

Sunday, May 19, 2024—Galatians 6:2 Bear Ye One Another's Burdens: Addressing Questions

Galatians 6:2

- **Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.**
- The word translated “bear” means to lift, literally or figuratively (endure, declare, sustain, receive, etc.):—bear, carry, take up.
 - Mark 14:13—“bearing a pitcher of water”
 - Luke 10:4—“carry neither”
 - John 19:17—“bearing his cross”
- The verb translated “bear ye” is a present active imperative which means that Paul is commanding the Galatians and by extension us to actively bear each other's burdens in the present. “Burdens” is a reference to heaviness, weight, or trouble.
- Noah Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* offers the following definition for the English noun “burden:”
 - That which is borne or carried; a load. Hence,
 - That which is borne with labor or difficulty; that which is grievous, wearisome or oppressive.
- Galatians 6:1—given the immediate context, it makes sense that Paul would instruct believers to carry each other's burdens in verse 2. In verse 1, Paul talks about how to handle a brother who has been “overtaken in a fault.” Such a brother is to be dealt with in the spirit of meekness, considering one's self, lest they also be overtaken in the same fault.
- In other words, believers are to be helping one another bear these burdens not harshly judging or excoriating them for their missteps.
 - I Corinthians 12:25-27
 - Romans 12:5
- Galatians 6:2—when believers serve one another by love by bear one another's burdens they fulfill the law of Christ. Paul's command that believers “bear one another's burdens” does not alleviate the individual believer's responsibility and accountability before God for their thoughts, attitudes, and actions.

- Galatians 6:3-5

Questions

- The following questions often accompany a discussion of Galatians 6:2.
- *Question 1*—Should we bear the burdens of non-believers in the same way and with the same regularity that we do for those who are saints?
- In my opinion, the answer to this question is no. Believers do not have the same obligation towards non-believers in terms of bearing their burdens. All of Paul’s one-anothering statements are made to believers and presuppose that the people he is addressing are members “one of another” in the body of Christ.
 - Romans 12:4-5
- Galatians 6:1-2—in the context, Paul is clearly addressing “brethren” or members of the body of Christ and instructing them how to act/ behave toward each other.
- Those who are outside of Christ, are coming at things in their lives from an entirely different system of values. They don’t value and esteem God’s word and his truth. They are following the course of this world that they have been programmed by the adversary to follow.
 - Ephesians 2:1-3
- Therefore, they have no framework in truth to grasp the one-anothering approach that saints ought to have from each other. Therefore, the local church is so important and essential for believers. The local church ought to be our safe space, our refuge from the world. The local assembly is where believers can come and enjoy the fellowship and edification of people who think like them and are endeavoring to treat each other in a Christ like manner. The local church ought to be a light to world of what the life of Christ looks like.
- Believers do have a spiritual obligation to do good and exhibit the love of Christ to those who are not saved.
 - Galatians 6:10
 - II Corinthians 3:2
 - Philippians 2:12-15
 - Colossians 4:5
 - I Thessalonians 5:15

- Titus 3:8
- Galatians 6:2—I don't believe that saints have the same obligation towards non-believers in terms of bearing their burdens. I do, however, believe that saints have an obligation before God to do good and exhibit the love of Christ to those who are outside of the household of faith.
- *Question 2*—At what point does bearing the burden of another saint become an enabling of that saint's bad behavior? Put another way, is there ever a time when carrying another saint's burden would enable them to continue carrying a burden in order to create an unhealthy type of codependent relationship. In other words, they basically use and abuse a fellow saint/saints for an indefinite amount of time for their own selfish reasons.
- This question is much more difficult to answer. The short answer I think is yes. I believe there is a fine line between coming along side to help a saint carry a burden and enabling that saint to never put their burden down. The burden does not belong to the saint how comes along side for a time to help bear it, rather it belongs to the one who was initially carrying it. That is why in my mind, Gal. 6:3-5 are so important because they indicate that every individual saint is still accountable before God for their own burdens.
- Titus 3:10—this verse is talking about a person who is believing/teaching false doctrine. After the second attempt to correct their error, they are to be rejected as a heretic. This verse is not talking about giving people two chances to put down their burden before you walk away from them without any further obligation.
- I Corinthians 5:11-13—Paul instructed the Corinthians “to not company with fornicators” and “to put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” If the Corinthians continued to fellowship with this man, they would have been enabling his sinful behavior.
- It seems to me that Paul's instructions to the Corinthians indicate that one believer's habitual sin is not to be empowered/enabled by other believers.
- This means that when it comes to bearing one another's burdens believers are going to need to exercise some discernment. I cannot give you a one size fits all answer to this question.
- I Corinthians 6:12, 10:23—I believe that honestly and prayerfully employing Paul's discussion making grid will help a believer discern how to handle circumstances such as these:
 - Is it expedient? Is it profitable? To myself and/or other believers.
 - Does it edify? Myself and/or other believers.
 - Does it make for peace among the brethren?

- Am I allowing it to have power over me?
- Even if you determine that you need to walk away from a given situation with a saint there is one thing you can still do for them and that is pray for them.