

## *Galatians—Grace Above the Law* *Our Freedom in Christ*

### **Lesson 10—Galatians 6.1-10**

#### ***Restoration and Reaping***

One of the takeaways from Paul’s epistle to the Galatians is how to deal with sin in the body of Christ. As we have seen from the very onset, when that sin is doctrinal heresy that denies the clear teaching of Scripture, it is to be opposed with ferocious intensity. Paul vigorously opposed the Judaizers because they denied the sufficiency of Christ’s atoning sacrifice and required followers to keep the Law of Moses in addition to accepting Jesus as their Savior. Paul’s response should serve as a model to us for how to respond to teaching that stands in direct opposition to the Word of God. Several of the mainline Protestant denominations such as Episcopal, Evangelistic Lutheran, and the United Church of Christ ordain clergy who openly reject God’s ordinance for marriage. John Stott warns, “Tolerance is not a spiritual gift; it is the distinguishing mark of postmodernism; and sadly, it has permeated the very fiber of Christianity. Why is it that those who have no biblical convictions or theology to govern and direct their actions are tolerated and the standard or truth of God’s Word rightly divided and applied is dismissed as extreme opinion or legalism?”<sup>1</sup> Rather than bow to the pressure of our liberal media and society, this is a time for the evangelical church to stand united and say, as Joshua did, “But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15 ESV).

By way of contrast, how are we to deal with a fellow believer who has lapsed into sin? When Paul speaks of a believer overtaken in trespass in verse 1, it is a picture of someone who has been overcome or caught in temptation and lapsed, or taken a misstep. J. Vernon McGee points out this is not a deliberate and defiant act against God or His revealed Word. We are not to tolerate or ignore the sin.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.christianquotes.info/quotes-by-topic/quotes-about-legalism/#ixzz3msIFNMQs>

Following repentance, we are to restore this individual to the fellowship with gentleness. We find another example of just such a restoration in Paul's letters to the Corinthians. You may recall that in 1 Corinthians Paul expressed shock that the church would tolerate open sin in their congregation (an openly incestuous relationship). Following church discipline of the individual and repentance by the couple, Paul uses these words in 2 Corinthians 2, "forgive, reaffirm, comfort, and restore." Warren Wiersbe wrote on the concept of forgiveness and restoration within the church, "Nothing reveals a legalist like their treatment of a sinner."<sup>2</sup> Not surprisingly when the Barna Research Group did a survey in April of 2013 entitled, "*Christians—More Like Jesus or More Like Pharisees,*" over 80% of non-Christians felt that Christians were more like Pharisees in attitudes and actions towards "sinners."<sup>3</sup> Fortunately, the subgrouping of evangelicals fared much better in the survey, but indicates that we still had a long way to go in implementing Paul's teaching.

While we are to restore a repentant brother or sister, we are not to tolerate sin within the body of Christ as Paul makes abundantly clear in the next section of this chapter. The principle of sowing and reaping is so basic and obvious it seems inconceivable that believers sow to the flesh, somehow feeling they will be the one exception to this universal rule and not reap destruction. While our eternal salvation is secure it is possible to have a saved soul and a lost life. Unlike the physical universe where cause and effect occur in rapid succession, spiritual reaping and sowing is often delayed because of God's mercy as stated in 2 Peter 3:9, "*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*" Choosing whether to sow to the flesh or the spirit is a decision each believer has to make but the consequences are inevitable, even if you are the president of the United States.

When a president is inaugurated, he is allowed to choose which Bible and which passage he would like to place his hand upon when he takes the oath of office. On January 20, 1997, Bill Clinton was sworn in as the 42nd president of the United States of America and chose to place his hand upon Galatians 6:9, "*And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up*" (ESV). Context is everything and President Clinton should have read, and heeded, the previous two verses, "[7] *Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever*

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<sup>2</sup>[http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/4396930.Warren\\_W\\_Wiersbe?page=7](http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/4396930.Warren_W_Wiersbe?page=7)

<sup>3</sup><https://www.barna.org/barna-update/faith-spirituality/611-christians-more-like-jesus-or-pharisees#.VgdcnM70jgw>

*one sows, that will he also reap. [8] For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:7–8-ESV).* This verse played out in real time during the second term of Clinton’s presidency as his affair with Monica Lewinsky was viewed nightly on the evening news and he later became one of only two presidents impeached by the Senate for his conduct. As this sordid story unfolded, it was a reminder that no one is exempt from the law of sowing and reaping and that “except for the grace of God there go I.”<sup>4</sup> But the truly good news is that if we chose to abide in Christ and walk in His Spirit, we can live the abundant victorious life that God intended for all who call on the name of Jesus.

### **Prayer**

Start by praying over the passage and asking the Holy Spirit to give you fresh insights and wisdom in understanding it. Then read through the entire passage two or three times.

### **Scripture Meditation/Memorization**

One of the most fundamental and rewarding Christian disciplines that pays back in full spiritual dividends is Bible meditation/memorization. It is an absolutely fundamental in the formation of your spiritual development, spiritual walk and faith growth. In Psalm 1:1-2 (NLT), the Psalmist warrior, King David said,

*“Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,  
or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers.  
But they delight in the law of the Lord,  
meditating on it day and night.”*

Use the suggested verse(s) to meditate on during the course of this week's study.

