

Galatians #18

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[0 : 00] I trust that everybody has a Scripture sheet, and let me just briefly explain the rationale for our using these. And we are today beginning a new chapter, so if you've got your Scripture sheet on page 859 down in the lower right-hand corner, you'll see chapter 6 of Galatians, and this is where we are going as of now.

We have spent together a number of months in the first five chapters of Galatians, and when we came to chapter 5, we spent a considerable amount of time dealing with the issues of the flesh and the Spirit.

And we have all come to the conclusion that each of us is our own worst enemy, that we all have dwelling within our psyche or our spirit, this thing called the flesh.

And Paul, the apostle, tells us that the flesh wars against the Spirit. There is a conflict that is going on internally within each of us. We, in and of ourselves, do not possess the power to be what we need to be.

But God has made that power available to us. The issue is whether or not we will avail ourselves of it. And if we do, we are then able to walk in the Spirit. And if you walk in the Spirit, you will produce the fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, gentleness, meekness, etc., that Paul outlined there in chapter 5.

[1 : 24] So the key to the Christian life, and someone said, I think really the Christian life is kind of hard. A fellow came back and said, it isn't hard, it's impossible.

It's impossible to live the Christian life. Only Christ can live it through you. And He wants your body and your mind so that He might live His life through you.

That's what Paul was talking about in 2.20 when he said, I'm crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh, as opposed to the one I used to live, I live by the faith or the faithfulness of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.

So Galatians is a very, very key letter. It is one of the earliest that Paul wrote. It is referred to as the charter of our Christian liberty.

And indeed it is. If you get focused and really understand the message of Galatians, then you are set up for what we will undertake next, which is Ephesians.

[2 : 32] And that is something to behold. Trust me, we're in for a real treat. But we've got to deal with chapter 6 of Galatians before we get there. So if you will look at the bottom of the page in the sheet that you have, you will see the very first verse is in bold black type.

All that means is that's the King James Version in the bold black type. That is the base text from which all the others are taken. And then following that verse, there are numerous other verses from different translations that are offered to provide just a little bit different emphasis that will help you to gain the truth a little more easy.

So in verse 1, we've got brethren. And be advised that this brethren, he is talking to fellow believers. The Bible has virtually nothing to say to unbelievers.

The Bible is for the household of faith. Those who are not subject to the law of God, who are not in Christ, are not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So a person isn't really in a position to receive the truth of God's Word until they are in Christ.

And when you are in Christ, you are a fellow believer in the Lord Jesus. You are a brother in Christ. And those are they whom Paul is addressing here.

[4 : 00] He's not writing to the world. He's writing to the community of faith. And he says, brethren, if a man is overtaken in a fault, who is he talking about?

Again, he's talking about brethren. He's talking about believers. He's not talking about unbelievers being overtaken in a fault. That happens all the time. Now he's talking about how do we relate to those in the body of Christ who've messed up, who've fallen, who've sinned, who've dishonored the name of the Lord or maybe the local assembly.

If a man be overtaken in a fault, he's succumbed to some temptation. And fellas, there isn't a single one of us that is immune to this.

We are all capable of committing sin that is displeasing to the Lord and dishonoring to the local body of Christ.

None of us is exempt from that. And we need to understand that our vulnerability to temptation is the rationale for remaining in a close fellowship situation with the Lord.

[5 : 19] That's our insulation. That's our protection. And you get out from under that protection and you become susceptible to everything that comes along. If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, all that means is those of you who haven't succumbed.

You who are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

Don't you go thinking that you are high and mighty and above this brother who has fallen into sin and isn't it too bad what happened to him? I could never do something like that.

Oh, yes, you could. Yes, you could. We're all subject to this. And we need to understand God recognizes our faults and our failures and He takes into consideration that we are but dust and that we do succumb to things from time to time.

But there's always a way back. God is the God of the second chance and the third chance and the fourth chance because every time we displease the Lord, we need a way back.

[6 : 33] And John tells us if we confess our sin, He is faithful. That means you can always count on Him. He is faithful and just.

That means God's righteousness is not compromised because He forgives. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

That's a priceless verse. I don't know how many times I've relied upon that. And you can take it to the bank. This is God's way back. It's called repentance and confession and admission of our sin.

