

## 11. Practical Christian Living



Gal 6:1-18

(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.

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

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

(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.

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

(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.

(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.

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

(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.

### Galatians 6:1

Gal 6:1-18. *Exhortations continued; to forbearance and humility; liberality to teachers and in general. Postscript and benediction.*

**Brethren** — An expression of kindness to conciliate attention. Translate as *Greek*, “If a man *even* be overtaken” (that is, caught in the very act [Alford and Ellicott]: BEFORE he expects: unexpectedly). Bengel explains the “before” in the *Greek* compound verb, “If a man be overtaken in a fault *before* ourselves”: If another has *really* been overtaken in a fault *the first*; for often he who is *first to find fault*, is the very one who has *first transgressed*.

**a fault** — *Greek*, “a transgression,” “a fall”; such as a falling back into legal bondage. Here he gives monition to those who have not so fallen, “the spiritual,” to be not “vainglorious” (Gal 5:26), but forbearing to such (Rom 15:1).

**restore** — The *Greek* is used of a dislocated limb, reduced to its place. Such is the tenderness with which we should treat a fallen member of the Church in restoring him to a better state.

**the spirit of meekness** — *the meekness* which is the gift of the *Holy Spirit* working in our spirit ([Gal 5:22](#), [Gal 5:25](#)). “Meekness” is that temper of spirit towards God whereby we accept His dealings without disputing; then, towards men, whereby we endure meekly their provocations, and do not withdraw ourselves from the burdens which their sins impose upon us [Trench].

**considering thyself** — Transition from the plural to the singular. When congregations are addressed collectively, each individual should take home the monition *to himself*.

**thou also be tempted** — as is likely to happen to those who reprove others without meekness (compare [Mat 7:2-5](#); [2Ti 2:25](#); [Jam 2:13](#)).

#### Galatians 6:2

If ye, legalists, must “bear burdens,” then instead of legal burdens ([Mat 23:4](#)), “bear one another’s burdens,” literally, “weights.” Distinguished by Bengel from “burden,” [Gal 6:4](#) (a different *Greek* word, “load”): “weights” exceed the strength of those under them; “burden” is proportioned to the strength.

**so fulfil** — or as other old manuscripts read, “so ye will fulfil,” *Greek*, “fill up,” “thoroughly fulfil.”

**the law of Christ** — namely, “love” ([Gal 5:14](#)). Since ye desire “the law,” then fulfil the law of Christ, which is not made up of various minute observances, but whose sole “burden” is “love” ([Joh 13:34](#); [Joh 15:12](#)); [Rom 15:3](#) gives Christ as the example in the particular duty here.

#### Galatians 6:3

Self-conceit, the chief hindrance to forbearance and sympathy towards our fellow men, must be laid aside.

**something** — possessed of some spiritual pre-eminence, so as to be exempt from the frailty of other men.

**when he is nothing** — The *Greek* is subjective: “Being, if he would come to himself, and look on the real fact, nothing” [Alford] ([Gal 6:2](#), [Gal 6:6](#); [Rom 12:3](#); [1Co 8:2](#)).

**deceiveth himself** — literally, “he mentally deceives himself.” Compare [Jam 1:26](#), “deceiveth his own heart.”

#### Galatians 6:4

**his own work** — not merely his own *opinion* of himself.

**have rejoicing in himself alone** — Translate, “Have *his* (matter for) glorying in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another (namely, not in regard to his neighbor, by comparing himself with whom, he has fancied he has matter for boasting as that neighbor’s superior).” Not that really a man by looking to “himself alone” is likely to find cause for glorying in himself. Nay, in [Gal 6:5](#), he speaks of a “burden” or *load*, not of matter for glorying, as what really belongs to each man. But he refers to *the idea* those whom he censures *had of themselves*: they *thought* they had cause for “glorying” in themselves, but it all arose from unjust self-conceited comparison of themselves with others, instead of looking at home. The only true glorying, if glorying it is to be called, is in the testimony of a good conscience, glorying in the cross of Christ.

#### Galatians 6:5

For (by this way, [Gal 6:4](#), of proving himself, not depreciating his neighbor by comparison) each man shall bear his own “burden,” or rather, “*load*” (namely, of sin and infirmity), the *Greek*

being different from that in [Gal 6:2](#). This verse does not contradict [Gal 6:2](#). There he tells them to bear with others' "burdens" of infirmity in sympathy; here, that self-examination will make a man to feel he has enough to do with "his own load" of sin, without comparing himself boastfully with his neighbor. Compare [Gal 6:3](#). Instead of "thinking himself to be something," he shall feel the "load" of his own sin: and this will lead him to bear sympathetically with his neighbor's burden of infirmity. Aesop says a man carries two bags over his shoulder, the one with his own

sins hanging behind, that with his neighbor's sins in front.

