

LEGACY

OF GRACE DEVOTIONAL
WAITING ON THE WORLD TO CHANGE

OCTOBER 24, 2021

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discussion Starter: What do you think it means to “bear one another’s burdens”?

Key Text: “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Galatians 6:2)

This story is strange but true. A young woman named Brenda was invited to go rock climbing. Although she was scared to death, she went with her group to a tall granite cliff. She put on the gear, took hold of the rope, and started up the face of the rock. About 2/3 of the way up the cliff, she got to a ledge where she could take a rest. As she was hanging on there, the safety rope snapped against Brenda’s eye—she was not injured, but it knocked her contact lens out. So, there she was on a rock ledge, hundreds of feet below her and hundreds of feet above her, far from home, afraid, and now her vision was blurry. Hoping her contact lens had fallen on the ledge, she looked at best she could on the ledge, but it wasn’t there. She began climbing again to the top, and to calm her nerves, she began reciting from memory 2 Chronicles 16:9, “For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.” Brenda prayed, “Lord, You can see all these mountains. You know exactly where my contact lens is. Please help me find it.”

Brenda made it to the top of the cliff, and after the rest of her climbing party reached the top, they walked down the trail to the bottom. At the bottom, a new party of climbers was just starting up the face of the cliff. One of them shouted, “Hey, you guys! Anybody lose a contact lens?” As if that wasn’t startling enough, the climber said he saw an ant moving slowly across the rock, carrying the contact lens on its back! Happily, Brenda retrieved her contact lens.

Brenda’s father is a cartoonist. When she told him the incredible story of the ant, the prayer, and the contact lens, her dad drew a picture of an ant lugging that contact lens with the words, “Lord, I don’t know why You want me to carry this thing. I can’t eat it, and it’s awfully heavy. But if this is what You want me to do, I’ll carry it for You.”

We need to remember the ant’s words when we are asked to do something for someone else—to help them bear a burden—that is heavy for us, too. “God, this load is awfully heavy. But, if you want me to carry it for someone else, I will.”

In Galatians 6:2 (see above), Paul is instructing his readers that one of the ways we live with each other as Spirit-empowered people in Christ is by helping carry each other’s burdens. This doesn’t mean we won’t have our own burdens to carry in this earthly life, but God wants us to “bear one another’s burdens” (v.2). What a great legacy to leave behind for our loved ones: We are remembered for helping others with their burdens!

Discuss: When has someone helped you bear a burden you were carrying?

Discuss: When have you helped someone bear a burden they were carrying?

In Galatians 6, Paul addresses a particular burden that we are to help our fellow Christians with: the burden they carry when they have stumbled and fallen into sin.

In 6:1, Paul clarifies, “*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.*” Paul instructs us on how we are to help others bear specific burdens and why.

- **How to Restore a Fallen Friend**

Paul uses the word “restore” in Galatians 6:1 when describing how to respond to a Christian friend who is caught in sin. The Greek word translated “restore” in 6:2 was a doctor’s term, a fisherman’s term, and a sailor’s term. Doctors knew the word “restore” because it described the tender resetting of a broken bone. If a broken bone isn’t reset properly, it will create problems for the body later. Similarly, if we do not restore a broken Christian tenderly and properly, the body of Christ may have bigger problems later.

Fishermen knew the word “restore” because it meant “to mend the nets.” If nets are not mended, they will begin to tear and ultimately will become useless. If a fallen Christian is not mended, God cannot use them to be “*fishers of men*” (Matthew 4:19).

Sailors knew the word “restore” because it meant “to outfit a ship for a voyage.” If a ship wasn’t properly outfitted, it could not face the storms along the sea journey. Each of us must carry some cargo and face some storms as we journey through life. If a sinning Christian isn’t restored, they can’t safely make their journey.

Discuss: As explained above, the word “restore” indicates gentleness (doctor), usefulness (fisherman), and equipping (sailor). Why are each of these three so important spiritually when restoring a fallen friend?

Discuss: Why do you think some Christians are quick to condemn or even rejoice at another’s sin rather than seek to restore them?

- **Why to Restore a Fallen Friend**

In Galatians 6:2, Paul tells us that restoring a friend by bearing their burden “*fulfills the law of Christ.*” Of course, the “law of Christ” is love: “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another*” (John 13:34). The law may tell us to condemn others when they have sinned, but love tells us to restore them. Love never condones sin or rejoices over sin; rather, love “*bears all things...endures all things...never ends*” (1 Corinthians 13:7-8).

Discuss: What are some challenges that can make restoring a fallen friend difficult?

Discuss: Why do you think God wants to use Christians to restore a fallen Christian?

For Further Study:

“What Does It Mean to ‘Bear One Another’s Burdens?’” article at www.crosswalk.com

“Are We Supposed to Carry One Another’s Burdens?” article at www.Christianity.com