And when we do, God is welcoming us back with open arms back into His fellowship. And this is exactly what Paul is talking about here when he reminds us what our attitude is to be toward those who have been overtaken in a fault.

And this meekness here, in a spirit of meekness, not a spirit of smugness, not in a spirit of judgmentalism, not in a spirit of how could you do such a thing, but in a spirit of meekness.

[7 : 38] Someone has said that the Christian army is the only one that shoots its wounded. Well, there's a lot of truth in that. And it comes from a judgmental kind of attitude.

We can look upon others who have fallen, shake our head in unbelief, and say, isn't it a shame? I could never do anything like that. How could he do such a thing?

I'll tell you how he could do such a thing. He's a human being. That's how he could do such a thing. And if we were facing the same kind of issues, dealing with the same kind of things that they are, we may very well have fallen before they did.

Because we are not to see ourselves as some high and mighty trophy, high and lifted up above everything else that is wrong, and that we've got it all together.

No, we don't. This is one of the big misunderstandings that people have about church. I've talked to people about this, and I know, over the years. You'd be surprised how many people think that church is a place where people go to congratulate each other on how they've got it all together.

[8 : 50] That's the complete opposite of a church. Someone has said, what a church really is, is a spiritual hospital, a spiritual emergency room that is set up to minister and care for those who are struggling in life with all kinds of issues.

Because, brothers, none of us has it all together. Nobody. We are all deficient. We are all lacking. We are all capable.

Capable of things that we don't even want to think of. And that's exactly what Paul is addressing here. To restore such and one. You welcome them back. And the way back, of course, now, if somebody has fallen into sin and they are unrepentant and they are insistent on remaining that way and they will not come back, you can't restore that one.

They're not in a position to be restored. But the way for restoration is always through repentance. When you change your mind, you also change your behavior.

Let me give you an example here. I don't have this on the sheet, but I know some of you have a Bible. And let's go to 2 Corinthians just a minute and I'll show you what I'm talking about. Here's a perfect example.

[10 : 10] In 1 Corinthians, the letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthians the first time, he addressed this issue where in the congregation there is a man who is shackled up with his stepmother.

And Paul says, you ought to be disciplining that man. You ought to be correcting him. And instead of doing that, you are actually boasting about your tolerance, about your understanding, about your compassion, and so on.

You should have dealt with that situation. This fellow is carrying on a lifestyle that even unbelievers don't do. Where do you get off of that? And this is 1 Corinthians, and he takes him to task regarding it.

Now, in 2 Corinthians, we've got a situation here where apparently, and we don't know this for sure, so maybe I'm putting something together that I can't support, but the principle is intact. In 2 Corinthians, we get the impression that this man who had been carrying on this illicit sexual relationship with his stepmother has repented and has come back.

Now, how are you going to treat him? How are you going to accept him? This is what 2 Corinthians is talking about. And I'm just going to begin in verse 4, reading, For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote to you with many tears, not that you should be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

[11 : 48] But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but to some degree, in order not to say too much to all of you. Sufficient for such an one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority.

Now, I get the impression that what Paul is saying here is that he is acknowledging that the assembly at Corinth took his advice when he says, you need to discipline that man.

You need to call him on the carpet and read him out and tell him that that behavior is unacceptable and you will not approve of it. And he needs to repent of his sin. I get the impression that they did that.

And the man did come to repentance and confession and acknowledgement. Now what? And that's where the next verse picks up. Sufficient, verse 6, for such an one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, that is, the congregation, they have received the man back and forgiven him.

And he says, so that on the contrary, you should rather forgive and comfort him lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

[13 : 12] What does this mean? Okay, here's what it means. The application is this man carrying on this illicit sexual relationship with his stepmother has seen the error of his way.

He has repented of his sin. He has acknowledged it. He has asked the congregation for forgiveness, for bringing reproach upon them, carrying on like that as a believer. Now, what is the attitude of the congregation?

Paul says, you need to forgive him because if you don't, you are going to drive that man into despair and depression because he has repented of his sin.

He has come back to you for restoration and forgiveness and you're not willing to extend it. How's that going to impact him? How's that going to make him feel?

It's going to make him feel a lot of good it did for me to get my life straight with the Lord because even though I'm straight with the Lord now, they won't let me be straight with them.

