

Riverview Baptist Church
Sunday School Lesson Guide
January 31, 2016
“Tough Love”

Memory Verse

“Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2

SS Scripture

Galatians 6:1-6 NIV

“¹ Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. ⁴ Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, ⁵ for each one should carry their own load. ⁶ Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.”

Remember that in the last chapter we learned to express by faith through the outworking of the Holy Spirit. This is one of the purposes and benefits of our relationship with Jesus. The focus of our life is to let our faith in Jesus be expressed through loving other people. This Spirit led love of other people is the fulfillment of Jesus' command to Love our neighbor as ourselves. There is also another important aspect of this love; it is to be humbly demonstrated.

Galatians 5:5-6, 13-14 NIV

⁵ For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. ⁶ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love. ...

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

It is within the framework of this new Spirit-led empowerment to love other people in humility that we are to read and apply verses 6:1-6.

- How do Christians relate to other Christians who are not expressing the “fruit of the Spirit” in their lives?
- Are all Christians equally committed to living in the Spirit and does this cause grief to God and other Christians?
- What is the significance of addressing this issue with the terms, “brothers and sister”?

This terminology is used repeatedly by Paul. It indicates that these are truly Christians, or people that we have reason to believe claim to be Christians. So this issue is an issue of importance to the broad Christian Family the Church. The private life and decisions of one Christian impacts all the rest. Our freedom so powerfully asserted in the last chapter isn't to be used as a platform for indulging the flesh, Gal. 5:13.

- What obligation does a Christian living and keeping in step with the Spirit have to other believers?

The Spirit-led Christian is obligated to express righteous and humble love for their brother or sister in Christ by:

1. Restoring them to the walk of faith in Jesus if they are caught in sin. 6:1

- a. Gently: with gracefulness and love in your heart.
- b. As you walk in the Spirit yourself: You who are spiritual or who live by the Spirit. This has nothing to do with a spiritual gift or calling. This applies to every fruit of the Spirit bearing follower of Jesus. You are to help restore the erring brother. Don't tell others about it. Don't depend on the minister to do it. You go and help that person out of their sin.
- c. Watch yourself: This is an encouragement to avoid hypocrisy and pride. Could it be that at times we do not help our brother back into the walk of the Spirit because we aren't willing to forsake sin and walk in the Spirit ourselves? Read Galatians 5:15-26 together. What do these verses teach us about ourselves that can lead us to be unable to restore those who are in sin?
- d. What sins are to be addressed? Sins of the flesh listed in 5:19-21

2. Carrying each other's burdens. 6:2

This word for burden refers to a heavy load. It may refer directly to those who are under the burden of active sinfulness. Those who are living according to their desires or appetites of the flesh are certainly under a burden of sin. It may also refer to those that are going through trial without actively sinning but are feeling the great weight of the temptation of the flesh. Think of an endurance athlete who is about to be overwhelmed by the fatigue of the race. But the emphasis is on our role in helping this struggling person. There is a mutual obligation in the church. We are not individuals only. We are a family, a body, a house under construction. We are mutually dependent and interdependent on one another.

- What are ways that we can bear the burdens of one another in church? Some may be things we already do.
- What about things that could be done but aren't being done now?
- What stands in the way of us really bearing the burdens of others in the church?

3. Carrying your own burden. 6:3-5

This is not a contradiction of the previous point. But rather a clarification of it. We can help others who are burdened with sin and struggle. They can and should help us when we are in that state as well. However, the goal is to be responsible to Christ and walk in the Spirit bearing fruit. In this instance that faithful and responsible walk in the Spirit is likened to a person carrying to portion they have been assigned. The word for "burden" here is different from that used in the previous verse. Here the word is a shipping term and has to do with the portion assigned, the bill of lading if you will. Do the part the Spirit has assigned you would be a paraphrase of the thought contained here. There will in fact always be others around to help you and do their part in the spiritual walk. But we should strive to create a culture of faithfulness to the Spirit and that includes doing what we are led or assigned to do, but to also lift others burdens when needed.

- a. We cannot carry our assigned burden or complete our work if we are self-deceived! Gal 6:3. We must carefully consider the truth about our lives. It is not enough to just live according to our conscience. Our consciences is sometimes controlled by or appetites of the flesh. *"They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want."* Gal 5:17b Ask

God to show us our true selves. Here are some Scriptures to pray through and to use in asking for God's truth about your spiritual condition.

- Proverbs 17:3 *"The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart."*
- Psalm 26:2 *"Examine me, O LORD, and try me; Test my mind and my heart"*
- Psalm 139:23-24, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way."*

b. We must each test our own actions. What is the standard for our testing? The standard is God's word of course. Specifically, we are to live by the parts emphasized as central to the mission of the church. Jesus gave us a great commission to make disciples. He also gave us a great command to love one another. Paul's writings and ministry reemphasize what Jesus made primary in His live and teaching ministry. Make disciples across the world and love one another in the church in good and bad times. So our standard is the standard put forth in the Bible.

- John 13:34-35, *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*
- Matthew 28:19-20, *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Our standard is the Bible and we should ask ourselves if our actions express the fruit of disciple making and humble service of our fellow Christian. Those fruits of the Spirit in the last chapter are accurate indications of our true heart condition as well!

c. Have pride in yourself based on your life not based on comparison. This verse may seem at odds with the many injunctions in the Bible not to boast in ourselves. This is not an encouragement toward empty boasting or self-glorification. Rather, it corrects the notion that our spiritual life is graded on a curve. We aren't compared to other people. You are responsible for your life in the end. If you seek to restore a person and they will not be restored, you aren't responsible for that. If you excuse your sinfulness with the idea that it is not as sinful or not as offensive or as known about or destructive . . . then you are wrong. God will judge you by the truth of your life and your real opportunities for fruitfulness and faithfulness. You should not boast in being more than another person because you don't know their true faithfulness and fruit. You can stand in your spiritual freedom, full of faith and be happy about where your life is in the Spirit, if you are keeping in step with Him and loving other people humbly. You are carrying your burden. Be humbly glad in it!

4. Sharing all good things with those who instruct.

- a. Those who instruct are those who have committed their lives to the teaching/discipling ministry of the church. We call the pastors or ministers.
- b. This encouragement to share with those in the ministry is a change in thought from burden bearing in one aspect but does relate. In fact the teacher or minister of the church usually bears more and knows more than anyone else about the needs and burdens of the church. How can this man be mutually supported by those that he supports. His financial needs should

be met. But the command is broader than material needs only. If the church will share in all good things with the one who instructs them, the relationship becomes reciprocal. It is a circle of support. The pastor/teacher ministers and carries burdens, the church receives the ministry and teaching and bears his burdens.

- c. What ways can the church and/or individual Christians share “all good things” with their pastor and other ministers?

Application:

- Do you know someone caught in known sin? How can you seek to restore them?
- Who around you is struggling hard with life at this moment? How could you support them?
- What is the true condition of your spiritual walk? Will you ask God to show you?
- What should you do to share a good thing with ministers in your life?