

Growing up in the church in the 1960's and 70's... I heard a lot of sermon illustrations from the old comic strip... "Peanuts." I understand that its creator... Charles Shultz was a Christian... and often he reflected a Christian worldview in his cartoons. ... From all the sermon illustrations... they were used in... one might think that Charlie Brown... Snoopy... Lucy... and Linus... were pretty great theologians. ... When I got to seminary... I half-way expected to find systematic theology courses along the lines of Bibliography... Pneumatology... Christology... Soteriology... and "Peanuts-ology."

So... in taking the risk of giving you a possible false impression... this morning I would like to open this message with an illustration... from... (believe it or not)... Peanuts.

In a strip several years ago... Lucy asked Charlie Brown, "*Why are we here on earth?*" He replies, "*To make others happy.*" ... Lucy ponders this for a frame or two in the strip... and then she asks, "*Then why are the others here?*"

I can picture a conversation like that in a children's Sunday School... can't you...? A third-grader is told by his teacher that we are here to love and serve others. But then he looks around... and it doesn't seem like anyone in his class... or the whole church are doing it... so he takes that answer as a commission that was literally given just to him.

Where we left off... in our study through Galatians... we had seen a contrast between trying to live as a Christian by following legalistic rules... and being led by the Holy Spirit. Charlie Brown was *kind of* right... the reason we are here on earth is for the sake of others. ... The "fruit of the

Spirit”... which we looked at last time... is to be expressed through our relationships with others. Keeping in step with the Spirit has us place our focus on others and meeting their needs. ... A legalist (on the other hand) is not “other-oriented”... but has his/her sights firmly focused on themselves... how much better they are doing than others at following the rules. That is a pride-filled life... while life in the Spirit is self-emptying.

Take a look at the last two verses that we left off with... the last time we were studying Galatians...

### **Galatians 5:25-26**

The word for walk... as I pointed out the last time... is stoichomen... which has a very basic and elemental meaning... of walk. ... It means "*to proceed or step in order.*" ... It means... "*learn to walk*". ... Just as we learned to walk physically by the trial and error method... so are we to begin to walk by the Spirit -- it is a learning process.

How did you learn to walk? ... Were you given a lecture on the subject? ... Did you go to a school and take a course in learning to walk?

No... the way we are to learn to walk in the Spirit... is by trial and error. You have to **learn** to walk in the Spirit... which means you are to start out. ... Some Believers don't want to learn to walk in the Spirit... because just like learning to walk physically... when they were an infant... they are afraid that they might fall down. ... I have news for you -- you **are** going to fall. ... It will hurt. ... But that is the way you are going to walk in the Spirit... and that's the only way.

This morning we have a passage that is a continuation of where we left off... the last time. We are given... today... some great lessons... examples... really... of what this walking looks like.

As we start with a new section of Scripture... this morning... I would like to jump to the end... and call your attention to our final verse of our passage... because it is a great summary of these lessons... of what walking in the Spirit looks like...

### **Galatians 6:10**

This is the plain and simple picture... of what “*walking in the Spirit*” will look like. ... It is... “*doing good to all people.*” But be sure and notice here the last phrase, “*especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*” ... Walking in the Spirit means... “*doing good to all people... but giving special priority to fellow believers...*”

Christians talk a lot about loving the world and sometimes have the attitude that loving each other isn't as important. “...*Do good to the unsaved... so that we might win them to Christ...*” But the admonition Paul gives... is to *especially* do good within the family of God. ... Do good to your brother.

So... as we go back now... and study all the verses leading up to this one... (verse 10)... we will see Paul's train of thought. He writes:

**Do good to your brother when he does bad (v. 1)**

**Do good to your brother when needs arise (vs. 2-5)**

**Do good to your brother with your money (vs. 6-8)**

**Do good persistently (vs. 9-10)**

When believers walk in the Spirit... they think of others... especially other believers... and how they can minister to them. Today's passage gives us two basic ministries we are all to have for the sake of others... by walking in the Spirit.

**I. A Ministry of Bearing Burdens (Gal. 6:1-5)**

**II. A Ministry of Sharing Blessings (Gal. 6:6-10)**

Look how this comes out in today's passage...

### **Galatians 6:1-10**

The first specific issue that comes up in bearing the burdens of others... is to do good to your brother... who is doing bad. ... How do you respond when you find out that your brother or sister is cheating in his marriage... or stealing money from his/her company... or looking at pornography... or hating their in-laws... or being a divisive person in the church...?

What do you do when your brother is doing bad? ... ANSWER: Do good! Do good to your brother when he does bad. What does that look like? You restore him/her in a spirit of gentleness... And Paul breaks that down even further for us... he gets very specific of what walking in the Spirit looks like... when we do good to a brother who does bad. ... It is the exact opposite of what the most common behavior tends to be in churches. ... Sadly a legalistic response is often given!

