

Relationships with Fellow Believers

Galatians 6:6-10

Galatians 6:6-10: *“Let him who is taught the Word share in all good things with him who teaches.”* ⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. ⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

Background Notes

The first five verses of Galatians 6 include some of the believer’s responsibilities toward our fellow believers. What are we to do when we see a fellow believer struggling under the weight of grief or sorrow, or suffering, or a trial, or a heavy workload? We are to do what we can to help. We are to bear one another’s heavy burdens.

And if a fellow believer has sinned, what should we do? Spiritually mature believers are to help that fellow believer to come back into fellowship with the Lord and His people. *“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted”* (v1). We are to do what we can to restore an erring brother or sister. Don’t write them off! Help them to get back on track.

A young Christian man I know is in the process of restoration right now. Because of moral sin, this man was destroying himself and his young family. Although the church leaders had to administer necessary church discipline, this man is now being restored to his family and to the fellowship of believers through the gentle care and spiritual counseling of fellow believers. This kind of restoration is wonderful to see! And it doesn’t always require trained counselors! Restoration will happen if we follow the guidelines in the first section of Galatians 6.

In verses 6-10 there are a few more exhortations about our relationships with fellow believers. Verse 6: *“Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.”* I love this verse! I’m teaching and you’re being taught, so the Bible is commanding you to share **all good things** with me! [laughter...]

Seriously, that’s the way the body of Christ should function. The Lord has given various gifts, talents, and abilities to each one of us. We are not all gifted as preachers or Bible teachers. So those who are taught should share in love with the needs of the teachers, who will be spending a lot of their time studying the Word. 1 Timothy 5:17 says, *“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.”*

“Double honor” doesn’t mean just extra respect for a spiritual leader. It’s respect, yes - and financial remuneration as well. Verse 18 makes this very clear: *“You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,”* and, *“The laborer is worthy of his wages.”*

Obviously this exhortation to give “double honor” can be abused. Pastors and teachers should be very sensitive in the area of finances - and they certainly should not demand excessive salary and benefit packages from their flocks!

Just a word of personal testimony here. I’d like to say that I’ve been blessed because of the truth of this verse. I left employment as a research scientist more than thirty years ago, and I have been involved in teaching God’s Word ever since then. The Lord’s people have been very faithful to me and to my family during this time. They truly have shared *“all good things”* with us.

Doctrinal Points

1. Believers who sow to the flesh will reap corruption.

Verse 7 is a very well-known verse, and it sets the foundation for verse 8. Verse 7: *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.”* And then verse 8: *“For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”*

Are verses 7-8 addressed to believers or unbelievers? We often think that they are addressed to unbelievers – but no! ***They are addressed to believers.*** To be sure, these verses have a wider application, and other Scriptures certainly indicate that this principle can apply to unbelievers. For example, Job 4:8 says, *“Those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.”* And Hosea 8:7 says, *“Those who sow the wind will reap the whirlwind.”* So Galatians 6:7-8 certainly is a biblical principle that applies to believers - and to unbelievers as well. However, in the context of the letter to the Galatians, these verses are addressed to believers.

Look back to Galatians 5:16 to see the overall context of exhortation to believers: *“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.”* And Galatians 5:24-25: *“And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”* Now Galatians 6:7-8 once again, thinking of it in this context, is written to believers: *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”* All these Scriptures go together as exhortation to believers.

In the immediate context, verse 6 says, *“Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.”* We are to be to be giving and sharing Christians. “Sowing to the flesh” would mean thinking only of yourself - your own comforts and your own pleasures, and not caring and not sharing with others.

Fellow believers, if a lack of love and a lack of caring and sharing is the condition of your heart and life right now, then don't expect much in the way of reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. It won't be long before you will reap disappointment and ultimate corruption or destruction, because everything associated with the flesh will decay and die and be worthless.

Believers who sow to the flesh will reap corruption.

2. Believers who sow to the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Verse 8: *"For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."*

What does it mean to "sow to the Spirit"? Once again, in the immediate context of verse 6, sowing to the Spirit means giving and sharing to help further the Lord's work by meeting the needs of the Lord's servants. If you do this, you will be blessed, and you will "reap" eternal life.

Does the phrase: "reap eternal life" mean that we enter eternal life when we die as a result of our good works of giving and sharing with the Lord's servants? No! That would be "salvation by works," that very thing the apostle so vigorously denied in earlier chapters of Galatians! We can't earn our own way to Heaven by our human effort. "Reaping eternal life" is the idea of **enjoying eternal life** - right now!

If you are a Christian you **already have eternal life**. Eternal life doesn't start when you die - you have it now! John 3:36 says, *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life."* But are you enjoying your eternal life? Or are you just living your life like the average non-Christian? If you give and share of your material blessings to support of the Lord's work and the Lord's servants, you will be rewarded in Heaven, but you will also enjoy your eternal life right now!

Verse 9 indicates that the enjoyment of the giving and sharing way of life may not be instantaneous - but the joy will come if you hang in there and don't get weary: *"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart"(v9).*

I know several Christians who have changed from being selfish and hoarding believers to being giving and sharing believers. They all testify that it was not easy at first - but it has become the greatest blessing of their lives as Christians!

Believers who sow to the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Practical Application

Don't forget to do good to unbelievers!

Verse 10: *"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith."*

In verses 6-10 we learned that, as believers, we have three areas of responsibility for helping to meet material and financial needs.

- **Area # 1** - the Lord's servants who preach and teach the Word of God or serve the Lord full-time in some other capacity.
- **Area # 2** - the "household of faith" - all fellow believers. Just as we help immediate family members during difficult times, so we have an obligation to meet the needs of our brothers and sisters in the Christian family.
- **Area # 3** - the unbelievers around us who have needs. Let us not forget to do good to unbelievers!

This is not the "social gospel" – this is a ***Christian obligation***. It has been said that we should do all the good that we can, in all the ways we can, to all the people we can, for as long as we can!

Obviously we can't do everything. There must be priorities. And there are other biblical principles that apply here too, such as not enabling "freeloaders" who are capable of working - and therefore *should* be working. But taking all those things into account, we do have an obligation to unbelievers.

Look around you for people you could help. And don't forget to do good to unbelievers!