### Galatians 6:6

From the mention of bearing one another's burdens, he passes to one way in which those burdens may be borne - by ministering out of their earthly goods to their spiritual teachers. The "but" in the *Greek*, beginning of this verse, expresses this: I said, Each shall bear his own burden; BUT I do not intend that he should not think of others, and especially of the wants of his ministers.

### communicate unto him —

"impart a share unto his teacher": literally, "*him that teacheth catechetically.*"

**in all good things** — in every kind of the good things *of this life*, according as the case may require ([Rom 15:27](#); [1Co 9:11](#), [1Co 9:14](#)).

### Galatians 6:7

**God is not mocked** — The *Greek* verb is, literally, to sneer with the nostrils drawn up in contempt. God does not suffer Himself to be imposed on by empty words: He will judge according to works, which are seeds sown for eternity of either joy or woe. Excuses for illiberality in God's cause ([Gal 6:6](#)) seem valid before men, but are not so before God ([Psa 50:21](#)).

**soweth** — especially of his resources ([2Co 9:6](#)).

**that** — *Greek*, "this"; this and nothing else.

**reap** — at the harvest, the end of the world ([Mat 13:39](#)).

### Galatians 6:8

Translate, "He that soweth *unto his own flesh*," with a view to fulfilling its desires. He does not say, "*His spirit*," as he does say, "*His flesh*." For in ourselves we are not spiritual, but carnal. The flesh is devoted to *selfishness*.

**corruption** — that is, destruction ([Phi 3:19](#)). Compare as to the deliverance of believers from "corruption" ([Rom 8:21](#)). The use of the term "corruption" instead, implies that *destruction* is not an *arbitrary* punishment of fleshly-mindedness, but is its *natural* fruit; the corrupt flesh producing corruption, which is another word for destruction: corruption is the fault, and corruption the punishment (see on [1Co 3:17](#); [2Pe 2:12](#)). Future life only expands the seed sown here. Men cannot mock God because they can deceive themselves. They who sow tares cannot reap wheat. They alone reap life eternal who sow to the Spirit ([Psa 126:6](#); [Pro 11:18](#); [Pro 22:8](#); [Hos 8:7](#); [Hos 10:12](#); [Luk 16:25](#); [Rom 8:11](#); [Jam 5:7](#)).



### Galatians 6:9

([2Th 3:13](#)). And when we do good, let us also persevere in it without fainting.

**in due season** — in its own proper season, God's own time ([1Ti 6:15](#)).

**faint not** — literally, “be relaxed.” Stronger than “be not weary.” *Weary of well-doing* refers to the will; “faint not” to relaxation of the powers [Bengel]. No one should faint, as in an earthly harvest sometimes happens.

### Galatians 6:10

Translate, “*So then, according* as (that is, in proportion as) we have season (that is, opportunity), let us *work* (a distinct *Greek* verb from that for “do,” in [Gal 6:9](#)) *that which is* (in each case) *good*.” As thou art able, and while thou art able, and when thou art able ([Ecc 9:10](#)). We have now the “season” for *sowing*, as also there will be hereafter the “due season” ([Gal 6:9](#)) for *reaping*. The whole life is, in one sense, the “seasonable opportunity” to us: and, in a narrower sense, there occur in it more especially convenient seasons. The latter are sometimes lost in looking for still more convenient seasons ([Act 24:25](#)). We shall not always have the opportunity “we have” now. Satan is sharpened to the greater zeal in injuring us, by the shortness of his time ([Rev 12:12](#)). Let us be sharpened to the greater zeal in well-doing by the shortness of ours.

**them who are of the household** — Every right-minded man does well to the members of his own family ([1Ti 5:8](#)); so believers are to do to those of the household of faith, that is, those whom *faith* has made members of “the household of God” ([Eph 2:19](#)): “the house of God” ([1Ti 3:15](#); [1Pe 4:17](#)).

### Galatians 6:11

Rather, “See in how large letters I have written.” The *Greek* is translated “how great” in [Heb 7:4](#), the only other passage where it occurs in the New Testament. Owing to his weakness of eyes ([Gal 4:15](#)) he wrote in large letters. So Jerome. All the oldest manuscripts are written in uncial, that is, capital letters, the “cursive,” or small letters, being of more recent date. Paul seems to have had a difficulty in writing, which led him to make the uncial letters larger than ordinary writers did. The mention of these is as a token by which they would know that he wrote the whole Epistle with his own hand; as he did also the pastoral Epistle, which this Epistle resembles in style. He usually dictated his Epistles to an amanuensis, excepting the concluding salutation, which he wrote himself ([Rom 16:22](#); [1Co 16:21](#)). This letter, he tells the Galatians, he writes with his own hand, no doubt in order that they may see what a regard he had for them, in contrast to the Judaizing teachers ([Gal 6:12](#)), who sought only their own ease. If *English Version* be retained, the words, “how large a letter (literally, ‘in how large letters’),” will not refer to the length of the Epistle *absolutely*, but that it was a large one for *him* to have written with his own hand. Neander supports *English Version*, as more appropriate to the earnestness of the apostle and the tone of the Epistle: “How large” will thus be put for “how many.”

