

GALATIANS CHAPTER 6

“GOSPEL RELATIONSHIPS... AND PARTING WORDS”



Gospel PRESENTED

In **CH. 1** Paul presents the source of the message as “not man’s gospel” (Galatians 1:11)

In **CH. 2** Paul presents the content of the message that “a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus” (Galatians 2:16).

Gospel EXPLAINED

In **CH. 3** Paul presents a series of arguments demonstrating the logic of the message that faith alone in Christ alone removes the curse of the law (Galatians 3:11,13).

In **CH. 4** Paul demonstrates the superiority of the message by offering a stark contrast between sons and slaves, and law and grace (Galatians 4:7-9, 31). Mid-way, he lifts the veil of his critique to display the heart of his message, addressing the Galatians as “my little children” (Galatians 4:19) and assuring them his goal is not to shame them but that “Christ be formed in you.”

Gospel APPLIED

In **CH. 5**, Paul presents the implications of the message, showing that gospel faith give us a gospel identity that results in gospel freedom (Galatians 5:1) that bears gospel fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”

In **CH. 6**, Paul moves from broad implications of the gospel for individual character, conduct and church life (“serve one another” and “love your neighbor as yourself” in Ch.5) to applications of gospel freedom to particular relationships and situations. He then ends abruptly, as if the courier of the letter stood waiting at the door, aware of the urgency of the communication.

In the first 4 chapters of the letter, we learned that gospel freedom makes our scorecards with God irrelevant. In the last two chapters, particularly Chapter 6, we see that gospel freedom allows us to **PUT AWAY OUR SCORECARDS WITH ONE ANOTHER** so that...



1. **We’re able to HELP BROTHERS and SISTERS CAUGHT IN SIN** (Galatians 6:1)

“Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

Q: What does “restoration in a spirit of gentleness” look like in practice? Note how this behavior is the opposite of the “biting and devouring one another” warned against in 5:15.

2. **We’re able to CARRY EACH OTHER’S BURDENS** (Galatians 6:2-5)

² Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵ For each will have to bear his own load.

The original words for “burdens” and “load” have been translated conversationally as “boulders” (or heavy loads) and “backpacks” (or lighter loads).

Q: Think of some examples, from Scripture and from your own life? How do these verses challenge the assumption we can be “Lone Ranger Christians” with a private faith that’s “just between me and God?”

3. **We’re able to HONOR PASTORS AND TEACHERS** (Galatians 6:6-8)

⁶ Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. ⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸ 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.

Does this appear self-serving? If so, think about the cultural context ... as the community of faith was shifting FROM mandated tithes that supported priests and temple activity TO voluntary giving to support gospel ministers who had dedicated their lives to planting and strengthening churches.

While the principle of sowing and reaping appears here in the context of investing in the gospel through support of its ministers, there's a broader application and contrast described between sowing to the flesh and sowing to the spirit.

Q: What are the results of each, according to this passage?

Sowing to the flesh. Q: Have you heard stories (or experienced) how a tiny seed of a thought can prompt an action that starts to repeat as a habit that becomes a pattern of sin – so that suddenly we're ensnared?

Sowing to the Spirit. Q: Have you ever planted a garden from seed? What is the typical proportion between what's sown and what's reaped? What's been your attitude during the waiting?

4. **We're able to DO GOOD to ALL WITH WHOM WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY** (Galatians 6:9-10)

⁹And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Q: How does our "doing good" to others give credibility to the gospel? Have you ever had opportunity to "give a reason for your hope" when you received credit for being a nice person? Do you agree with the commonly expressed sentiment "Preach the gospel at all times and, if necessary, use words?" If the gospel is "good news," aren't words ULTIMATELY necessary?

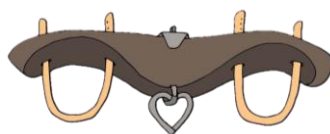
PAUL'S FINAL COUNSEL:

¹¹ See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. ¹² It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. ¹³ For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. ¹⁴ But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵ For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. ¹⁷ From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. ¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

We've seen that this is a strongly worded letter to address a desperate situation involving the critical distinction between grace, which results in freedom, and legalism, which results in enslavement.

So it's not surprising that Paul would return to his original subject before closing. He add final emphasis by grabbing the pen from his scribe and writing in large or capital letters!

Q: What does it mean for the world to be crucified to us and us to the world? Remember: the cross was an instrument of death. How does one dethrone the "idols" in our hearts to experience the freedom and security that comes from our true gospel identity?



*²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." ~ **Matthew 11:28-30***

GALATIANS (FOR REFLECTION BEYOND OUR STUDY)

Consider how the freedom that results from a wholehearted commitment to a gospel of grace applies:

- To **WORK**...when our identity (sufficiency, security, worth, competence, purpose, standing before God) is NOT bound to our title, our income, our path up the corporate ladder or favor with superiors and coworkers.
- To **RELATIONSHIPS**...when we don't need to find our esteem in the opinions of others or fear that we diminish ourselves when we give with no strings attached or extend grace to others.
- To our **RESPONSE TO PERSONAL SIN AND THE SINS OF OTHERS**...when we can throw away our scorecard with God and skip the comparison game with others.
- To the changing **SEASONS OF LIFE**...when we can set aside the need to create our own purpose and meaning for the moment, and instead seek God's purpose, viewing each chapter in our story in light of God's grand story of redemption.
- To living in a **RESTLESS CULTURE** where people strive to look better, live better, feel better and BE better in front of God and man...when we can GET OFF THE TREADMILL OF CEASELESS STRIVING and rest in Christ's finished work.
- To our community **LIFE AT EGCC** as we serve together in a common mission, bound together by something much stronger than our differences and preferences.
- To our outward witness as **CHRIST'S BODY AT EGCC**, as we display the supernatural fruit of the spirit and live out a gospel confidence that stands in stark contrast to the crumbling foundations on which the world builds...such as career, wealth, health, political identity, family reputation, sexual and gender identity and every other foundation that ultimately cannot sustain us.

...To the extension of our individual "gospel-rooted" identity to our corporate "gospel-rooted"

IDENTITY AS CHRIST'S BODY AT EGCC. Are we focused on *our abilities* or *God's sufficiency*? Are we a church whose best years are behind us OR are we God's gospel outpost on the frontier of missions, FREE from the constraints of human fear, FREE from comparison with other churches, and set apart and custom-fit for a fresh vision to make an eternal impact for our time, place and culture?



	Can Control	Cannot Control
Take Action	Mastery	Ceaseless Striving
No Action	Giving Up (Hopelessness)	Letting Go (Acceptance)



Not a Biblical model per se, but a good reminder that resting securely in the gospel freedom that's ours based on Christ's work and apart from any human effort will keep from us living in this box!