4 But Let Each One Test His Own Work** - An honest appraisal of ourselves is always in order. For such virtues as may be found we should praise God and the Spirit which produced them. For such faults as may be found we should ask forgiveness. Unless we are completely blind, such an appraisal should give us plenty to be humble about!

**His Reason To Boast Will Be In Himself Alone And Not In His Neighbor** - The reason to boast should be understood as a ground for satisfaction. There is a sense in which this feeling of satisfaction is wholesome and right, as when Paul felt good about preaching the Gospel and refusing the salary he deserved (I Cor. 9:1-18). Most of all, the lesson is this: If you are to have a feeling of satisfaction, let it be in your heaven-helped accomplishments, not in your neighbor's failure!

**V. 5 For Each Man Will Have To Bear His Own Load** - At first glance there seems to be a contradiction between verse two and verse five, especially in the KJV. First we are told to "bear one another's burden," and then we are told that each man must "bear his own burden." The solution lies in the two different Greek words for burden. The burden of verse two is *baros*, which means "heavy, having great weight." The burden of verse five is *phortion*, which is the common word for one's usual freight or cargo.

Thus, we must all help one another in the oppressive burdens of life, but we also each have certain things for which we alone are responsible.

### **Sowing And Reaping (6:6-10)**

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

*7 Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

**V. 6 Let Him Who Is Taught The Word** - One way in which Christians can show brotherly love and "bear one another's burdens" is by paying those who preach and teach the Gospel. It is only right that the man who gives up other employment to spend full time preaching and teaching should have his physical needs met by the church (Matt. 10:9-10; I Cor. 9:1-18; II Cor. 11:8-9; I Tim. 5:17-18). In fact, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel (I Cor. 9:14).

**Share All Good Things** - This includes many things other than money. Whatever material benefits are available should be freely shared with those who helped bring spiritual benefits (Cf. Rom. 15:27).

**V. 7 Do Not Be Deceived; God Is Not Mocked** - The Galatians must not think they can toy around with the preaching of the gospel. It is worth their money, but far more, it is worth their lives. A spiritual law of harvest is involved here and they must pay close attention. They must not think they can mock ("turn the nose up at") God and treat His gospel with contempt.

**Whatever A Man Sows, That He Will Also Reap** - This same principle is given in II Cor. 9:6 with specific application to giving money. Money is involved here in this text as well,

but only as one application of a grander truth. It is not merely a matter of the pocketbook, but of the entire battle between the flesh and the Spirit. The Spirit must control every area of the Christian's life, including his finances. A man must not hold back any part of his life from the Spirit, thinking to pull the wool over God's eyes. The choice he makes concerning what and where to sow will decide his destiny.

**V. 8 For He Who Sows To His Own Flesh** - If the choice is to sow to his own flesh, then the man has chosen to serve Self. He has reversed the demand of Christ that all who follow Him must deny self (Matt. 16:24). Some people suppose that because they do not live in wealth and luxury that they are immune to the warning about sowing to the flesh. However, anytime a person cares more about what he wants than what God wants, he is guilty.

**Will From The Flesh Reap Corruption** - Just as the flesh itself will someday decay and putrefy, all who sow to the flesh will reap corruption. The god Self will lead them to an eternal kingdom where the worms of decay never die (Mark 9:48), and the fire of destruction cannot be quenched.

**But He Who Sows To The Spirit** - 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. We must be willing to spend and be spent, trusting the judgment of God more than our own. Our primary concern must be to fill our life's storehouse with the fruit of the Spirit.

**Will From The Spirit Reap Eternal Life** - Anyone who tries to keep his life for himself will lose it, but anyone who gives up his life to the Lord will find it (Matt. 16:25). While the consequences of his choice may not become immediately obvious, they are certain and sure.

**V. 9 And Let Us Not Grow Weary In Well-Doing** - In addition to the dangers of choosing money or choosing an immoral, fleshly life, there is one more danger: that we will just grow weary and do nothing. Especially if the going gets tough, we will be tempted to give up and quit. (The word for "grow weary" is also found describing the despair of a woman in the middle of a long, difficult childbirth). Since we are doing what is right, we cannot quit.

**For In Due Season We Shall Reap** - One cannot gather the harvest before the time is ready. We must wait for God to reveal the appointed time of harvest, and trust His wisdom. The fact that the harvest is guaranteed should make us rejoice, and should give us renewed enthusiasm to "keep on keeping on."

