

**THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS:
KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL
(Emphasis: How to Change to Be More Christ-like and Christ-centered)
Equipping Hour at Saving Grace Bible Church, Osprey, FL
(Lesson 8: 6/24/2018)**

INTRODUCTION

We are continuing our journey through the Apostle Paul's Letter to the churches of Galatia -- in the cities of Derbe, Lystra, Pisidian Antioch (not Syria) and Iconium -- churches Paul and Barnabas planted during their first missionary trip documented in Acts 13-14.

PURPOSE OF OUR STUDY

To equip you to understand and address the key issues raised by the Apostle Paul to the Galatian churches. Why? So you may live more Christ-like/evidence Christ-centeredness flowing from your life and heart. In doing so, you may be better equipped to be able to teach others/present all people complete in Christ (Colossians 1:28-29).

BRIEF REVIEW

So far we have been blessed to go through chapters 1-5 and last Sunday we honed in on 6:1-5 identifying our responsibilities to restore fellow believers by addressing and bearing burdens. In addition to 6:1-5, we also identified biblical principles to apply when you, by God's sovereign plan, are given the privilege and responsibility to lovingly restore another believer who has been caught in sin. Last week's materials and all of the recordings and notes for this Galatians study are available on the SGBC website.

TODAY'S OUTLINE

- I. What Biblical Counsel Do I Give an Unbeliever Who Expresses Burdens?
- II. Sharing Fellowship in Service to Christ and Reaping Eternal Rewards (6:6-10)
- III. Takeaways for Your Personal and Practical Application

I. What Biblical Counsel Do I Give an Unbeliever Who Expresses Burdens Resulting From or Connected to Sinful Patterns of Life?

Review of established Scriptural truths (abridged) to help us gain a biblical perspective about the spiritual condition of every unbeliever:

1. Unbelievers (those who have not been regenerated) are dead to spiritual truth, dead in their transgressions, and live in the lusts of the flesh/mind and have a life practice of indulging in sinful lusts (Ephesians 2:1-6).
2. Unbelievers are darkened in their understanding of God, remain excluded from the life of God, have hard hearts/are callous to biblical truth, and have given themselves over to a life practice of sensuality, impurity, and greediness (Ephesians 4:17-19).
3. Unbelievers are declared by God as ungodly and unrighteous since they suppress the truth in unrighteousness even though God has made the truth evident within them (Romans 1:18-20; Psalm 19:1-6). As a result, God has given unbelievers over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, some to degrading passions, and others possess depraved minds (Romans 1:18-32). The latter practice a lifestyle that is ungodly, including unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil while being full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. In addition, these depraved unbelievers are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, not trustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful,

4. Unbelievers (i.e., natural or unspiritual people) have no ability in and of themselves to accept or understand the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to them. They cannot understand Scripture because they are spiritually appraised, examined, and discerned (I Corinthians 2:14) and unbelievers are spiritually dead in their trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1-3).
5. Unbelievers have no desire to serve Christ as Lord (I Corinthians 12:3) since they are His enemies (Romans 5:8).
6. Unbelievers possess a heart of stone which is hard (i.e., unmoldable) until the Spirit of God turns it into a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19).
7. Unbelievers do not subject themselves to the righteousness of God (Romans 10:1-3).

Summary:

One cannot restore (Galatians 6:1-5; Matthew 18:15-20) an unbeliever in a spirit of gentleness as one can a believer.

When you aim to gently restore a believer by providing biblical counsel, your resources are vast; the Spirit and the Word operate to bring about change. Unbelievers have neither power at work in them. Moreover, the believer possesses a regenerate nature capable of understanding and appropriating biblical truth (I Corinthians 2:16). Again, that is something the unbeliever does not (yet) have.

According to Romans 8:8, "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God." That fact underscores it all. Even if you attempt to help an unbeliever change from one outward behavior that is displeasing to God to a different one, the new behavior (i.e., behavior modification) will also displease Him because an unbeliever's heart is far from God. Is that what God has called you to do? Certainly not.

Then, what should you do to help restore unbelievers? The Bible gives you the privilege and responsibility to precounsel (evangelize) them by prayer and using your Bible. In that sense, you do provide biblical counsel to the individual. Begin with explaining to him/her:

God has the answers to all your problems. But those resources and answers are not available to you. I must first spend time precounseling you so as to help make them available. I cannot begin discussing particulars about restoring your life situation (e.g., marriage problems, broken relationships) until this matter is settled.

