

# The Christian Arsenal

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## GALATIANS 6:1-18

Today, we finish our study in the book of **Galatians**. I hope you've enjoyed this book as much as I've enjoyed studying and teaching it. All of Paul's books are so full of rich doctrine and practical application to our lives. I hope we've learned from him that **our salvation is totally by grace through faith...a gift of God...not of works...lest we should boast!**

### **Galatians 6:1-6...**

Remember that Paul has been contrasting the law and grace. He's been contrasting a salvation by grace through faith and the Law through works. He's been contrasting a salvation message which he himself had taught them and a salvation message taught by legalistic Judaizers.

**The Judaizers didn't care what they left in their wake.** In fact, by their very nature, they would not have wanted to leave caring and loving churches behind them. They delighted when folks were at odds with each other...and especially at odds with Paul.

So, I believe it is for this reason that Paul comes along and exhorts them in several areas and all this points out how to have a caring church...a loving household of faith... a devoted church family and Sunday School class.

There are four commands Paul makes in the first six verses of **Galatians 6**. I'd like to think of these commands as "**Commands for a Caring Class.**"

The first command we see is **restore**. Paul says we are to restore a believer who is caught in any trespass.

**We know this is a believer Paul is talking about because a person cannot be restored to something he has never been a part of, can he?**

The word "trespass" in **verse 1** carries with it the idea of "stumbling or falling" and means not so much a **premeditated sin** but rather **a sin that happens because the believer isn't on his guard...doesn't have his armor on...**and perhaps **flirts with a temptation** because he is living in his own strength and instead of **standing** in the face of that temptation, he **stumbles and falls**.

Paul says in **Galatians 6:1** that if a fellow believer is caught in a trespass, then it's the responsibility of the **spiritual** believer to restore him. The spiritual person is the person Paul taught us to be in **chapter 5**.

Remember last week, Paul taught you and me to walk in the Spirit. He said if we walk in the Spirit, we will not carry out the desires of our flesh, didn't he?

What is the usual desire of our flesh when we see a fellow believer in sin? The usual desire of our flesh is to **lecture**, or to **criticize**, or to **shun** him, isn't it? But, Paul is telling us to do none of these things...he's telling us to **restore** him!

This word "**restore**" is interesting. It carries with it a couple of different word pictures. First, it's a picture of the **setting of a bone that has been broken**.

**And that's exactly what sin does to a Christian. Sin will cripple a Christian and the crippled Christian needs to be restored!**

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The legalist doesn't do this. The legalist comes along and kicks the crippled Christian when he's down. But, Paul is instructing the spiritual believer to come alongside the sinning believer and do all he can to mend and restore him back to good health.

The word "**restore**" also carries with it the idea of **mending a torn net**. Sometimes the nets of the fishermen would become worn and be torn apart. A fishing net isn't much good if it has a big hole in it, is it? It's really quite useless...totally ineffective for catching fish!

**And that's what sin does to a believer! Sin renders the believer ineffective in his witness...ineffective in his worship...ineffective in his walk with the Lord. And he's not going to catch many fish when the net is broken.**

Listen, the world looks at the church and knows if we have love one for another. They know if we're in the restoration business. And they also know when we're not!

Churches and Sunday school classes fail in this many times. I heard the example given of a man who attended a Narcotics Anonymous meeting as an observer. He was amazed at the openness and frankness with which the people shared their problems.

He asked one of the men afterwards if he would feel free to share with his church the same things he had shared at the meeting and he said, "*Oh, I'd never share this with my church. See, here I'm not condemned. Everyone here has experienced similar things. I feel like if I were to say some of these things in my church, there would immediately be condemnation and judgment from the congregation.*"

**Is that what Paul said to do? He didn't say criticize and condemn and judge one another, did he? He said to bear one another's burdens!**

**Romans 15:1:** "Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength..."

**Romans 14:1:** "Accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment..."

The problem in the church is not always the **weak** believers. The problem in the church is more often the **strong** believers who aren't fulfilling their duty of bearing the problems of the weak and helping them and accepting them and restoring them. I mean...whose responsibility is it to make a weak believer strong? It's the responsibility of the strong believer!

