

Study: Galatians 6:1-10, Reaping What you Sow

Leader's Note: This week we'll be looking at Chapter 6 of Galatians. We'll explore some specific examples of what it looks like to walk in the Spirit in the context of community.

Pray for your time together in God's word.

Ask the Group: Can you think of a time when you were called to help someone with a personal struggle?

- Were there any challenges or worries that got in the way?

1) Restoring Gently

As a group, read through Galatians 6:1-10.

Galatians 6:1-10 (NIV)

¹ Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. ⁴ Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, ⁵ for each one should carry their own load. ⁶ Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 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. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Leader's Note: Have the group members take five minutes on their own to try and identify all of the imperatives, or commands, that Paul gives in this passage.

Ask the Group: What imperatives, or commands, does Paul give in this passage?

Possible Answers:

- 1) If brother in sin, restore them
- 2) Watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted by sin
- 3) Carry each other's burdens - this fulfills the law of Christ
- 4) If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves
- 5) Don't compare yourself to others - just be proud of yourselves alone
- 6) "Carry your own load"
- 7) "Share all good things with your instructor" in the word
- 8) Reap what you sow (destruction through pleasing flesh, or eternal life through pleasing the Spirit and doing good)

9) *In light of eternity, do good to all people, especially believers*

Ask the Group: What, if anything, do these commands have in common?

Possible Answer: They give instruction to the Galatians about how to walk in the Spirit in the context of community - both exercising personal responsibility and mutual accountability.

Ask the Group: What is our responsibility towards those who lapse or sin?

Possible Answer: To restore them gently.

Ask the Group: Think of a time where someone caught you doing something wrong. Did they “restore gently” or something else?

- How did that impact you?

Ask the Group: Now think of a time when you noticed something about someone else that needed correcting. How did that affect you?

Possible Answers: It caused you to examine yourself. You felt proud of yourself for being “above” that particular issue in your own life. You sought out guidance from others in how to offer correction.

The Law of Christ - Not to be confused with Paul’s previous references to the Law of Moses, Paul’s reference to the “Law of Christ” refers to new life in the Spirit. “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” (Galatians 5:18). One way this happens is when we carry our neighbor’s burdens (Galatians 6:2).

Ask the Group: How do Paul’s commands to “carry each other’s burdens” and for each one to “carry his own load” make sense together in this passage?

Possible Answer: The Christian community should be characterized by mutual accountability, but that does not mean individuals are not still personally responsible for sin.

2) Reaping what you Sow

Ask the Group: What does it mean to “reap destruction” or “reap eternal life”?

Possible answers: Life or death! Punishment or salvation.

Optional Transition: Another passage in Scripture hits on a similar theme:

James 2:14-19 (NIV)

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food.¹⁶ If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.”

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

Ask the Group: What do good works have to do with faith?

Possible Answer: Martin Luther said, “We are saved by faith alone, but saving faith is never alone” (i.e. true faith will result in good works).

Application Question: One commonly used expression of the Gospel is:

Jesus + Nothing = Everything

Which of the following distortions of the Gospel are you tempted to fall into?

Jesus + The Good Stuff I Do = Everything

Jesus + Nothing = A Free Pass to Do Whatever I Want

The Good Stuff I Do (I Don’t Really Need Jesus) = Everything

- Are there others?
- How can you fight against these lies?

Ask the Group: What is our community application of this passage?

Leader’s Note: You may choose to create your own application question as a group based on your discussion or highlight a question from this study.