Then, present the truth of the gospel. You may begin with Romans 3 explain the depravity of all people and explain how that applies to him/her. Do not seek to restore or provide biblical counsel to an unbeliever regarding a horizontal problem before addressing (with clarity and completeness) the vertical relationship with the Lord through evangelism. However, use the very problems, circumstances, issues, etc., stated by the individual to identify sin and the individual's need for salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. Evangelism is where your biblical counsel begins in order to reconcile an unbeliever to God (II Corinthians 5:16-21). Otherwise, the unbeliever may think that some change he/she has made pleases God when, in reality, it does not. False assurance will lead him/her away from the truth in Christ. At the right time, warn an unbeliever not to make a false profession of faith in order to obtain biblical counsel from you. Faith must be genuine.

You may use the word "precounsel" for two reasons: first, it makes clear that restoration or biblical counseling has yet to begin. Second, the word "evangelize" intimidates some unbelievers.

II. Sharing Fellowship in Service to Christ and Reaping Eternal Rewards (6:6-10)

Verses 6-10: The Galatian saints who are leaning toward deserting grace for law, are exhorted to put themselves under the ministry of the teachers who led them into grace, and are warned that if they do not, they will reap a harvest of corruption (6:6–10).

V. 6, Paul provides an additional responsibility – help build that brother or sister up in the faith.

The one who is taught refers to the one receiving instruction from one who is teaching the word to that disciple or learner. The word taught refers to the act of giving instruction. The one who is taught the word has received oral instruction in the Word of God – the gospel.

The word “share” means “to share, to be a partner in a thing with a person;” here it means “to hold fellowship with another person.” Thus, the one who is taught should hold fellowship with his teacher in all good things.

Now in the context, could the Spirit-filled Galatians hold fellowship with the Judaizers (false teachers)? Obviously, no, since these false teachers were not teaching the truth of God’s Word by adding requirements for salvation; thus, they were not ministering good things to them.

What are the good things referred to? Note that the context is where Paul had just addressed how to restore a sinning brother/sister who has fallen to temptation. “Good things” translates (agathos) into spiritual and moral excellence. Paul uses glad tidings of good things regarding the gospel in Romans 10:15.

There is no mention of financial support or any kind of material support. Good things could include material goods, and should not be entirely excluded, but that does not appear to be the primary emphasis in this passage. So here, the Apostle Paul emphasizes a common co-operation between those who are teaching and those who are receiving instruction. Again, sharing all good things pertaining not necessarily to temporal maintenance, but to local ministry labors. In other words, local church ministry is to be mutually shared – accomplished -- by both the teacher and the one who is taught.

Every one is a responsible laborer in the field of local church ministry. Let all be at work in the ministry of the local church, and always striving at it. Good things, things of moral excellence, things of spiritual excellence, things of truth that flow out of the Word of God; and you share together in all those things together. The word even here, shares, is *koinne*, you share in common good things in the context of local church ministry. All that to say that the better understanding of verse 6 would read: *Let the one who is being taught the Word, constantly be holding fellowship with the one who is teaching in all good things.*

Galatians 6:7:

In verse 6, the apostle exhorts the Galatians to continue to hold fellowship with their teachers who taught them grace. The implication being that they were not doing so because they were strongly considering following the teaching of the Judaizers. In v. 7, Paul continues this theme so that the Galatian believers understand the importance of where they practice their fellowship: either with their teachers who teach the truth or with the Judaizers who were teaching them error.

The word “mocked” means “to turn up the nose, to ridicule, to ignore, or to sneer.” It implies an outward display of respect neutralized by an indirect expression of contempt. The point that Paul wishes to press home to the Galatians is that it is vain to think that one can outwit God by reaping a harvest different from that which a person has sown. The figure of sowing and reaping used for conduct and its results is a frequent one in the Scripture (1 Cor. 15:33).

Galatians 6:8:

For the one who sows to his own flesh is one looking to fulfill the desires of the flesh. He does not say, "his own spirit," as he does say, "his own flesh." For in ourselves we are not spiritual, but carnal; devoted to selfishness.

From his own flesh will reap corruption--that is, destruction (Philippians 3:19. Compare as to the deliverance of believers from "corruption" (Romans 8:21). The use of the term "corruption" implies that destruction is the result or natural fruit of fleshly-mindedness; the corrupt flesh producing corruption, which is another word for destruction (see I Cor. 3:17; II Peter 2:12). Future life only expands the seed sown here. They who sow tares cannot reap wheat. They alone reap life eternal who sow to the Spirit (Psalm 126:6; Proverbs 11:18; 22:8; Hosea 8:7; 10:12; Luke 16:25; Romans 8:11; James 5:7).