Paul says if any of us thinks we are something, when we are nothing, we deceive ourselves. And I believe this warning is needed. We're to restore a sinning brother or sister in a **spirit of gentleness**...not a **spirit of superiority**!

Paul warns that we must be very careful...we must "look to ourselves..." because we can be tempted as well.

Any time we come in contact with sinners or sin, we must be

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careful. We should be very careful even with folks who come to our door... Unless we're extremely grounded in the Word of God, we mustn't decide to change the minds of those who come bearing a false witness.

In fact, we're told in God's word not to allow them into our home...

Even a doctor can come down with the same disease he's treating. The newspaper had an article about a nurse in Canada who was treating SARS and came down with it.

We must restore our fallen brother or sister with gentleness, and with carefulness!

The second command we see in this passage is **bear**. We are to bear one another's burdens. And I believe we can apply this to a broader subject than just to someone caught in a trespass.

Jesus said, ***"By this shall all men know that you are My disciples...if you love one another."*** And the way you and I can show our love for each other is to bear burdens for each other.

And Paul goes on to tell us that when we do this we fulfill the law of Christ! What did Jesus say? He said, ***"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you."*** **The law of Christ is the law of love!**

Well, Paul never writes anything that doesn't connect. Paul has spent a lot of time teaching these folks that the legalists want nothing more than to burden them with rules and regulations and rituals. The legalist isn't interested in **bearing** the burdens of others...the legalist is interested only in **adding** to the burdens of others.

The Judaizers were cut from the same piece of cloth as the scribes and the Pharisees. Jesus spoke of the sins of the scribes and the Pharisees this way:

***"They tie up heavy loads, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with so much as a finger."***

There are so many different ways that we can bear the burden of another believer. It may simply be a **word of encouragement**. It may be a **word of exhortation**. It may be a **visit**. It may be a meal. It may be a **check**. It may be any number of things...**It may be prayer faithfully lifted up to the Father on behalf of a hurting believer.**

**Let me ask you...**when you hear prayer requests here on Sunday morning, do you remember them? Do you take them home with you and pray for them through the week. You know, prayer requests can seem a **routine thing**, until we have one **ourselves**. And then, it becomes a very **important thing**, doesn't it?

**I hope you pray for our requests through the week...who knows, next week you may have one you will want others to pray about.**

And I want to tell you...whatever we do to lighten the burden of another believer means we are fulfilling the law of Christ!

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A third command Paul gives us is **examine**.

I believe Paul is telling us in **verse 4** that we should examine our own lives and we're not to compare ourselves with anyone else...we're to compare ourselves to the standard of God.

God doesn't look down and compare you and me with each other...He looks down and sees how we're doing compared to His standard of holiness and righteousness. And that's the way we should look at ourselves as well.

Isn't it so easy and tempting for you and me to say, "Well, so and so's not doing such and such, so why should I?"

Paul tells us we should examine our own work...not someone else's. And for this class or any class to function with love and care, each of us must do what God has called us to do...not fail to do something because God hasn't called someone else to do it!

Let me go a step further with this...

And I believe we will never accomplish what Paul is teaching us if we "look down our nose" at someone else. Paul says, "If we think we are something when we are really nothing, we deceive ourselves." God cares as much about those in His kingdom who have a little as He cares about those who have a lot.

I've heard of churches and even Sunday School classes where people felt uncomfortable because some of the members dressed in furs and designer clothes and thought they were better than other people.

I don't believe furs and designer clothes or education or wealth or anything else impresses God! And He's the only One we should be seeking to please!

**Verse 5...** "...for each one shall bear his own load."

This is different from the "burdens" in **verse 2**. In **verse 2**, the burden is a heavy, crushing weight.

In **verse 5**, the "load" or "burden" is a picture of a pack that a soldier carries on his back. It's a word that means something that only you can carry. It's not something somebody else can carry for you.

See, sometimes in the family of God we see a brother or a sister whose life is being pressed beyond measure...either by sin in their life, or even by outward circumstances beyond their control...and we're to bear those burdens for them.

But, other times we are all to bear our own load...