### **Galatians 6:1**

Throughout this entire letter to the Galatians... Paul has been dealing with the problem of legalism in the church. Here he sets it against walking in the Spirit. And you know... *nothing reveals the wickedness that can exist in a church... better... than a legalistic response to those who have sinned.* ...Call to mind the legalistic Pharisees... who dragged a woman taken in adultery before Jesus (in John 8). ... Or that Jewish mob that almost killed Paul... because they *thought* he had defiled the temple... by bringing in Gentiles (Acts 21:27ff).

Legalists do not need facts and proof... they need only suspicions and rumors. ... Their self-righteous imaginations will do the rest. ... So... in verse 1-5 here... Paul is really contrasting the way the legalist would deal with the erring brother... and the way the spiritual man would deal with him.

The spiritual man would seek to restore the brother in love... while the legalist would exploit the brother. ... The word *restore* (katartizo) means "*to mend*"... and was often used in the context to restore a broken bone." It is a word that implies care and healing. ... If you have ever had a broken bone... you know how painful it is to have it set. ... The sinning believer is like a broken bone in the body... and he needs to be restored... and it will be a *painful* process. ... Even so... the believer who is led by the Spirit... lives in the liberty and grace of Christ... and will seek to help the erring brother.

J.Vernon McGee writes: "*If a fellow falls down and breaks his leg, what are you going to do? Are you going to walk off and leave him in pain? God says, "You who are spiritual set the broken bone. Get him back on his feet again." It is to be done in the spirit of meekness.*"

Instead of trying to restore the erring brother... the legalist... on the other hand... will condemn him... and then *use the brother to make himself look good*. ... This is what the Pharisee did in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18:9-14). ... The legalist rejoices when a brother falls... and often gives the matter wide publicity... because then he can boast about his own goodness... and how much better his group is than the group to which the fallen brother belongs.

Let's suppose for a second, that I am a **legalistic** Christian... And let's say that I find out that you are cheating on your spouse. ... Now... if I have any skill at all in the legalism game... of competition. ... I'll recognize that this as a great opportunity for me. You have just given me a perfect chance to pass you up. Your sin is an opportunity for my superiority. So maybe I talk to you about how it's not right that you're cheating on your spouse. ...But beneath my words... is a secret joy... Underneath my condescension... are the foolish feelings of superiority.

But that is NEVER what a believer who walks in the Spirit would do. They do not have such a spirit of *competition* with other Christians... or go around challenging them to become "as good as he/she is." ... However, the legalist lives by competition and comparison... and tries to make himself look good by making the other fellow look bad.

Notice the warning also in verse one: "*Keep watch on yourself lest you too be tempted...*"

Every one of us are inclined to the snags and snares of sin. It is OFTEN easier for us to get drawn into their sin... than for us to draw them out. We must be careful.

The Spirit-led believer approaches the matter in a spirit of meekness and love... while the legalist has an attitude of pride and condemnation. The legalist does not need to "*consider himself*"... because he pretends he could never commit such a sin. ... But the believer living by grace realizes that no man is immune from falling.

### **1 Corinthians 10:12 (ESV)**

*Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.*

I read a story of a pastor who needed to visit a sinning member... for the purpose of restoration... and wanted to take a deacon with him. ...To choose the deacon... he asked each of the deacons if they would have committed such a sin. ... All answered with a dogmatic "No!" ...except one who said he wasn't sure... "*But that given the same circumstances... he may have sinned too...*" ... The pastor said to that deacon... you are the one who I want to go with me to visit this sinning member. ... It was that deacon who had the right attitude... to do the restoring of the sinning member.

Do good to everyone, especially to those of the household of faith. Bear burdens. #1. Do good to your brother when he does bad. ... Next

Do good to everyone, especially to those of the household of faith. Bear burdens. #2. Do good to your brother when needs arise.

### **Galatians 6:2-5**

The legalist is not interested in bearing burdens. Instead... he *adds* to the burdens of others (Acts 15:10). ... This was one of the sins of the Pharisees in Jesus' day:

**Matthew 23:4 (ESV)**

*They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.*

The legalist is always harder on other people than he is on himself... but the Spirit-led Christian demands more of himself... than he does of others *that he might be able to help others*.

No Christian should ever think that he or she is totally independent... and doesn't need help from others... AND... no one should feel excused from the task of helping others. The body of Christ—the church—functions only when the members work together for the common good. Do you know someone who needs help? ... Is there a Christian brother or sister who needs correction or encouragement? ... Humbly and gently reach out to that person offering to lift his or her load.

What stands in the way... for so many believers to either render help in bearing someone else's burden... or ask for help with their own excessive burden... is pride. And so we are given a warning against this obstacle with verse 3.