### **Memory Verse**

*“7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”—  
Galatians 6:6-7 (ESV)*

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<sup>4</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Bradford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bradford)

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**Galatians 6:1-5—Bear and Share the Burdens**

Warren Wiersbe believes nothing reveals a legalist as much as their harsh treatment of a member of the body who falls into sin. When a brother or sister in Christ falls into sin, the response from those within the church may include: ignoring the sin, harshly rebuking the sinner, gossiping about the sin (so we can join others in praying for the sinner), or after repentance failed to restore the sinner. The Barna Group did a survey in 2013 entitled *Christians—More Like Jesus or More Like a Pharisee?*, and found that it was on this very issue that non-believers felt most Christians were more like Pharisees than Jesus in their response to sinners (and tax collectors).

1. The sin referred to in verse 1 is a slip or misstep and not a deliberate willful act of defiance. In Matthew 7:1 Jesus advises us not to judge others, but as you read the rest of that chapter you will realize it is referring to the hypercritical holier-than-thou judgments of a legalist, and not what Paul is suggesting here.

a. What are we to do when we see a brother or sister overtaken in sin?

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b. The restoration should be done by those “who are spiritual.” What do you think are the qualification to be considered spiritual (hint: Galatians 5:22–26 will help)?

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c. What does 1 Thessalonians 5:14–15 further teach?

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2. Verse 2 charges us to care for our brothers and sisters in Christ. The word used for bear implies endurance or carrying a heavy load over a long haul. What do the following scriptures teach us about this command?

a. Romans 15:1–2

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b. John 13:34–35

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3. \*What are some examples of how one might “carry one another’s burdens”?<sup>5</sup>

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a. What might hinder this from happening?

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4. Pride is a trait exalted in the workplace, athletics, and schools, yet it is clearly discouraged in Scripture. What do we learn about pride in:

a. Verse 3

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b. Philippians 2:3 (For an even better understanding on how God views pride, read all the way to Philippians 2:11.)

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<sup>5</sup> Question taken from Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary—Galatians, B&H Publishing Group, Nashville, Tenn., 2014

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c. James 4:10

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5. The sixteenth-century British preacher and reformer John Bradford, upon seeing a chain gang of prisoners walking along the road, issued this famous quote: “There but for the grace of God go I.” He later explained that this statement was based upon Paul’s writing in 1 Corinthians 15:10. How does Bradford’s quote reflect our proper response to a brother caught in sin?

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**Galatians 6:5-10—Reaping and Sowing**

Cause and effect is one of the constants in the physical universe and applies to the spiritual universe as well. One of the laws of motion states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction; however, in the moral or spiritual realm because of the delay between the immoral action and the reaction (consequences), many feel they can literally get away with murder. This passage will teach us otherwise.

1. In verse 6, we who are under the teaching of a pastor or leader are told to share (*Greek koinonia*) with them the good things.
  - a. What does Paul teach on this in 1 Corinthians 9:7–14?

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b. What else do you learn from 1 Timothy 5:17?

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2. While believers cannot lose their salvation because of sinful acts they may commit, there are certainly natural consequences to these actions. The word for deceived in the Greek is *planktos* from which we get our word plankton, and it means to drift away or wander.

a. Summarize verse 7 in your own words.

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b. Christianity is frequently belittled and mocked in the media. Based on Jude 18, should we be surprised—? Why or why not?

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3. Because of lack of immediate consequences, many celebrities have sinned openly, almost taunting God to do anything about it. Sinclair Lewis, Oscar Wilde, and Ernest Hemingway all learned too late the peril of mocking God. What do the following passages teach us on sowing, reaping, and judgment?

a. Galatians 6:8–9

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b. Job 4:8

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c. Ezekiel 33:11

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d. 2 Peter 3:3–9

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4. \*Verse 8 is obviously not talking about literal seed. Then what sorts of things are “sown”?<sup>6</sup>

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5. In verses 9 and 10, Paul closes out this section with a call to action and a warning.

a. What is it that Paul calls us to do?

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b. What could cause us to become weary or lose heart in ministry and how can we prevent burnout?

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<sup>6</sup> Question taken from Galatians—Experiencing the Grace of Christ, John Stott Bible Studies, InterVarsity Press-USA, 1998



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**Lesson 10 Summary/Take Away**

If one of your friends at work or a neighbor were to ask you what you did on Tuesday, you would tell them you went to a Bible study. The next question would likely be, "What did you learn?" We often summarize an entire athletic contest or a movie in a few brief sentences and easily convey the essence of the event. Now apply these same skills to give a summary of the passage in a sentence or two. Then, in an additional sentence or two, describe what impact this passage will have on how you live.

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**Memory Verse**

*"7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."— Galatians 6:6-7 (ESV)*

### **Key Words/Phrases**

Write out the definition of these key words. You can use a regular dictionary or go to one of the Greek sources listed in the Tool Box at the end of the study. You may also use a concordance to see where else and how the word is used in the Bible. How would these phrases instruct or encourage us today?

Sows to the Flesh (Galatians 6:8)

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Sows to the Spirit (Galatians 6:8)

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