[14 : 18] In other words, people can make stronger demands upon a Christian than what God makes. And fellas, don't ever want to get there.

Our standards are not higher than His. And if God accepts and receives and forgives, how dare you not do the same?

How dare you say, well, maybe God has forgiven him, but I'm not. Who are you? We need to be accepting, affirming, and receive them back into full fellowship.

And we do so with meekness, which is with the understanding that this man fell, you know what? Next month it could be me. And would they love me enough and care for me enough to confront me?

I would hope so. So, look at what goes on. That he should be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

[15 : 25] Wherefore, I urge you to reaffirm your love for him. For to this end also I wrote that I might put you to the test whether you are obedient in all things.

But whom you forgive anything, I forgive also. For indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ. And look at verse 11.

In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes or his devices.

Listen. Satan loves to cause dissemblance among the brethren. Rancor, bitter spirit, unforgiveness, Satan gets mileage out of that.

Because when believers are at one another, they are not with one another. And we need to be with one another, arm in arm, shoulder in shoulder, supporting each other, rather than tearing down, beating down, and all the rest that goes on with it.

[16 : 43] Nobody in the congregation is superior or above someone else. No one is below someone else. We're all in that same plane. Whether we be bond or free, male or female, Jew or Gentile, you are all children of God, Paul says, in Christ Jesus.

Now, I've got a lot more I want to share with you, but I want to stop here because there may be some Q&A.; Feel free to add your two cents or question. Anybody? Dan? I heard someone say that religion can be mean.

Religion can be mean. Oh, yeah. Religion can be mean. In fact, the word religion means to bind, to bind, to tie up.

Christianity has frequently been referred to as a relationship. Not a religion. Religion is man seeking God man's way.

Christianity is God seeking man God's way. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing our trespasses unto them, and has committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation.

[18 : 00] You're right. Religion can be mean, can be cold, can be distant, and unforgiving, can be demanding, all of those things. That's where grace comes in.

And it's a beautiful thing. Other thoughts or comments? Anyone? Sir? In my spirit, I still see a lot of sacrifice running the ground here.

Oh, absolutely. You know what I mean? I know what you mean. I know what you mean. You're saying religion, we should be more Christ-like. There you go. There you go.

And you mentioned the Pharisees. It reminds me of that parable of the publican and the Pharisee. Remember? In Luke's Gospel, two men went into the temple to pray.

One was a Pharisee, one was a publican. And all the Pharisee could say is, Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men. In other words, I am so grateful that I'm better than everybody else.

[19 : 01] Isn't that something? You talk about crass egotism. I thank Thee that I am not as other men. And that poor old publican wouldn't even so much as lift up his eyes to heaven.

And all he could say was, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. God loves honesty. Truth of the matter is, fellas, we're all sinners.

sinners. The only question is, you're either just a plain sinner, or you're a sinner saved by grace. But you are a sinner. And Billy Graham, when asked to define a sinner, he said, a sinner is anyone who is less perfect than God.

That kind of covers the waterfront, doesn't it? Wow. Some of the other translations. Brethren, brothers, if anybody is caught in the very act of doing wrong, you who are spiritual, in the spirit of gentleness, must set him right, each of you continuing to think of yourself, for you may be tempted too.

Even if a man should be detected in some sin, my brothers, the spiritual ones among you should quietly, let's turn the page, set him back on the right path, not with the feeling of superiority, but being yourselves on guard against temptation.

[20 : 26] Another New English Bible says, if a man should do something wrong, my brothers, on a sudden impulse, you who are endowed with the spirit must set him right again, very gently, not harshly, not in a condemning fashion, but gently, look to yourself, each one of you, you may be tempted too.

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Listen, guys, everybody has a history.

Everybody has a story. And some stories are very, very sad and very difficult. There's an old Indian saying, I'm sure you've probably heard it, but we ought not to be ready to judge or condemn a man unless we've walked in his moccasins for a mile, you know, because people are dealing with issues the likes of which you can't even imagine.

Stuff is going on in the hearts and minds of people with fears and temptations and desires and anxieties and everything. And all of those things contribute to making us what we are, and they contribute to our behavior and are doing the things that we are.