There are just some things other folks can't do for us!

No one can **serve the Lord for us**...we must do that ourselves.

No one can **read the Word for us**...we must do that ourselves.

No one can **witness for us**...we must do that ourselves.

No one can **be faithful for us**...we must do that ourselves.

No one can be **Spirit-filled for us**...we must be Spirit-filled ourselves!

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What a wonderful thing it would be if each member of our class would sit down and examine our own work and ask, "Am I carrying my load in **praying** and **visiting** and **ministering** and in **sharing my faith**?"

There is the command to **restore**. There is the command to **bear**. There is the command to **examine**...But there is also the command to **share**.

At first glance, this looks like an admonition to folks to pay their preachers, and it may mean this, and of course, they certainly should do this. But, I believe in the context of this passage, this verse might be translated, "Let him who **receives** instruction share with him who **gives** instruction in all good things."

The Greek word translated "**good things**" here is used primarily in the New Testament of spiritual and moral excellence. Paul uses this word in describing the gospel itself, the "**glad tidings of good things**."

Do you know the best payment I could ever receive from you? And bear in mind I'm a lay person just like you...but the best thing you could do for me **is to live in the light of the good things I have shared with you! And share those good things with others!**

## **Verses 7-10...**

These are familiar verses and we most often use them in relation to the unsaved. But, Paul was writing to the believers in Galatia...and Paul is speaking to you and me today. These words are for believers!

We need to remember again the theme of the book of **Galatians**. The Judaizers were leading these Christians astray. They were teaching them to sow to the flesh instead of the Spirit. And Paul is admonishing these folks that they may think they can make a mockery of the grace of Almighty God, but they cannot!

Believers can indeed sow to the flesh. They can indeed reap corruption. This doesn't mean they will lose their salvation.

But don't we all know of folks who began their walk with Jesus well...but somehow they got sidetracked and they began sowing to their flesh...and their life was a mess...no witness for Jesus in their everyday life...no example set before their children for Jesus in their everyday life...

Can a believer sow to the flesh? Let me read you a quote from John R. W. Stott:

"Every time we allow our mind to harbor a grudge, nurse a grievance, entertain an impure fancy, wallow in self-pity, we are sowing to the flesh. Every time we linger in bad company whose insidious influence we know we cannot resist, every time we lie in bed when we ought to be up and praying, every time we take a risk that strains our self-control we are sowing, sowing, sowing to the flesh."

On the other hand, the believer who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life. You know, we think of eternal life as being in the sweet bye and bye. Well, it is...but it is also in the sweet now and now. The Christian begins participating in eternal life the moment he accepts the Lord Jesus Christ as His Savior.

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And when a believer sows to the flesh instead of the Spirit he loses the fruit of the Spirit...one characteristic of which is joy. David didn't say, "Restore my salvation to me," but, "Restore to me the **joy** of Thy salvation."

I believe the most miserable person on earth is not the unbeliever...but the sinning believer. Why? Because there is such a battle raging within him between the flesh and the Spirit.

Then Paul tells us to not be weary in well doing. He tells us that we will eventually, in God's timing, reap a harvest from our well doing. And then he tells us that we should do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the **household of faith**...while we have the opportunity.

I want to ask you this morning...how many opportunities have you let slip by to do good? God gives you and me opportunities and I truly believe that some of the opportunities He gives us to do good are opportunities that only **we** can fill. Jesus said, "**By this shall all men know that you are My disciples...if you love one another.**"

**Scripture also tells us if we know to do good and don't do it...then this is sin!**

It takes time and effort to do good...but let's try this church year to not be weary in well doing...to not lose heart in doing good and to do our best to take advantage of every opportunity that God gives us to do good!

As important as doing good to **unbelievers** is, it is especially important to do good to fellow **believers**. John said that if we say we love God and don't love our brother we don't really love God!

Well, in the time we have left, let's look at

**Verses 11-18**...Paul said he wrote this part of the letter with his own hand...in big letters! Paul no doubt had trouble seeing to write.

I truly believe this was Paul's thorn in the flesh. Remember, Paul had asked three times to deliver him from his thorn in the flesh.

