

# Galatians

## Chapter Six

### Introduction

#### **You have been set free!**

The word "liberty" appears three times in Galatians; the word "free," four times. "For you, brethren," Paul says, "have been called to liberty."<sup>1</sup> In the NIV Bible, verse one of chapter five reads, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free."

You have been set free... *What are you supposed to do with your freedom?* That is the subject of this closing chapter.

#### #1 You Have Been Set Free To Serve Gently (v1-5)

Earlier, in chapter five, when Paul said, "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty," he went on to add, "through love serve one another."<sup>2</sup> You have been set free to serve one another in love.

It may surprise you to hear me say this, but serving God is a burden. It's a burden - but not in the sense you normally think. Serving is not an oppressive, backbreaking chore - although many times that is how we approach it... Serving is not *oppressive*; it is an *opportunity*. It is an opportunity for you to respond to the burden on your heart to see others ministered to in the grace and by the love of God.

Remember the song, years ago, "He Ain't Heavy; He's My Brother"? Love for your brothers and sisters in Jesus is what motivates you to serve - it's the burden of love.

---

<sup>1</sup>Galatians 5:13

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Serving one another in love is put to the test when the other person is acting unlovely:

Galatians 6:1 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.

What does it mean to be "overtaken in any trespass"? The word for "trespass" can be translated *blunder*.<sup>3</sup> Paul is describing a ***blundering believer!*** The blunders aren't the continual, habitual, willful practice of sin; they are the unguarded moments when you find yourself responding or reacting in your flesh rather than in the Spirit. At any given moment, you can be spiritual, or you can be fleshly. It is a great blunder for you as a believer to get in your flesh, yet we do it all the time.

Christians do and say fleshly things. How should you react if they do them to you? It's a test of our serving one another in love. Often we get in the flesh ourselves... Or we come across as superior, almost enjoying seeing someone else blundering...

There's a better approach. "You who are spiritual" describes any believer who is responding and reacting in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit. You serve in love when you "restore" the blundering believer. "Restore" literally means to *mend or repair*; it was used to describe the setting of a broken bone. You restore the blundering believer when you respond with "gentleness." Gentleness, you remember, was one of the characteristics of the love that is produced in your heart by the Holy Spirit.

Paul isn't setting forth the exact actions you should take as you approach the blundering believer; he's more interested in your attitude as you approach the blundering believer. If you are walking in the Spirit, you can approach with gentleness.

Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

"Bear" means to *endure*. Your gentle approach to the blundering believer communicates your willingness to endure their faults; after all, he is your brother; she is your sister. You are willing

---

<sup>3</sup>Jon Courson

to put up with them, knowing that Christ is still at work in them. It is one of my great sorrows that too often in the church believers refuse to communicate a willingness to endure the faults of others. They approach the blundering believer, but not in the Spirit-produced gentleness that is a mark of Christ's love.

"The law of Christ" is that you love one another. In John 13:34 Jesus said,

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

Does Jesus endure your blunders? You bet! Then you do the same for your brothers and sisters.

Galatians 6:3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

Galatians 6:4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

These verses are a slam on the Judaizers and their legalism. The legalist "thinks he is something" because he or she keeps certain rules; but, as we've seen throughout the pages of this book, they are only deceiving themselves. They are "nothing" apart from the empowering of the indwelling Spirit.

The legalist always rejoices when others blunder; it makes him or her look better. Instead they ought to examine themselves and rejoice in the changes God's Spirit is making in them, noting also the areas in which the Lord is still mercifully at work.

Galatians 6:5 For each one shall bear his own load.

"Load" here refers to your own calling and ministry before the Lord. Your serving will one day be evaluated by your Master. He'll be looking for those times you allowed His love to be your law in serving others.

You, and the believers around you, will blunder from time to time. You have been set free to serve gently. As you allow Jesus to love blundering believers through you, they will be restored and you will be rewarded at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ.

## #2 You Have Been Set Free To Share Generously (v6-10)

Christians are a community, but they are not communists. What I mean is that there is no mandatory or forced sharing of their resources. You are not billed for your tithes and offerings, nor scheduled to serve against your will. Your sharing with others in the community of believers is always done on a voluntary basis. You are set free to share generously.

Galatians 6:6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

The most fundamental reason we gather together is to hear the Word of God taught. In order for the Word to be taught, many physical things are needed. Just look around: You need a meeting place... You need furnishings... You need help from others who usher, run sound, teach the kids, lead the worship... You get the idea.