And the bottom line for all of this is, listen, brothers, let's be willing to cut each other some slack. We have no cause for being demanding.

[21 : 56] We have no cause for setting artificial standards and then requiring people to measure up to them so they can be like us. Because everybody's got a story, everybody's got issues that they're dealing with, and you don't know what they are.

None of us do. In the deep, dark recesses of each and every one of our hearts, there are all kinds of anxieties and hurts and problems and issues that we have to deal with.

And nobody else has to deal with those. You do. And each of us has our own set. And we need to recognize what one another may be going through. And when we handle each other, like Paul is saying here, with gentleness, not an air of superiority, not a holier-than-thou attitude, that will encourage them to go on.

Bear you one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Practice bearing one another's burdens, and in this way, carry out the law of Christ.

And every time somebody gets something that overloads them, and it gets to be more than they can handle. And when we're close enough to one another, and can confide in one another, that's when you can come alongside and help.

[23 : 18] And you'd be surprised how encouraging a word fitly spoken can be. Like the proverb says, word fitly spoken is like pictures of gold and apples and pictures of silver.

Apples of gold and pictures of silver. It is just what somebody needs. I remember reading the story of Mel Trotter, founder of the Mel Trotter Mission in Michigan.

And he was an alcoholic, derelict, living on the street, decided that he was going to end it all.

And he was near Lake Michigan, and he told himself he was going to walk out, and when he got to the end of the pier, he was just going to keep right on walking.

And Mel Trotter was the kind of guy that was pretty low. Pretty low. This is the guy who, when his two-year-old baby daughter died from malnutrition because he drank up all the money and couldn't afford milk and food for the baby, and the baby died, he went to the funeral home where his little two-year-old baby daughter was laid out in a casket.

[24 : 42] And he reached over the casket in a moment of privacy, reached over in the casket, and he took the little shoes off of her feet so he could take him to the local pawn shop and pawn him for the price of a drink.

That was Mel Trotter. And on his way, he passed a mission, and he heard people inside singing, and he thought to himself, well, maybe it would be appropriate if I checked out of this world with a little bit of religion and some hymn singing.

So I'll go in and prepare myself. And he went in and he heard not just him singing, he heard the glorious gospel of the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

And it completely revolutionized his life. He became a believer in the Lord Jesus. And as they say the rest of the story, he founded the Mel Trotter mission.

And it's still in existence today. ministering to winos and derelicts and homeless people because someone made the gospel available to him when he was really down, ready to pack it all in and forget it.

[25 : 57] And that's what the grace of God does. Fellas, with God's grace, there is always a way back. God's open arms are always there and they're always open.

And all he's asking us to do is confess our sin, admit it to him. And when we do, all we're doing is aligning ourselves with truth. And that's why God is willing to receive us because he's a God of truth.

And he receives those who are walking in truth. God loves truth. This is why Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. It's all part of the package. It's all part of the package.

Bear you one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

There's a lot that could be said about this in the world of politics today, isn't there? When a man thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

[26 : 59] Wow. Any comments or questions about that? Anyone? Feel free to put in your two cents word. This is ego.

Ego. This, again, bears out the idea. Yes. Lamar. Yeah. I think it's based on pride. The Bible talks about the nothing that's left in the eyes of pride.

I think it's based on the pride. Absolutely. Pride is... Pride... Pride is that thing that when you think you've got it, you don't.

Pride is what Jeremiah was talking about when he said the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? This means that our pride and our ego can con you, can sell you a bill of goods.

[28 : 01] It's called self-deception. That's what the verse is talking about. If we think ourselves to be something when we're nothing, we deceive ourselves.

Paul said when he wrote to the Philippians, let everyone prefer others better than themselves. In other words, we put other people first.

Hey, that's not natural. No, it's not natural. It's supernatural. It is the complete reverse of the way things work in this world.

But this is a fallen world. And believers have been redeemed out of a fallen world and we have a capacity for living supernaturally. We have an ability to live in a way that the world doesn't.

Because the world doesn't have the resources that we do. And our resource is the Spirit of God and Christ living within us. Makes all the difference in the world. Any other thoughts?

[29 : 08] All right. Verse 4. But let every man prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another.

Moffat translates that. Let everyone bring his own work to the test. Then he will have something to boast about on his own account and not in comparison with his fellows.

