

## HE AIN'T HEAVY - HE'S MY BROTHER

### *Galatians 6:1-5*

*"To walk by the spirit is not to have an inexpressible mystical experience. To walk by the Spirit is to support the weak and the fallen and to bear their burdens." (S.L. Johnson)*

*"It is easy to talk about the fruit of the Spirit while doing very little about it. So Christians need to learn that it is in concrete situations, rather than in emotional highs, that the reality of the Holy Spirit in their lives is demonstrated." (James Boice)*

Paul has been talking about "walking by the Spirit", yet he realizes that it is necessary to paint a picture of what that looks like in practice, lest his readers think it is a merely abstract theological point. And so he goes into detail to show us that "keeping in step with the Spirit" affects the way we view ourselves, and our relationships, in a very "down-to-earth" fashion.

*"What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?" (James 2:14-16)*

<sup>5:26</sup> *Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.*

<sup>6:1</sup> *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.*

<sup>2</sup> *Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

<sup>3</sup> *If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.*

<sup>4</sup> *Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, <sup>5</sup> for each one should carry his own load.*

See **verse 6:1** - "**caught in a sin**" means "overtaken", "entrapped", or taken by surprise (the word was once used to describe a Roman legion which had been overrun by a Jewish military force.)

Do you view Christians as people desperately wanting to sin, just barely restrained by the rules of Christianity, OR as new creations, really wanting to please God, and trying not to be entangled with sin?

The word "**fault**" or "**sin**" is literally a false step, a blunder.

Could the sin be a legalistic one? we naturally think of a "license" sin like immorality, stealing, or drunkenness. Can you think of an example of a legalistic sin? (see **Galatians 2:11**)

The word "**restore**" was a word used to describe the mending of a fishing net, or the setting of a broken bone.

The word "**gently**" is the same word found in chapter 5 in the list of the fruit of the Spirit.

"**He who is spiritual**" - is similar to the concept of someone who is "filled with the Spirit". (See Acts 6, where the leaders look for "a few good men" whose lives are characterized by the fruit of the Spirit.)

What errors do we usually fall into in responding to someone who has fallen into some obvious sin?

Have you ever experienced this yourself?

(Were you on the confronting side or the receiving side? How did it turn out? Was it a model to follow in the future, or one to avoid?)

How does 1 Thessalonians 5:14 relate to all this?

See verse 2. "The law of Christ" - Paul has gone to great lengths to show that we are under grace, not law. Is he now introducing the Law all over again? Explain. (See John 13:34 and James 1:25, 2:8)

"**bearing**" - this word is found four times in Galatians (5:10, 6:5, 6:17). It comes from the Greek "baros", which means a heavy burden, more than one should be expected to carry.

Have you ever had such a burden? Do you have one now? (Do you tend to ask for help quickly, or try to do it all by yourself?)

Ecclesiastes 4:9 - 12

*"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work. If one falls down, his friends can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! ... A cord of three strands is not easily broken."*

Referring to this passage, **Martin Luther** said: "Christians need to have strong shoulders and mighty bones."

General **William Booth**, founder of the Salvation Army, was once unable to attend a convention because he was ill. Instead, he cabled a one-word message to the workers, which read simply: "*OTHERS!*"

How does the following verse relate to **verse 3**?

Romans 12:3 *"Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."*

See **verses 4 & 5**.

**"load"** - this Greek word is "*phortion*", the common term for a daily pack, or the normal cargo that a ship is designed to carry.

How does this seem to differ from verse 2?  
(Do the two verses contradict each other?)

Have you ever felt like you wished you could pay someone to live your life for you!? How well are you "carrying your own load" right now?

How can you tell the difference between your own "normal" load and an excessive burden that needs to be shared?

## SUMMARY

What principles do you find in this passage, first, in regard to ourselves, and second, in regard to how we should deal with others?

*"If we walked by the Spirit we would love one another more, and if we loved one another more we would bear one another's burdens, and if we bore one another's burdens we would not shrink from seeking to restore a brother who has fallen into sin."*  
- John Stott