As the Word is being taught, many spiritual things are set in motion. Just look around: Missionaries are sent out or supported... Outreaches are developed... Benevolence is established... You get the idea.

I believe Paul has all of this in mind as he says "Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches." It's not just the pastor and his material needs Paul has in mind; it's the whole ministry God raises up around the teaching of the Word by the pastor that is worthy of your support.

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

This is a well-known physical law that Paul applies to spiritual things. The more sparingly you share with the ministry, the more sparingly you will reap spiritual benefits from it; the more generously you share with the ministry, the more generously you will reap spiritual benefits from it.

Galatians 6:8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

You each have certain resources at your disposal, mostly time, talents, and things. When you invest your time, talents, and things in carnal pursuits, you reap carnal benefits. When you invest your time, talents, and things in spiritual pursuits, you reap spiritual benefits - now and eternally.

Here is something to consider:

No matter how spiritual the ministry you attend is, you will not fully reap its spiritual benefits until you share generously in it. Let me put it this way: You won't *grow* unless you *sow*! Your sharing is voluntary; but you need to know that your withholding of your time, talents, and things hinders your own growth as a Christian.

Galatians 6:9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

It is a matter of fact that you can grow weary sowing to spiritual things. That's often because spiritual seed takes time to germinate and grow. Some of your sowing will not be reaped until you get to heaven! Sow by faith.

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

God will give you the increase of your sowing. Therefore, you are to consider everything that comes your way each day as an opportunity to sow for eternity. Purpose in your heart to share generously with everyone - but especially share generously with those in the household of faith where you worship the Lord.

God has set you free to share generously. I want you to be able to walk in that freedom. We don't want to publish our needs, or ask you for money. We do let you know about opportunities to share your time, talents, and things. But it's up to you to respond. Just remember that you won't grow if you don't sow.

#3 You Have Been Set Free  
To Suffer Gloriously  
(v11-18)

Paul was never one to sugar-coat the suffering you would have to face for your faith in Jesus Christ. He had suffered greatly; but he had suffered gloriously! You may never suffer for Jesus as he did; but whenever you suffer, you can do so gloriously.

Galatians 6:11 See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!

Paul dictated his letters to someone. He apparently had eye trouble; you remember he mentioned his eye trouble in chapter four. At this point in the letter he took the pen himself to write the closing. He wrote with large letters; this was the first large print Bible!

Galatians 6:12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

The Judaizers taught the necessity of circumcision. Paul said it was largely because they were afraid of being persecuted by the Jews! They were wimps.

Galatians 6:13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

This is a reminder that not even the Jews could perfectly keep God's law. Yet they wanted Gentiles to come under the law. Why? So they could boast of their converts.

Galatians 6:14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Never boast in what you have accomplished in your ministry! By the way, this is why we are stingy with praise here at Calvary Chapel; we don't want you to be stumbled in false pride. If you are seeing success in your ministry, it's because Jesus is living His life in and through you.

Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Being a Jew neither helps nor hinders salvation. Everyone, Jew and Gentile alike, are saved by grace through faith. They are born-again by God's Spirit as new creatures in Jesus Christ.

Galatians 6:16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

What "rule"? The rule that salvation is by grace through faith alone, apart from works. You begin the Christian life that way; now walk that way - not turning back to the law. All those who are saved and who walk by faith are "the Israel of God." They are a spiritual Israel - God's nation on earth today.

Let me add this, though:

Don't think for a moment that God is through with the physical nation of Israel...

Galatians 6:17 From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Paul gloried in his bruised, battered, broken body; every scar and sore was to him a trophy or a medal of his serving the Lord. Once he had been proud of circumcision; now he gloried in the marks of his suffering. Listen to this self-description, from Second Corinthians 11:23-28,

2 Corinthians 11:23 ...in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

2 Corinthians 11:24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

2 Corinthians 11:25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

2 Corinthians 11:26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;

2 Corinthians 11:27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness;

2 Corinthians 11:28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.

He counted it glorious to suffer for Christ.

Galatians 6:18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Grace. What a wonderful word; what a wonderful life. Stay in the place where grace can be received, walking by faith in God's promises rather than walking in the flesh in your performances.

+You have been set free to suffer gloriously. In any and every suffering God's grace can be sufficient for you. When you discover

His grace it is glorious. The suffering only brought you closer to your Savior.

## Conclusion

Beloved, you have been set free to love one another with the love of Jesus Christ. You're free to serve, free to share, and free to suffer. Stand fast in your freedom; fight for it against legalism, and against license.