



3/16/26

*It's kinda cool when God lines things up in what seems like a coincidence. So I thought this was a cool coincidence... I actually just posted a blog with a bimonthly email focused on body image struggles I send out to whoever wants it called Hidden Reflections. I've been going through the book of Galatians for Hidden Reflections because the whole letter is focused on understanding the power of the gospel in our lives over all other things... including the struggle we have to not let our body image define our value. My focus for the blog that was sent out yesterday is on vs. 3-5. I thought I would include that post before going on to vs. 6-10. If you receive that email, please forgive me for "double dipping." Feel free to jump down to vs. 6. If you don't, I hope this will be an encouragement to you if you ever struggle with what you see when you look in the mirror.*

*Blessings,  
Jonna*

*Galatians 6:3-10 ~*

*Vs. 3-5 ~*

*I can recall two pictures from more years ago than I want to admit. One was taken when we brought my first baby girl home from the hospital. Having her was quite the ordeal. I was told that I had to give birth to her 5 weeks before my due date or I would not survive. My body was filling up with toxins. In less than 35 weeks of pregnancy I had gained 75 pounds. I wish I could say it was all water weight. But though I immediately dropped 30 pounds when she was born, I was still way heavier than I wanted to be. When I looked at the picture of me standing in our yard, holding my precious little girl as we arrived home from the hospital, all I could see was my swollen body. I couldn't see the look of joy on my face as I held this sweet gift from the Lord in my arms. Ugh! I was missing what really mattered.*

*The second picture that comes to mind was taken about a year later. After 6 months of not losing another pound after my sweet girl was born, I went on a mission. I started exercising*

*every day and I cut back as many calories as I could. I counted every morsel that went into my mouth. I lost the extra 45 pounds and another 15-20 on top of that. I was ecstatic. And yet, I wasn't satisfied. I could still look and see imperfections. The target of beauty kept moving! And I was missing what really mattered.*

*Two pictures... At the time, if you could have read my thoughts, you would have seen that I defined my value according to those two pictures. Instead of seeing this incredible, beautiful baby in my arms, I saw a worthless woman. Instead of seeing a woman who had become consumed with losing pants sizes, I saw a woman who thought she had finally achieved value... but that satisfaction was fleeting... because now that woman would have to exhaust herself trying to keep that level of success... and there's always more that could be improved.*

*I missed what God thought of me. I minimized the incredible 5 pound miracle of life that He put in my arms. I could not be satisfied. I don't wish that on anyone!*

*The fact is, I was deceiving myself. I was trying to find a way to think highly of myself... to find a place of honor. That was never meant to be my purpose. My friend, that was never meant to be your purpose, either. Galatians 6:3 says, "For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself." That was my goal! To make myself SOMETHING! To make MYSELF something. But our value does not come from what we see in the mirror. It comes from the Lord!*

*Let's go back to Galatians 5:1, "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." Fighting to make something of ourselves is enslaving! We have been set free. If you have confessed Jesus as your Lord, you never have to prove your value again. You are free to live without fear. You are free to never again be enslaved to making something of yourself.*

*This is why Paul tells us in Galatians 6:2 to "keep watch on ourselves, lest we too be tempted." Our natural inclination will be to turn things into a way to build ourselves up, even when we're helping others overcome their struggles. In fact, when we're helping others overcome their struggles, we're often tempted to think that we have the power to fix them. We deceive ourselves. Our only job is to be faithful to the Lord in caring for others and watch Him work in their hearts. That's my goal here.*

*I'm hoping to encourage you to find your value in the Lord. At the same time, I realize that I have to keep watch on myself because trying to find my value in something other than the Lord is always a temptation. I constantly have to surrender my heart to the Lord and ask for His help. He's always faithful to answer.*

*But wait. There's more, and it looks confusing. Galatians 6:4 says, "But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor." So... is Paul saying there's a way we can boast in ourselves??? Not really. Paul is trying to help us not let our heads get too big in thinking we're better than others. He's calling us to examine our hearts to*

*see if the work we're doing is really aligned with what God wants.*

*Truly, scripture gives us reasons to boast and none of them have to do with how awesome we are.*

- *Jeremiah 9:23-24 says, "Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches (let not the thin man or woman boast in their thinness), but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord." You and I need to examine ourselves to see if we're boasting in the Lord.*
- *In 2 Corinthians 12:9, Paul had asked God to take away a thorn in his flesh. We often think our appearance is a thorn. God was more interested in protecting him (and us) from arrogance. He said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my WEAKNESSES, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me." We need to examine ourselves to see if we're allowing the grace of God to be our satisfaction and strength. For me, having a "perfect" body image is all about pride. Instead, God wants us to boast in our weaknesses, so that we can experience the fullness of His grace and strength. How are you doing with that? I'm definitely having to keep surrendering my heart to the Lord to overcome pride.*

*So... we're called to examine ourselves to make sure our boasting is in the Lord and in His grace and in our weaknesses. What we absolutely can't do is spend our time comparing ourselves to others to try to make ourselves feel valuable. God wants us to examine ourselves according to His word to see what pleases Him.*