**If We Do Not Lose Heart** - The picture is that of a muscle straining hard at a task. Finally, in defeat, the muscle lets go and becomes limp. This is what we must not do. The same warning is echoed in Hebrews 12:3, where the last word in the verse is the same as used here for "lose heart."

**V. 10 So Then, As We Have Opportunity** - It is interesting that the same word in verse nine for the due season of reaping is now used for "opportunity." Perhaps Paul was using this play on words to remind us that we are usually looking for "the time" in the wrong way. Since we have no control over the time of reaping, we should be more concerned about the time of serving. The thought of brotherly love and "bearing one another's burdens" is still in mind.

**Let Us Do Good To All Men** - Love is a demanding law. So long as there are still people in need - hungry, despairing, lost - love will never let us rest. The whole world becomes eligible to receive our "doing good." Every race and every nation is included in "all men."

**Especially To Those Who Are Of The Household Of Faith** - While we must stand ready to do good to all men, we have a special responsibility to help other Christians. They are fellow members of our family and their needs receive first notice. When famine struck the churches of Judea, gentile churches from as far away as Greece and Macedonia sent relief.

We have no precise guidelines for deciding the benevolence budget of the church. Exactly how we should balance the needs of fellow Christians against the needs of "all men" has not been prescribed. While the saints deserve special attention, the rest of mankind must not go forgotten.

## **STUDY QUESTIONS:**

1. What kind of trespass needs the special treatment of verse one?
2. What are the true requirements for those who set out to restore a fallen brother?
3. What is the “law of Christ”?
4. In what way should a man boast in himself and not in his neighbor?
5. What about bearing burdens: Are we to take care of our own or help each other?
6. Why should the student share “all good things” with his teacher?
7. How might a person mock God?
8. What is God’s law of harvest?
9. What temptation does the Christian face in addition to the obvious temptations of money and immorality (vs. 9).
10. What is the role of the church in benevolence? What is your opinion (not binding on others!) regarding:
  - a. United Fund or Community Chest?
  - b. Salvation Army?
  - c. International programs such as C.A.R.E.?
  - d. Money for a Christian family whose house burned?
  - e. Money for a local non-Christian family whose house burned? What principles or guidelines would you suggest in evaluating these appeals?

## **ABA REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Gal. 6:1-10 deals primarily with what subject?
2. Briefly define “trespass” as it is used in Gal. 6:1.
3. List the three requirements for those who are to help restore a fallen brother.
4. How is the Greek word for “restore” used in the following verses?  
Matthew 4:21  
  
Luke 6:40  
  
Ephesians 4:12
5. In the context of Gal. 6:1-2, what are the burdens Christians must bear and carry?
6. What is the law of Christ?
7. “One of the greatest lessons we can ever learn is that we are only \_\_\_\_\_, and will never \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of God....It is only when we admit our \_\_\_\_\_ that we shall see God.”
8. Is there a contradiction between Gal. 6:2 and Gal. 6:5? Explain your answer.
9. The Greek word “baros” means “\_\_\_\_\_.” The Greek word “phortion” is the common word for one’s \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.”
10. Is it appropriate to pay those who preach and teach the Gospel? Provide Scripture references to support your answer.
11. “The Spirit must \_\_\_\_\_ every area of the Christian’s life, including his \_\_\_\_\_.”
12. “Just as the \_\_\_\_\_ itself will someday decay and putrefy, all who \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_ will \_\_\_\_\_.”
1. How does a Christian sow to the Spirit?
2. What common teaching is found in Gal. 6:8 and Matthew 16:25?
3. “The word for ‘\_\_\_\_\_’ is also found describing the \_\_\_\_\_ of a woman in the middle of a \_\_\_\_\_.”
4. “The fact that the \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ should make us rejoice, and should give us renewed \_\_\_\_\_ to ‘keep on keeping on.’”
5. In reference to “if we do not lose heart,” “the picture is that of a \_\_\_\_\_ hard at a task. Finally, in \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ and becomes \_\_\_\_\_.”
6. “Since we have no \_\_\_\_\_ over the time of \_\_\_\_\_, we should be more \_\_\_\_\_ about the time of \_\_\_\_\_.”

7. “While we must stand ready to do good to \_\_\_\_\_, we have a \_\_\_\_\_  
to help other \_\_\_\_\_.”