Don't we want to compare ourselves with others? Because, and you know, someone said, hey, it's always easy to find somebody that'll make you look good.

And he says, those who compare themselves among themselves are not wise. But in our heart of hearts, in that old fallen ego, we all tend to think or want to think that we're better than most.

We're cut above most. We're not like other people. There's this Pharisee thing again, you know? And this, what we need is that attitude that Paul had said, Paul said, I am less than the least of all the apostles.

[30 : 24] And that to me, this grace was given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. He couldn't get over the fact that God entrusted that to him.

Me. Can you believe it? Saul of Tarsus. Me. To me, was this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ? Fantastic.

Absolutely. This is the difference that the grace of God makes in someone's life. My, oh my. And then in verse 5, every man shall bear his own burden.

Now, I want to know how you square verse 5 with verse 2. Verse 2, Paul says, bear one of another's burdens, so fulfill the law of Christ. Verse 5 says, for every man shall bear his own burden.

Is this a contradiction? How do you see that? Any thoughts? I'm sorry?

[31 : 29] You're still responsible for that. Okay. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. You're responsible. You're responsible for your own actions, for what you produce in your life. You're also responsible to aid a brother who isn't producing, or is subpar, or needs help.

We are to bear one another's burdens, because from time to time, we all need a little help. And we ought to be there, ready and eager to give it.

But at the same time, none of us should cop out of what our responsibility is. We need to accept life's responsibilities and fulfill them in a godly manner, because each should row his own boat.

But when you have a brother who is ill, or is weak, or is beaten down, you need some help. You need to be there to help him. So there's no contradiction here. It's saying we're supposed to be self-sustaining and self-sufficient so we can row our own boat, and so we can also provide a hand for the brother who's not able to do it right now.

Because next week, it may be you who's on the needy end. Other thoughts? Anybody? Yes. This is a powerful act of humility. It is. Absolutely.

[32 : 49] It is. It is. And humility, like I said, it's kind of like, well, humility is that thing that when you think you've got it, you don't.

You know? Did I tell you about the book that I planned to write? It's called The World's Ten Most Humble Men and How I Chose the Other Nine.

Yeah. That'd make a good book, huh? Yes. Lamar. I relate these two scriptures with the two scriptures of the Father that says, answer a fool according to his father.

Let me be wise and as long as he says, answer not a fool according to his father. Let thou also be like that. Yeah. Right.

Yeah. And it's a time to enter a fool according to his father and it's a time not to enter. Yeah. Yeah. So it's a time to bear one another mercy and it's a time not to bear.

[33 : 51] There you go. It's a commentary. Yeah. It's a commentary on what we're talking about from Proverbs. Appreciate that. Thank you. Yeah. Yeah. Anything else? Yeah. Okay.

Well, the food is here. That means it's time for me to quit. So you all enjoy your breakfast. And by the way, guys, you know where we are now. Thursday morning. And we're here every Thursday morning that they'll let us in.

And we really appreciate this, Tabby, because actually, Collier's does not open for breakfast until eight o'clock. But for the last 15 years, they have accommodated us at seven o'clock on Thursday mornings.

And we do appreciate it very much. So thank you, guys. Enjoy your breakfast. Well, by the way, I've got some handouts here. This one on dispensationalism, the approach to the study of the scriptures.

It's very valuable. Contrary to what some people believe, dispensationalism is not a newly discovered disease. And ISIS, ISIS, the nations and the end of the world.

[34 : 54] Greg Laurie, an evangelist, written this article. These are all available here. Feel free to pick up one if you want on your way out. They are. And here's an interesting one. Do Muslims and Christians worship the same God?

You'd be surprised how many Christians think we do. We don't. And this article is written by a former Muslim. And a medical doctor. So it's quite interesting.

I've got here a few CDs. This is last Sunday morning's message that I brought at Grace.

And it's probably the most, what shall I say, the most different message that I have ever brought at Grace in 45 years because, and it kind of pained me to do this, I never used the Bible.

This is from secular history. And what was going on in the early centuries. If you're interested, feel free to pick up one on the way out. I'll put them here in the corner.

[35 : 58] Help yourself to them. And enjoy your day. Bye. Bye. llesouts. Bye. Bye. Bye.

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