



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:8

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“A Commentary On Galatians 6:1-10”

Bob Buchanon

There are many, even within the brotherhood, who use Galatians 6.10 to teach we can give the Lord's money to anyone we deem fit. The Lord has instructed us to give only for the work of the church, i.e. evangelism, needy saints and edification. Below, brother Bob Buchanon examines the context of Galatians 6.1-10 to show that giving to just anyone for just any cause is a perversion of Scripture. While dealing with this error, Bob shows the need for going to our brethren who are in sin. BG

Galatians 6:10 is the culmination of a line of thought begun in chapter five: “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (v. 13). Then in verse 16, he continues: “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.” The following verses draw a contrast between the flesh and the Spirit and their works and fruit. Then in verses 24 & 25, Paul warns: “Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.”

But a question would naturally arise in the minds of the brethren, which Paul anticipates and answers in the first paragraph of chapter six. It might be worded something like this: "What about those Christians who are weak and give in to following the flesh? Should we turn away from them and reject them?" Let us look at Paul's answer. I am making a few comments in parentheses as we read these verses.

Verse 1 - "Brethren, even if a man (this is the Christian man) is caught in any trespass (he is overtaken in a fault, he is walking after the flesh, he needs to be restored), you who are spiritual (the obligation is not placed on the church--the case is not assumed to have progressed that far--but it is to those walking after the Spirit), restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted (to turn aside after the flesh)." The apostle sets the stage in this first verse for the subject of burden bearing. Someone is overtaken or overcome in a fault or sin. The subject is not overcome with hunger or exposure to the weather, but rather to sin. This becomes even more obvious in the end of the verse when Paul warns the restorer to be careful for he might "also be tempted." The fault of the one needing restoration is the result of temptation, not physical needs.

Verse 2 - "Bear one another's burdens (this sets forth the individual nature of the repairing that needs to be done), and thus fulfill the law of Christ (Christ is in the business of forgiving sins and reconciling men to God and to each other)." The burden we are to help with is the "fault" of verse one. Because of the love we have one for another we should be concerned when a brother is overcome of temptation and sins. Providing a bag of rice or potatoes and a pound of bacon is not going to fulfill the law of Christ in this passage. The only thing that will do that is helping the man to overcome sin.

Verse 3 - "For if anyone thinks he is something (superior to his erring brother) when he is nothing (he also has sinned at times), he deceives himself." The first word in verse three shows that the approach mentioned in that verse is the state of mind necessary on the part of the sincere individual who seeks to bear a burden for the backsliding brother per the instructions in verses 1 and 2.

Verse 4 - "But let each one examine his own work (by God's standard instead of by a sinning brother), *Continued on back...*

Northside
church Of Christ

25 Greenfield Pike
Hillsboro, OH 45133

churchofchristatnorthside.com

Visit Us On Facebook!
Facebook.com/northsidehillsboro

Bryan Garlock

Office: 937.393.3634

Cell: 478.256.0325

preacher@churchofchristatnorthside.com

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and then he will have reason (the right) for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in respect to (comparison to the error of) another."

Verse 5 - "For each one shall bear his own load (of God-given responsibility)."

Verse 6 - "And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches." This verse has been used out of its context to prove that we should support those who preach the gospel. While there are several passages in the New Testament that teach that a gospel preacher may be supported, this passage does not so teach. Look again at the context. Paul says when a man sins, help him. When he is restored, he may rejoice in himself. What then? Is he to give the preacher a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken? Is that what Paul is saying? To put such a meaning to the passage degrades the thought Paul has in mind. The thing under consideration is that of an erring brother being corrected by those who are not in error. The one who is taught should come to a point when he participates jointly with the one doing the teaching.

The person who is walking after the flesh and the one who is walking after the Spirit are no longer in step; they are going in different directions; their fellowship has been broken; and the one walking after the flesh is the one guilty of breaking that fellowship. He needs to heed the correction and instruction given him in order that he may return to the fellowship of good things from which he has parted. Hence, Paul admonishes the erring person, "And let the one who is taught the word (the one being corrected) share all good things with him who teaches." In other words, the erring brother is not only to listen, but he is also to do what he is instructed to do to correct the situation in order that fellowship may be restored.

It is true that the word "communicate" in this verse is sometimes used to refer to financial support (see Philippians 4:15). But that has to be determined from the context and not from the word itself. The word translated "communicate" here is also translated "fellowship" and "partaker." Basically, we are told, it means to "share," but what is to be shared must always be determined from the context. It is not included in the word itself.

Verses 7-8 - "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh (by walking after the flesh) shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit (by walking after the Spirit) shall from the Spirit reap eternal life." These verses express the eternal truth taught in Genesis 1:12, that of reaping relative to the sowing. It expresses quite vividly our individual responsibilities in the realm of helping one another, as individuals. It is quite sad that some are trying to shift their personal burdens to institutions, but their real responsibilities stay with them. God is not mocked--they shall reap as they sow.

Verse 9 - "And let us not lose heart (growing weary or complaining because of prolonged effort) in doing good (it is easy to count them as weary burdens and shift them to others, to the church, or to an institution), for in due time we shall reap (based on our sowing) if we do not grow weary."

Verse 10 - "So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith."

In this verse, Paul gives a general admonition concerning the matter to all Christians. The word translated "therefore" or "so then" connects this verse with what has been said before. In the Greek of this verse, the definite article comes before "good." Paul has in mind "the good" he has been discussing of correcting and instructing those in error, especially those of the "household of faith" that have been overtaken in walking after the flesh.

This verse does not have anything to do with helping those who are materially destitute or in need of financial benevolence. In fact, it has nothing to do with finances at all. It is the need of correcting those in error that is under consideration.