And God's answer was, "**No, Paul. I won't. But, I want you to know that My grace is sufficient for you. I want you to know that My power is may perfect in your weakness.**"

I said that to say this...Paul didn't let his thorn in the flesh stop him. If indeed it was his poor eyesight...he didn't say, "Well, I can't see very well, so I guess I'll have to give up working for the Lord. I'll have to stop traveling and planting churches and winning lost souls to Jesus. I'll have to give up writing letters to the churches."

No, he simply got someone else to help him with his writing...and kept right on. Aren't you glad he did?

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We've seen in our study of Galatians that Paul has drawn a number of contrasts between the Judaizers and the Christian.

For instance, he has said

The Judaizer lived in **bondage to the Law** and the Christian lives **by grace through faith**.

The Judaizer **walked in the flesh** and the Christian **walks by the Spirit**.

The Judaizer **lived for himself** and the **Christian lives for others**.

We see in this passage Paul expressing a **final warning** against the Judaizers...

We see that Paul says that

The Judaizers lived for the glory of men and Christian lives for the glory of God!

Paul says the Judaizers were **motivated by pride**. Paul says the Judaizers are boasters in **verses 12 and 13**...they desire to make a good showing...and they boast in your flesh.

Paul says they were **ashamed of the cross**. He says they were compromisers in the latter part of **verse 12**...they didn't want persecution to come to them from the Jewish religious people because of the cross of Christ.

And finally, Paul said these Judaizers were **hypocritical in their conduct**. **Verse 13**...they had no intention of keeping the Law, but they were imposing it on others.

Not only do we see a **warning against the Judaizers**, but we also see a Paul expressing a **testimony to the Cross**...

Paul knew the **Person of the Cross**. Paul mentioned the Lord Jesus Christ at least 45 times in the book of Galatians. The person of Jesus Christ captivated Paul, and it was Christ who made the Cross glorious to him. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...and He died on the Cross!

Paul also knew the **Purpose of the Cross**. The purpose of the Cross was death. We talked last week about being crucified with Christ. Paul said in **verse 14** that the world had been crucified to him and he to the world.

Paul not only knew the **Person of the Cross**, and the **Purpose of the Cross**... and Paul also knew the **Power of the Cross**...

The power of the Cross is that **it takes a wicked sinner and makes him a saint of God!**

The power of the Cross is that **all our sins are washed away there by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus**.

The power of the Cross is that **it introduced us to and allowed us to be filled with the Holy Spirit**.

**And there is so much more...**

Lastly, we see Paul expressing a **desire for the believers**.

**Verse 16... "and those who will walk by this rule..."** What rule? The rule of the Cross...the rule that we aren't saved by the Law, but by the Cross...the rule that we don't walk by circumcision, we walk by grace...the rule that we don't live by the flesh, but by the Spirit...the rule that we are a blood bought new creation in Christ Jesus!

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Isn't the last phrase of **verse 16** interesting? *"...the Israel of God."* Not *"the God of Israel."* What is *"the Israel of God?"*

I believe it is the Israelites who put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Messiah!

The last thing we see in this letter is that Paul state again his authority to say the things he has said...**Verse 17...** *"...I bear on my body the brand-marks of Jesus."*

There was a time when Paul was proud of his circumcision.

But, after he came to Jesus, he was persecuted time and time again...and Paul counted it a privilege to suffer for the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ...and to have the scars to prove it.

**Verse 18...**

**"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen."**

This chapter began with the word "brethren" and it ends the same way.

Paul comes to the end of his letter to the brethren in Galatia and he prays that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ would be with their spirit. This is his final declaration of grace over law...faith over works...the internal over the external.

My prayer is that our study in this book has meant a great deal to your walk with the Lord Jesus.

I pray that it liberates you from legalism of any sort.

I pray that the grace of God means more to you than ever before.

I pray that each day you and I will strive to walk by the Spirit, not by the flesh.

May God's Holy Spirit empower us to minister to each other this coming church year. May we restore each other when we fall, may we bear each other's burdens and fulfill the law of Christ Jesus. May we examine ourselves and our own work from time to time. And may we share with each other all the good things we learn from God's Word!