

Galatians

Lesson 11

Chapter 6

Leader Guide

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Lesson 11

Galatians 6

Doing Good to All

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. (*Galatians 6:10*)

Prayers

Introduction

Paul closes his letters with practical encouragement to love others and reminds them that he is writing them personally. His letters are not the work of a secretary. He closes his letters to the Thessalonians by writing, "I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write" (2 Thessalonians 3:17).

In this lesson, we will read Paul's closing comments and discuss Paul's major points to the Galatians and how they apply to us.

Read Galatians 6

Gal 6:1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

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

Gal 6:3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

Gal 6:4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else,

Gal 6:5 for each one should carry his own load.

Gal 6:6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

Gal 6:8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Gal 6:9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Gal 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

1. Paul's comments on practical applications of Christian living are very short in Galatians. What actions did Paul stress Galatians 6:1-10?
 - a. Verse 6:1 **to gently restore others who have sinned**
 - b. Verse 6:2 **to carry each other's burdens**

- c. Verse 6:5 **to not be idle and provide for your own needs**
- d. Verse 6:6-8 **to generously provide for the needs of your pastor or elder**
- e. Verse 9-10 **to do good to others**

2. What is the relationship between carrying the burdens of another with fulfilling the law?

The law of Christ is to love God and one another. Carrying someone's burdens is an act of loving one another.

3. How have you been called to carry the burdens of others and do good by them?

Answers will vary widely. Christians serve in charities, care for their family members, and care for others in many ways. They also provide for others through financial gifts, services, encouragement, and prayer.

Read Galatians 6:11-18

Gal 6:11 See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

Gal 6:12 Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ.

Gal 6:13 Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh.

Gal 6:14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

Gal 6:15 Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.

Gal 6:16 Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule, even to the Israel of God.

Gal 6:17 Finally, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

Gal 6:18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your Spirit, brothers. Amen.

4. What were Paul's final reasons why the Galatians should not follow the Judaizers (verses 6:12-13)?

Paul said their motives were not right. The Judaizers did not have the best interests of the Galatians at heart but were trying to avoid persecution and were motivated by pride.

As time permits, discuss some of the following topics:

5. What is justification, and how does it assure your faith?

Justification is being made righteous to God through faith in Christ. Justification through Christ gives us complete assurance of our faith because Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness, so we are holy in God's eyes. Our actions would never be so good to make up

for our sins. When would we know we had done enough to please God? We wouldn't and couldn't, but Christ's righteousness is perfect and ours through faith.

6. What are some wrong ways we try to justify ourselves to God?

We try to justify ourselves whenever we look to our actions as a means for our salvation. Our actions may be good – helping others, reading the Bible, or going to worship but they mean nothing if they are not acts of love.

7. What is redemption, and how does it assure in your faith?

Redemption is to be bought back from the bondage of sin through the price of Christ's sacrificial body, blood, and death. He saved us and delivered us from sin and all its consequences. What confidence we have in Christ! We are assured of our union with God, and nothing can separate us from His love for us. We can bring all our worries and burdens to him as his children, and we will spend eternity with him.

8. Why does Paul call all believers "sons of God"?

Paul made a revolutionary statement by calling all believers sons, regardless of sex or social standing. In Paul's time, sons received an inheritance, but daughters did not. Paul's point is that everyone in Christ is a son of God because they all receive the same inheritance; eternal life, the abiding presence of Christ's Spirit, and adoption as God's children.

9. Why was it futile for the Galatians to believe they needed to be circumcised, keep Jewish laws, and believe in Christ?

The issue was not circumcision, the celebration of Jewish heritage, or wanting to please God. The issue confronting the Galatians was they believed they could justify their righteousness to God by keeping the Jewish laws. They failed to understand the grace of God through Christ's justification for them. Christ's sacrifice was for all their sins, for all time, and his righteousness was their righteousness. The Galatians were trying to earn what God had already blessed them with through their faith in Christ.

10. What does it mean to live by the Spirit?

Paul's short answer of a life led by the Spirit is 'faith and love' (Galatians 5:6). If all our thoughts and actions flowed from faith and love, we would indeed be led by the Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit in our lives is multifaceted. The Spirit calls us to Christ to give us a new life in faith and abides in us to unite us with Christ and other believers. The Spirit sanctifies us and transforms our minds so that we become more Christ-like. The Holy Spirit gives us rich gifts of love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23) so that our relationships with others can be joyful and enriching. The Holy Spirit also reminds us of the gifts we received from God the Father and Christ the Son.

God showed his unconditional love to us from before creation by making good and wonderful plans for us to be his children and giving us faith so that we are united in him through Christ and His Spirit. He sent his Son to atone for us and redeem us from sin, so we enter his holiness and have eternal life with him.

These are just a few of the many benefits of a life led by the Spirit.

11. If we are spiritually reborn and live by the Spirit, why do we continue to sin?

This is a difficult question and one that every Christian struggles with. The apostle Paul spoke for us when he expressed his frustration with sin by saying, “I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do” (Romans 7:15). We accept our spiritual rebirth and the indwelling Holy Spirit by faith, but our minds have been profoundly corrupted by what we have seen and experienced in the world. We have learned sinful patterns of behavior and thinking that need to be changed. The Holy Spirit is at work transforming our minds, convicting us of sin to bring us to repentance, and keeping us in union with Christ so that we can take on his character in increasing measure. We are not passive in this transformation. Paul writes in Philippians 4:8, “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” We actively expose our minds to what is good. These renewing actions are sometimes referred to as spiritual disciplines. They include scripture reading and meditation, prayer, service and charity, and living with joy and gratitude for our moments of life.

12. While Martin Luther was a monk, he practiced a rigorous worship, prayer, study, and service schedule. These actions are regarded as the foundation of a well-balanced Christian life, but they brought him misery, not closer to God. Ultimately his search for peace with God led him to rediscover God’s grace and revolutionized the Church. Discuss how any of these actions can be either legalistic or life by the Spirit.

Worship, prayer, study, and service to others are all good when they are expressions of love toward God and love toward others. They become legalistic if they are done from a mindset of obligation, duty, and as a command rather than through love and joy.

Martin Luther was burdened by his worship, prayer, study and service to others because none of his actions could make him righteous and holy compared to God's perfect standards – until he rediscovered God's grace through Christ. With Christ as his righteousness, Luther was free from guilt and condemnation, and free to serve his neighbors in love. One dramatic expression of love for his neighbors was during the bubonic plague that struck his hometown of Wittenberg, Germany, in 1527. Luther correctly reasoned that plague was associated with

filth. Many townspeople fled from the city to the countryside to escape the plague. Luther stayed in the city to administer medicines, clean the living conditions, and care for others.

13. Share any additional insights you gained during your study of Galatians.

Discussion varies.

Closing Prayer

