

Fact Sheet for **“Five Practical Examples”**
Galatians 6:1-18

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We have come to the last sermon from Galatians. And it would be good to take stock of what Paul earlier wrote to the Galatian believers. They had been pummeled by some who taught that if they wanted to be justified before God they had to obey the Law of Moses, or at least some of it. Paul was very strong in the first four chapters of this book in saying that we are justified only by faith in Christ, not by works of the Law! Chapter five begins with a strong statement of our freedom in Christ! And then Paul gives God’s alternative to Law observance.

ESV Galatians 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Paul followed this verse with a sampling of the works of the flesh. Then he included a sampling of the fruit of the Spirit. Paul now gave five very practical examples. And remember, these too are just a sampling of multiple examples that Paul could have given. Paul likely chose these because here is where the Galatians were having problems.

Example 1

ESV 6:1 ¶ Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

The word **caught** has the sense of being overtaken. Those who are **spiritual** are those who are spiritually mature, who truly walk by the Spirit (5:16). The word **restore** is used in Matthew 4:21 and Mark 1:19 for the mending of fishnets. In the medical vocabulary of ancient Greece it referred to the setting of a fractured or dislocated bone. This ministry of restoration should be done with gentleness (5:23), and with the awareness that no one is immune from being tempted. This was a very different approach from that of the Jewish legalists. An example of this legalistic approach is seen in John 9:13-16. And remember that some who were Jewish in background were pushing the Galatians to a legalistic view of salvation and holiness.

Example 2

The ministry of restoration is one way to help other believers. But there are other burdens we can help with.

² Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

The word **burden** (ba'-ros) is something that is heavy and oppressive. We get our word “barometer” from this word. For some it is the burden of temptation and its resultant moral lapse. For others it may be physical, the lack of employment, a family crisis, or a van full of young people broken down in La Pine. What is **the law of Christ**? Is this another law like the Mosaic Law? Not at all! A couple of days before Jesus was crucified he was asked about the great commandment of the Law. Look at this account in Matthew 22:36-40. Later that week at the Last Supper Jesus gave his disciples a command to love (John 13:34). Paul had echoed this same thought earlier in Galatians (5:14). Helping a Christian who is burdened is one way we fulfill Christ’s command to love one another. In addition something needs to be laid aside if we are to bear one another’s burdens, and that is conceit.

³ For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

You can almost hear the overtones of these words referring to the Jewish legalists who were bothering the Galatian believers.

⁴ But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵ For each will have to bear his own load.

The word **test** is the same word Paul used in Romans 12:2. This boasting is not a sinful boasting, but a balanced evaluation. Compare what Paul wrote in Romans 12:3. And the word for **load** in Galatians 6:5 is different than the word for **burden**. It has the positive sense of the demands we carry if we are truly disciples.

Example 3

⁶ Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.

Example 4

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.

These words refer to two approaches to life and their outcome, both in this life and the life hereafter (compare Romans 8:13). Paul's use of the words **flesh** and **Spirit** harken back to Galatians 5:16-24.

Example 5

⁹ And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰ So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Paul now took the pen from his scribe and wrote the rest of his letter for himself.¹

¹¹ ¶ See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

This is not likely because his eyesight was bad. Instead it was a way of emphasizing what follows for the Galatian believers.

¹² It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. ¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. ¹⁷ From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

¹⁸ ¶ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

In conclusion of this whole series on the book of Galatians I would direct you back to that key verse to meditate on (Galatians 5:18).

¹ See 1 Corinthians 16:21; Colossians 4:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:17.