

Galatians 6:1-5

Introduction

I. We often think of “spiritual” people in terms of personal holiness, knowledge, or devotion to God, but Paul talks about “spiritual” people in terms of how they relate to others in the community.

II. The struggle between the flesh and the Spirit

- A. Living by the flesh (self-centered part of us) results in always comparing ourselves to others
- B. Living by the Spirit results in us carrying each other’s burdens
- C. Are you someone who is always comparing or carrying?

The Passage

I. The Premise: we are God’s family

A. “Brothers” (v. 1)

We are adopted in Christ and have been filled with the Spirit, so we are part of the same family. Let’s treat each other like family (take care of each other, carry each other’s burdens)

B. Remember group projects in school? God is calling us into a group project
Group projects are messy, clunky, awkward, but that’s God’s plan

II. What walking in Spirit looks like in community

A. The basic perspective

1. “Let us not be desirous of vain glory” (5:26)

We don’t think more of ourselves than we should, we realize everything we have is a gift from God (1 Cor 4:7)

2. “Brothers”: we are part of this family

B. The basic action: carry each other’s burdens (v. 2)

1. Explanation

a. A “burden” = is something weighing you down

Piper: burden = “anything that threatens to crush the joy of our faith”
Emotional, physical, financial, spiritual, etc

b. “Carry each other’s burdens”:

come alongside and you carry some of the weight,
let some of weight fall onto you, they feel lighter and you feel heavier

2. Examples

- Praying with people
- Listening, entering into their pain
- helping financially
- helping them move, providing meals
- using our gifts for sake of others
- restoring them in sin

3. This fulfills the law of Christ

John 15: "love one another"

Carrying burdens is one fundamental way to love each other

4. This fulfills the pattern of Christ

Christ was the ultimate "burden carrier" (the cross)

III. What walking in the flesh looks like in community?

A. The basic perspective

1. "vain glory" (5:26) = Seeking glory in and for ourselves

2. thinking we are something when we are nothing (6:3)

=Not being interested in the group project/family

Rather concerned for the self, please, protect the self

B. The basic action: comparing ourselves to others

1. v. 4: "comparing"

2. v. 26: provoking and envying

a. Provoke is what we do when we compare and feel better than others
= "call out to challenge"

b. Envy is what we do when we compare and feel less than/inferior

3. Orange County is the capital of comparison

4. Comparing is the great enemy to community/carrying each other's burdens

a. Prevents us from allowing our burdens to be carried because we have an image to protect so we can't risk being vulnerable and needy

b. Prevents us from carrying each other's burdens because so much time, energy, and resources go towards "keeping up"/competing with people, we don't have much left for carrying burdens

5. Paul's solution to the comparison game (v.4-5)

We need to realize that one day each of us will stand before Christ to give an account of our lives, and he won't be judging us based on comparing us with others. Each of us will have to carry our own load (i.e. give account for our own lives) on that day

IV. An example of burden carrying: restoring a brother in sin (v. 1)

A. The flesh's response

1. This person's sin is none of my business. We each have our own spiritual journeys, and we should leave each other alone.

2. We judge them for their sin as we come from a place of assumed superiority

3. Or we do both: we judge them behind their backs

B. The Spirit's response

1. The perspective: this is a brother/sister who is carrying a burden and I want to help

2. The purpose: to "restore" (= resetting a dislocated joint)

3. The posture: gentleness + humility

Humility = recognizing we can easily fall into the same sin

Conclusion

I. Am I loving people, or am I too busy comparing? Where does comparing get in the way of loving?

II. Where are those spiritual friendships in my life where we give each other permission to speak truth in love?

Discussion Questions

1. Opening questions: What struck you most about the sermon/the passage? What surprised you? What confused you? What did you disagree with?
2. Based on Sunday's sermon how do we reconcile Paul's statement in v. 2, "carry each other's burdens," with Paul's statement in v. 5, "each one will carry his own load?"
3. In what situation or friendship might God be nudging you to "carry someone's burden" at this time in your life?
4. Where in your own life are you tempted to constantly compare yourself to others? How does this affect (or not affect) your ability to love people well?
5. Based on Sunday's sermon, do you have a new perspective on what it means to be "spiritual"? How did this affect your understanding of what it means to "walk in the Spirit?"