*What pleases Him? Our faith. Hebrews 11:6 says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek him." Whoa! He doesn't care what we look like!!! He wants us to believe Him, seek Him, and draw near to Him... and He gives us freedom! Freedom from thinking our value is measured by our pant size, the number on the scale, how good we look in a picture, or whether we look better than the next person. That's so much better than the deception of trying to prove our value and worth. My friend, God already values you. His opinion is the one that matters!!!*

*Finally, we come to our last verse for today, Galatians 6:5, "For each will have to bear his own load." In vs. 2, we were called to "bear one another's burdens" and here we're called to bear our own load. This goes back to the deception of thinking too highly of ourselves. The burden we carry for others is helping them carry what's too heavy for them to handle, as we talked about in the last blog. The load we bear is what we can handle, and what we shouldn't place on others. When we're thinking too highly of ourselves, we fall into comparison and expect others to do for us because we think we're better than them. When we think too low of ourselves, we fall*

*into comparison and think we're too weak to carry any load. Deceptive boasting will lead us to lay down our load.*

*What's our load? Walking by faith in Jesus, boasting in Him and His faithful love, righteous heart, and perfect rule. Our load is to serve Him faithfully and celebrate the freedom we have in Him.*

*Remember, all of this is to protect us from being deceived. The world will tell you that you have to bear a load you were never meant to bear... to make yourself valuable. The freedom that comes in letting God be our defining measure is incredible when we keep watch on ourselves so that we don't go back to the lies.*

*I was watching the Olympics a few weeks ago, and I heard an ice skating commentator say that the ice skaters love to have the crowds celebrate their performances, but they skate for the judges. They know where they get the points... it's from the judges. No one else's opinion really matters. You and I skate for the one and only Judge. Only His opinion matters. And the BEAUTIFUL thing is, His Son already gave us a perfect score when He died on the cross and rose again. Let our boasting be in HIM. That's the freedom!!!*

*My friend, let's examine our hearts and not be deceived. Our God wants to free us from deception. Where is your boasting? Where is mine? May we let it be in the Lord, the only Judge, the one who loves us and takes us as we are.*

*Now... moving on to the rest of the passage...*

*Vs. 6 ~ "Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches." Paul wrote this letter, not to be self serving... "Make sure you're taking care of ME." In fact, he wasn't the pastor of the church. He was wanting the leaders of the local church to be provided for so that they could focus their energy on teaching the word and shepherding the church.*

*This verse makes me ask myself a question... What teachers am I sharing good things with? Is it a physical therapist? A social media influencer? Is it someone who points me to what has eternal value in the Lord, or am I sharing good things with the person who teaches me about clean eating or how to invest in the stock market or whatever? I need to make sure that the good I share is going primarily to the one who points me to Jesus... and to those in need (as I see in a ton of other passages).*

*The fact is... I may pour my good gifts into people who help me serve my flesh, or who help me serve the Lord by the power of the Holy Spirit. Let me not be deceived...*

*Vs. 7-8 ~ "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 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."*

*When I'm sharing all good things with one who teaches me to live in the flesh better, I mock God and I reap a more sinful heart. I mock God because I trample on His gift of salvation that He has poured out on me. When I do that, I grieve the Lord, and I sabotage my heart.*

*When I share good things with one who teaches me the word of God and points me to Him so that I'm walking in the Spirit, keeping in step with the Spirit, and not hostile to the Spirit as I read about in Galatians 5, I grow in the Lord and I reap a harvest of all things that pertain to eternal life. There is no self sabotage, only Spirit filled satisfaction.*

*Sowing to the Spirit is hard. It's a constant tension between my flesh and my spirit. The flesh is always trying to push me away from the Lord. Vs. 9 gives me hope...*

*Vs. 9 ~ "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."*

*Don't give up sowing to the Spirit. That's where the good is. Every farmer knows that the crop doesn't grow the moment the seed is planted. It takes time. For the one who sows to his flesh, he may think he's getting away with it because it takes time for his harvest of corruption to come in. But do not be deceived. It will. For the one who sows to the Spirit, he may think that he's wasting his time because no good harvest seems to be coming. Do not be discouraged. It will.*

*In the waiting, God is doing something. Don't give up. I WILL reap, and God WILL make it worth the wait. When I see the harvest of righteousness, hope, peace, and joy come... I will be in blissful shock at how huge the harvest is. So...*

*Vs. 10 ~ "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."*

*Why does a humble attitude of myself and a giving heart toward others, my choice to sow to the Spirit rather than my flesh, lead to me pursue doing good to everyone? Because that's the gospel. God pours into us, not just individually, but corporately... so that we can have a united heart for Him. As I do good to unbelievers, I can pray they see Jesus in me. As I do good to other believers in Christ, we spur each other on to keep pursuing the Lord with a pure heart.*

*Thinking highly of myself and sowing to my flesh reaps corruption. It just does. Thinking highly of the Lord and sowing to the Spirit reaps all things that pertain to eternal life. Praise God. It just does. O Lord, please let me not deceive myself, and let me not think You can be mocked. The freedom and goodness come in aligning myself with Your word in relationship with You. May it be so.*