**Galatians 6:3**

Pride keeps a person from viewing themselves correctly. They think they are good at something when they are not. And their pride so deceives them that they do not recognize their own inabilities. (We see the perfect



example of this every year on TV... when American Idol starts a new season with their auditions. ... I used to shake my head at some of the people who were absolutely terrible singers... and yet they could not believe that they would be passed by... I'm thinking... why hasn't anyone ever told them the truth...? ... Sadly church game players are just like those deceived American Idol rejects. ... They really think that they are much better than they truly are. ... The truth is that they need to ask for help in carrying a heavy burden in their life. ... And the one who steps in to help must also realize... it could so easily be (and might someday be) themselves under such a heavy burden.

The point is this: no person is better than any other person... not in righteousness and godliness. All men stand before God as sinners... in fact... we all stand as totally depraved sinners. There is not a single person who is righteous... no... not one — not today... not tomorrow... not ever. ...If anyone... believer or unbeliever... wants to stand in God's presence... that person has to come by Jesus Christ and His righteousness alone. Therefore, there is absolutely no place among God's people for pride... There is absolutely no place for feeling superior or spiritually better than others.

Verse 4 says... "*Let each one test his own work...*" Let each one test his own work in light of God's will... according to how well you have followed the Spirit's leading for your own life... not according to how good you look next to someone else's achievements. Competition is completely out!

I think the saddest moment for me in my recent trip to Colombia... was when I attended the annual 3 State church conference for Baptists in

Cartagena with Mike and Pastor Luis. The meeting went very smooth and orderly as they elected a whole slate of officers for the coming year. Things were very calm... until it came time for the reading of individual church reports. It got very animated... and there was shouting... and interrupting the man who was reading the reports. ... I asked Mike what was happening... because I don't speak fluent Spanish. He told me that the disruptions were pastors who were arguing over whose church had more baptisms than the other... *"How can you say that church had more than mine...? That is a lie! Those numbers are not the truth. I know for a fact that we had more than his..."*

The danger of comparing ourselves with others is that we either come out ahead (a cause for false pride)... or behind... (leading to lowered self-esteem and the danger of not doing any more for others at all).

Christians have different gifts and abilities... but God does not excuse us from sharing others' troubles. We are not responsible to do everything or to make the same contributions as others... we are responsible to accomplish what God has called us to do.

### **Galatians 6:5**

In verse 2... Paul used a different word for burden than he uses here. In verse 2 it means an overwhelming burden. We are to help anyone with an overwhelming burden. ... But here in verse 5... we are told that each of us are given our own burdens to bear... and this time Paul uses a word that means *"a soldier's pack."* ... We should help each other bear the unusually heavy burdens of life... but there are personal responsibilities that each man must bear for himself. ... *"Each soldier must bear his own pack."*

Do good to everyone, especially to those of the household of faith. Bear burdens. Do good to your brother when he does bad. ... Then

Do good to everyone, especially to those of the household of faith. Bear burdens. Do good to your brother when looming needs arise.

Now we are ready for the last major section... Do good to everyone, especially to those of the household of faith. Share blessings.

### **Galatians 6:6-10**

Share blessings. This includes financial support... material items and services... as well as personal encouragement. In this section Paul uses the “Law of the Harvest” as the foundation... Whatever you sow... you will reap...”

The first area that Paul applies this to... would have been a very revolutionary... and radical concept... to his first century readers. The concept of voluntary giving to provide for the Lord’s servants... was revolutionary... because Jews were **taxed** for the support of their priests. Gentiles... also... had regular fees they paid automatically... if they wanted to participate in a religious activity. ... So Paul introduces here... what may have been a *startling* concept. ... And the way he does it... is by tying it to this ‘Law of the Harvest’... which he seamlessly moves right into.

God does not command believers to give... simply so that pastors and teachers and missionaries might have their material needs met. The context here shows us that Paul wants them to see *that the givers can receive a greater blessing*.

Pastors who minister in a church like Living Water can expect their needs to be taken care of... because it has leaders and a membership comprised of those who are walking by the Spirit...

I sat and cried over lunch this past Wednesday with a pastor friend... who is not from a church like ours. ... That entire church shows very little evidence... if any evidence at all... that God's blessings are on them. Hearts are very hard... and the pastor is criticized for trying to correct doctrinal error in some of its members. ... They have a budget deficit nightmare... and an even worse prevailing spiritual deficit. That church is a primary example of the principle Paul lays out next... the "Law of the Harvest." It shows increasingly fewer signs of any life... or spark of spiritual vitality.

Verse 7... "Do not be deceived... God is not mocked!" While people can deceive one another... and even themselves... about their motives and attitudes for giving... they cannot deceive **God**. ... So let's now dive into these "Law of the harvest" verses. ... You can try to live your life as if this Law doesn't exist... but God will not be so mocked... It is still true... and you will still experience this Law's consequences.