### Galatians 6:12

Contrast between his zeal in their behalf, implied in [Gal 6:11](#), and the zeal for self on the part of the Judaizers.

**make a fair show** — ([2Co 5:12](#)).

**in the flesh** — in outward things.

**they** — it is “these” who

**constrain you** — by example ([Gal 6:13](#)) and importuning.



**only lest** — “only that they may not,” etc. (compare [Gal 5:11](#)).

**suffer persecution** — They escaped in a great degree the Jews’ bitterness against Christianity and the offense of the cross of Christ, by making the Mosaic law a necessary preliminary; in fact, making Christian converts into Jewish proselytes.

#### **Galatians 6:13**

Translate, “For not even do they who submit to circumcision, keep the law themselves ([Rom 2:17-23](#)), but they wish you (emphatical) to be circumcised,” etc. They arbitrarily selected circumcision out of the whole

law, as though observing it would stand instead of their non-observance of the rest of the law.

**that they may glory in your flesh** — namely, in the outward change (opposed to *an inward change wrought by the SPIRIT*) which they have effected in bringing you over to their own Jewish-Christian party.

#### **Galatians 6:14**

Translate, “But *as for me* (in opposition to those gloriers ‘in your flesh,’ [Gal 6:13](#)), God forbid that I,” etc.

**in the cross** — the atoning death on the cross. Compare [Phi 3:3](#), [Phi 3:7](#), [Phi 3:8](#), as a specimen of his glorying. The “cross,” the great object of shame to them, and to all carnal men, is the great object of glorying to me. For by it, the worst of deaths, Christ has destroyed all kinds of death [Augustine, *Tract 36*, on John, sec. 4]. We are to testify the power of Christ’s death working in us, after the manner of crucifixion ([Gal 5:24](#); [Rom 6:5](#), [Rom 6:6](#)).

**our** — He reminds the Galatians by this pronoun, that *they* had a share in the “Lord Jesus Christ” (the full name is used for greater solemnity), and therefore ought to glory in Christ’s cross, as he did.

**the world** — inseparably allied to the “flesh” ([Gal 6:13](#)). Legal and fleshly ordinances are merely outward, and “elements of the world” ([Gal 4:3](#)).

**is** — rather, as *Greek*, “has been crucified to me” ([Gal 2:20](#)). He used “crucified” for *dead* ([Col 2:20](#), “dead with Christ”), to imply his oneness with Christ *crucified* ([Phi 3:10](#)): “the fellowship of His sufferings being made conformable unto His death.”

#### **Galatians 6:15**

**availeth** — The oldest manuscripts read, “is” (compare [Gal 5:6](#)). Not only are they of no *avail*, but they *are nothing*. So far are they from being matter for “glorying,” that they are “nothing.” But Christ’s cross is “all in all,” as a subject for glorying, in “the new creature” ([Eph 2:10](#), [Eph 2:15](#), [Eph 2:16](#)).

**new creature** — ([2Co 5:17](#)). A transformation by the renewal of the mind ([Rom 12:2](#)).

#### **Galatians 6:16**

**as many** — contrasting with the “as many,” [Gal 6:12](#).

**rule** — literally, *a straight rule*, to detect crookedness; so a rule of life.

**peace** — from God ([Eph 2:14-17](#); [Eph 6:23](#)).

**mercy** — ([Rom 15:9](#)).

**Israel of God** — not the Israel after the flesh, among whom those teachers wish to enroll you; but the spiritual seed of Abraham by faith ([Gal 3:9](#), [Gal 3:29](#); [Rom 2:28](#), [Rom 2:29](#); [Phi 3:3](#)).

### Galatians 6:17

**let no man trouble me** — by opposing my apostolic authority, seeing that it is stamped by a sure seal, namely, “I (in contrast to the Judaizing teachers who gloried in the flesh) bear (as a high mark of honor from the King of kings).”

**the marks** — properly, marks branded on slaves to indicate their owners. So Paul’s scars of wounds received for Christ’s sake, indicate to whom he belongs, and in whose free and glorious service he is ([2Co 11:23-25](#)). The Judaizing teachers gloried in the circumcision mark in the flesh of *their followers*: Paul glories in the marks of suffering for Christ on *his own* body (compare [Gal 6:14](#); [Phi 3:10](#); [Col 1:24](#)).

**the Lord** — omitted in the oldest manuscripts.

### Galatians 6:18

**Brethren** — Place it, as *Greek*, “last” in the sentence, before the “Amen.” After much rebuke and monition, he bids them farewell with the loving expression of *brotherhood* as his last parting word (see on [Gal 1:6](#)).

**be with your spirit** — which, I trust, will keep down the *flesh* ([1Th 5:23](#); [2Ti 4:22](#); [Phm 1:25](#)).