

Parson to Person
(Galatians 6 – Part 1)
(Verses 1–5)
“The Ministry of Restoration”

“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. ² Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. ⁵ For each one shall bear his own load” (Galatians 6:1–5).

Any Trespass—Regarding the Gospel

The context of Galatians leads me to suggest that “*any trespass*” (vs. 1a) could include missing the mark concerning the Gospel. The Judaizers had been a plague among the Galatians. Several people within the churches were struggling with the error.

A trespass is crossing a line or stepping out of bounds with or without intention. Unintentional trespass may occur when one is weak and/or suffers a lapse in judgment. Intentional trespass occurs by willing rebellion. Therefore, “getting the Gospel wrong” might fall in either category.

Being led toward a lie, believing a false gospel, and/or having error in doctrine is transgression. If this occurs, the one deceived and thereby “*overtaken*” would need rescue by way of correction/instruction, repentance, and restoration.

Therefore, teachability in the transgressor is essential! One cannot “*restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness*” unless there is a teachable, repentant disposition.

Intentionally proclaiming a lie and/or refusing correction is another concern. Intentional transgression must be dealt with in clear and defined terms. If the transgressor is stiff necked and unwilling to learn, Church discipline is the only correct avenue. Paul told Titus, “*Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned*” (Titus 3:10–11; see also 1 Corinthians 5, Romans 16:17–18, and 2 John 10–11).

Any Trespass—In General

If “*any trespass*” is to be considered at a broader range, “*any*” then means “*any*.” Therefore, the same rules apply—intentional and/or unintentional. The teachable must be restored and the rebellious dismissed without prejudice—leaving room for a “retrial,” correction, and restoration.

Please remember, our goal in Church discipline must always be restoration.

Bearing the Burdens of Our Brothers and Sisters

Patience and humility are required when working with others. In fact, we are called to gentle self-sacrificial meekness when serving our brothers and sisters. Without true biblical humility (“*considering yourself lest you also be tempted*”), we may end up in trouble ourselves. Self-aggrandizement must be avoided. We are just as capable of trespassing the right ways of the Lord as are our brothers and sisters.

Paul wrote, “*you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness*” (vs. 1), for “*if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself*” (vs. 3). Therefore, the injunction to restore another is given to the “proven/tested” (Philippians 2:19–22, 1 Timothy 3:1–6) and “*spiritual*” (vs. 1).

Paul’s caution, “*let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in [comparison to] another*” (vs. 4), was a reminder. Self-exaltation (especially when one compares oneself to another) is unwise (see 2 Corinthians 10:12b). We must always minister from the perspective of grace and desire for restoration.

Self-exaltation and self-righteous criticism of others always grieves the Lord. The fruit is bad and members of the body get hurt.

I have seen and experienced the “bad fruit” of self-righteousness. I have been judged (falsely) by some—and at times needed genuine correction. It is always heartbreaking when I see a brother or sister pass judgment in self-righteousness and turn away or reject other members of the body without making every effort to share, heal, and restore. It has been said that “Christians are often guilty of creating a circular firing squad.” This should never occur! Paul made it clear. I stand with Paul.

The fact that Paul wrote that “*each one shall bear his own load*” (vs. 5) suggests that there is an accountability even among those who see themselves as better than others. There is a consequence for self-righteous judgmentalism. The consequences can be grievous.

Rejoicing in Restorative Processes

“Rejoicing” here should not be considered pride in self (see Luke 18:11). The believer’s *“rejoicing”* should be a proper and healthy recognition of where one actually resides—as the result of God’s work within.

We may peacefully *“rejoice”* in humility (a proper and healthy evaluation of oneself) while (in maturity) helping others. In this way we are strengthened to *“bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ”* (vs. 2).

It has been mentioned that *“the law of Christ”* is love. In the last chapter Paul wrote, *“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!”* (Galatians 5:14–15).

Biting and devouring one another occurs when we don’t function in the love herein mentioned. We are created in Christ for good works, and those works begin with love for God and then by love for others (see Mark 12:29–31).

May the Lord bless us with the grace to serve others faithfully—as we serve the Lord.

“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.’ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ

Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:1–6).

I love you all,
Pastor Paul