A lot of people are deceived. In their deception... they think that they will not reap what they sow. They think that they can live in sin... and not suffer the consequences for it.

But there is a flip side to this as well. ... You can also be deceived by thinking that all the good you have been doing for God's Kingdom... as you walk in the Spirit... has been in vain. You haven't seen any reward... and

you never will. That is the flip side – so don't be deceived by that either. ... Our attempts to mock God occur whenever we dispute this divinely decreed Law of the Harvest... Whatever you sow... you **WILL**... in due season (maybe not right away)... but you will reap accordingly.

“To Sow” by the way... means to “spread”... to “utilize”... to “invest.”

The Law of the Harvest... clearly stated says... “everything reproduces **after their kind.**” The farmer doesn't sow wheat and reap barley. You don't plant an apple tree and get peaches from it. The law of nature is... that everything reproduces after its own kind.

Many are trying to satisfy themselves by indulging in “casual” or “recreational” sex. ... Some of them have already reaped the results of what they have sown. ... It is not just venereal disease... which has reached epidemic proportions in America... but in the vast majority of marriages that were in crisis... where I have stepped in to counsel... have experienced non-marital sex... before the marriage... or after it. ... Another “reaping”... (that Hollywood never shows)... is an alarming amount of mental disorders... that are directly related to sex outside of marriage ... Why? God says that you will not get by with sin -- regardless of how many pills you take. God says you will reap what you sow. God will not be mocked. When you sow corn, you reap corn. When you sow sin... that is what you will reap.

A believer might say, "I got converted... I'm a Christian now..." That is wonderful... but you are still going to have a payday someday. You will still reap what you have sown.

If you gossip... grumble... or engage in other divisive behavior (supposedly in secret)... don't be foolish enough to think that you are getting away with it. ... And if you have been gossiped about... you have some assurance here too. In due season... the offender will reap what they have sown. ... Every action has results.

If you plant to please your own desires... you'll harvest a crop of sorrow and evil. ... If you plant to please God... you'll harvest joy and everlasting life.

But what started this conversation about the Law of the Harvest...? It was sowing our finances for God's kingdom. ... Money sown to the Spirit (such as sharing with missionaries who teach the Word) will produce life... and in that harvest... will be seeds that can be planted again for another harvest... and on and on into eternity.

Some investments take a long time to mature. Some investments take longer than this lifetime to mature. Sometimes investments do the opposite of maturing – we've seen enough of that lately on the stock market.

But what God promises is that investment in love will never lose value. He says that we will reap the benefits of loving each other. And sometimes we need to hear this. We need to be assured that our efforts are not in vain. So be assured: your efforts at love will bear fruit. God will use them. Do good persistently.

Verse 9 drives home both a promise and a peril to the Law of the Harvest.

### **Galatians 6:9**

Probably the worst enemy of enthusiasm is time. Human beings have a remarkable and sad capacity for getting tired of (even) wonderful things. Almost every one of you can think of something you were enthusiastic about recently... but now the joy is faded. Your first day of vacation on the coast the sunset was breathtaking... and made you so happy... you could sing. ... But by the end of your stay... you hardly noticed it any more. Vacationers get tired of sunsets... millionaires get tired of money... kids gets tired of toys... and... Christians get tired of doing good.

At first the excitement of teaching that Bible Study was strong... but now you have grown weary of well-doing. The thrill is gone. At first you felt joyful and strong in the Holy Spirit as you worked in AWANA... KIDS Church... visited the newcomers... started reading the Bible... but now you have grown weary in well-doing. The inner power and joy have seeped away. It's a chore. You've lost heart.

But the promise Paul gives us will help to keep us going: "*In due season we shall reap.*" The seed that is planted may not bear fruit immediately. There are seasons to the soul just as there are seasons in agriculture... and we must give the seed time to take root and bear fruit... Each day we ought to sow the seed so that one day we will be able to reap. ...But we must remember that the Lord of the harvest is in charge... and not the laborers.

There is both this promise... and this warning: “*If we do not give up.*” Our responsibility is to be faithful to the Lord’s work... and watch Him bring in the harvest.

### **Galatians 6:10**

“*As we have opportunities...*” Everyone does not have the same opportunities. ... But most of us have more opportunities than we want to admit. ... When God presents your unique opportunities to you – act on them! Pay closest attention to the opportunities among fellow Christians.

**Do good to your brother when he does bad (v. 1)**

**Do good to your brother when needs arise (vs. 2-5)**

**Do good to your brother with your money (vs. 6-8)**

**Do good persistently (vs. 9-10)**

This is what it looks like to walk by the Spirit.