Galatians 6:9:

In verse 8, Paul exhorts the Galatians to live their lives with a view to the Spirit's control over them. Now, he exhorts them not to lose heart or grow weary in that course of action. The words are from becoming exhausted and giving up; weariness caused by prolonged effort. These phrases are the opposite of what Paul wrote in I Cor. 15:58. The incentive to keep on sowing to the Spirit was that at the right time they would gather the harvest.

Galatians 6:10:

The word opportunity is from the same word being used in v. 9 where it is translated a fixed or distinct period of time. Opportunity means the total opportunity of a believer's present earthly existence to do something. Believers have a unique but limited opportunity to serve others in the Lord's name.

The word "have" is from echo meaning "let us be having" a seasonable opportunity or time. The exhortation is not merely to do good to others when the opportunity presents itself, but to diligently look for or pursue opportunities to do good to others -- "to labor, to be active, to perform," with the idea of continued exertion being included.

The word good is not merely what may be good in character as judged by anyone's standards, but moral and spiritual excellence which is the product of the work of the Holy Spirit through the believer.

The word to (as in to all people) combines the sense of direction with that of activity. None of us lives to himself or herself as isolated units among others. We are bound together and are to do good to all people.

The word household pertains to belonging. Recall I John 3:14 and 4:20-21 regarding the emphasis on loving the brethren. Please note the definite article precedes (the) faith. The expression refers to those who belong to the faith, the Christian faith -- those who are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. Takeaways for Your Personal and Practical Application

A. Providing biblical counsel to an unbeliever requires you to know the gospel message of salvation and to present it clearly, gently and firmly by appealing to the individual that he/she repents (see Acts 2:22-42, and Acts 17:16-31).

B. Serving and being (and encouraging others) in local church ministry is a privilege and a responsibility, which is not just a service activity. It is designed to encourage fellowship with another. Remember that the one who is taught should hold fellowship with his teacher in all good things pertaining to moral and spiritual excellence and striving to be complete in Christ. Be alert for and diligently pursue opportunities to do good by exemplifying and stimulating others to moral and spiritual excellence.

C. Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. Labor diligently for His glory and do not lose heart in doing good (spiritual and moral excellence) for in due time you will reap that which you sow to the Spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 2:16, Paul quotes Isaiah 40:13 and then makes a statement concerning all believers: “We have the mind of Christ.” Having the mind of Christ means sharing the plan, purpose, and perspective of Christ, and it is something that all believers possess.

Having the mind of Christ means we understand God’s plan in the world—to bring glory to Himself, restore creation to its original splendor, and provide salvation for sinners. It means we identify with Christ’s purpose “to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10). It means we share Jesus’ perspective of humility and obedience (Philippians 2:5-8), compassion (Matthew 9:36), and prayerful dependence on God (Luke 5:16).

In the verses leading up to 1 Corinthians 2:16, we note some truths concerning the mind of Christ:

- 1) The mind of Christ stands in sharp contrast to the wisdom of man (verses 5-6).
- 2) The mind of Christ involves wisdom from God, once hidden but now revealed (verse 7).
- 3) The mind of Christ is given to believers through the Spirit of God (verses 10-12).
- 4) The mind of Christ cannot be understood by those without the Spirit (verse 14).
- 5) The mind of Christ gives believers discernment in spiritual matters (verse 15).

In order to have the mind of Christ, one must first have saving faith in Christ (John 1:12; 1 John 5:12). After salvation, the believer lives a life under God’s influence. The Holy Spirit indwells and enlightens the believer, infusing him with wisdom—the mind of Christ. The believer bears a responsibility to yield to the Spirit’s leading (Ephesians 4:30) and to allow the Spirit to transform and renew his mind (Romans 12:1-2).

III. Closing: Living in Light of the Flesh or in Light of the Cross? (6:11-18)

Galatians 6:11:

V. 11 is similar to II Thessalonians 3:17. "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand." The apostle, as addressed in II Corinthians, had a serious affliction of the eyes, a common disease in the East, which caused him to usually dictate his letters. He seems to have had no assistant with him when writing to the Galatian churches, but the urgency of the situation regarding the Judaizers he made it a priority to write his "own hand," even though with pain and difficulty.