

Weight Bearing Love

Josh Blevins Sunday October 13, 2016

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Galatians 6:1-5

ILLUSTRATION

INTRO:

- In the church building where I pastored up north, there was a large beam right in the middle of a row of seating. At times it was annoying because it impeded a few people's views of the stage.
- When we looked into replacing it, we realized why it was there! It was a weight-bearing beam. Remove that beam without spending tens of thousands of dollars to reinforce the ceiling, and you'd have a much bigger problem on your hands than a few people not having a great view of the worship leader!
- When I think about that, I realize, "the church needs a lot more weight-bearing beams..." No, I'm not talking about steel poles, I'm talking about people; people who support one another by sharing the natural weights of life and discipleship with one another.

I'm not just talking about having a community of people, I'm picturing a community of people who are so filled with the love of God and so empowered by the Spirit of God that they each do their part in spiritually engaging one another so that each person causes growth in the next person.

In Ephesians, Paul puts it like this:

[Ephesians 4:16 NKJV] 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

APPLICATION

I call this "weight-bearing love."

At the end of Galatians, Paul describes what this kind of weight-bearing love looks like practically. Like the majority of Paul's letters, Galatians follows the outline of a deep theological treatise followed by very practical application of the theological truths that have been disseminated.

- Galatians is a book to equip believers to live a spirit empowered life of freedom in Jesus Christ.
- Chapters 1-4 build the case that those who are in Christ have been set free from the bondage of the Old Mosaic law and it's 613 commands. That "it is for freedom that Christ has made us free," and that we are to "stand fast in that freedom, not being brought back again to a yoke of bondage."
- Chapter 5 tells us how that freedom is maintained, and that is "to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, and those who walk in the Spirit have crucified the lust of their flesh and they bear the fruit of God's spirit in their lives.
- Chapter 6 arrives and gets very practical. If we have been set free by faith in Christ, and we are walking in the Spirit (His fruit coming out of our lives), then there will be a very practical kind of love coming out of us toward one another... a weight-bearing love.

What is a weight-bearing love, and what do we need in order to walk in it? That's where we pick up in Galatians 6:1-5.

[Galatians 6:1-5 NKJV] 1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load.

PRAYER

APPLICATION

In order to hopefully make this easier for us all to remember, I have put together four analogies that portray 4 characteristics you and I need to have in order to have a weight-bearing love. The first thing you need that we find in verse 1 is a lifesaver ring. Look with me again at verse 1.

1

A Lifesaver Ring

ILLUSTRATION

When I did a short stint as a lifeguard, we had to carry this flotation device always by our side. If anyone found themselves "in over their heads," that could be thrown to them to potentially save their lives. This provides a great example for us because Paul teaches us that in life, there will be Christians who find themselves drowning in disobedience or failure. When that happens, they will need a lifeline.

[Gal 6:1-5 NKJV] 1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

APPLICATION

Paul just finished explaining how imperative it is to walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh in chapter 5. But unfortunately, as people who are still in process, there will come inevitable moments where we find ourselves giving room for the flesh to overtake us. How are we to respond when we see each other slipping from the Spirit and falling victim once again to our sinful desires? Well, there are several things we need to take note of in verse 1.

A - CHRISTIANS COMMIT TRESPASSES

This might seem unnecessary, but that first word tells us a lot.

- BRETHREN – what Paul is about to talk about is in the context of people who are brethren, or part of the same spiritual family. These are Christians.
- Yes, Christians will fall, Christians will trespass, Christians will need to be restored after sin rips them off.

The Bible speaks that we have three very real adversaries that war against our sanctification and holiness:

- The lusts of our flesh
- The temptations in the world
- The fiery darts of the devil

Now, we are thankful that we have a Savior who sanctifies us, forgives us and redeems us from our fallen state:

[1Th 5:23 NKJV] 23 Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Having said that, the reality is that sin is always looking to take us down. Satan roams around like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. From the very beginning, God told Cain:

[Gen 4:7 NKJV] 7 "...sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

B - TRESPASSES ARE TAKERS

Overtaken – two Greek words (compound):

Pro – before

Lambano – to be snatched and carried away

ILLUSTRATION

When used of a person, this word implies someone who is preemptive.

- In 1 Corinthians 11, this word is used of a person who comes to the Lord's supper and eats before anyone else has an opportunity to come to the table so that he can make sure he gets his food to satisfy his hunger.

EXAMPLE: You know that person at Thanksgiving? Everyone is gathered together talking and catching up. Everyone is being respectful waiting for grandpa to say the prayer... except uncle Vinny. He is over at the table scooping olives and dressing onto his plate with a drumstick in his mouth so he gets everything he wants before anyone can take it or stop him.

This is the nature of trespass.

- Sin loves to take its full fill before anyone else notices. Sin wants to destroy a person as long as it can before anyone comes to the aid or calls it out. Sin is a snatcher and it is "pro-lambano."

QUOTE

"Sin seeks to do its damage before anyone has the courage and character to deal with it."

Josh,

QUOTE

Trespass – different from the word for sin (hamartia).

Trespass – a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness.

Definition,

WHO ARE WE TALKING ABOUT

I don't believe Paul is talking about a person who merely claims to be a Christian, but is living in unrepentant sin without any remorse or disdain in their hearts toward their disobedience.

- We are talking about genuine believers who are caught in a moment of deviation from the truth.
 - They are caught off guard or are in a season of distance from the Lord.
 - A trespass has craftily snuck in and overtakes them in a moment of weakness.
 - They might not even be able to see their own deviation from the road of truth.
 - But oftentimes, God gives others the ability to discern the warning signs.

You might see warning signs in someone's life.

- They are flirting around with the person at work who is not their spouse.
- They start spending a lot of time with a certain unbelieving crowd and begin to avoid fellowship and develop unhealthy and ungodly habits.
- Your friend or family member confesses a battle or a struggle they are having with wandering eyes, unholy affections or destructive patterns or addictions.

These are not moments to sit back and hope for the best, but to be engaged in making sure they don't drown in their sin. These are moments for spiritually mature Christian brothers and sisters to take the life ring of truth and cast it to the sinking brother or sister.

C - THE NECESSARY ACTION

“Restore such a one in the Spirit of gentleness.”

Verse 1 communicates three things:

- Who should do it
- What needs to be done
- How it needs to be done

Who should do it: You who are spiritual. This refers to the fact that a person who confronts the sin in another person's life needs to be a person who approaches things spiritually and not carnally.

- Paul is communicating that a carnal, worldly mindset will not help restore a person from the ***grip of sin*** back into the ***grip of grace***. The last thing a person who is struggling with sin needs is the world's advice.

QUOTE

Issues of sin must be approached with spiritual answers, not worldly wisdom.

APPLICATION

- You just need more self-esteem
- You're just a poor victim.
- Oprah said... Doctor Phil said... How about Jesus says! How about the Bible says!

The amount of bad advice that comes from people who don't think spiritually or biblically is plentiful and dangerous.

- When someone is struggling with being overcome with sin, they need a person who will take them to Jesus and lead them to scriptural truth.
- Spiritual problems require spiritual answers in order to get to the root.
- If you are not such a person, the best advice you can give is to point them to get help from such a person.

APPLICATION

What needs to be done: Underline the word “Restore”

- The goal of a rebuke or correction should always be the restoration, not the embarrassment or humiliation, of a brother or sister into the fold of God where they can be healed and protected.

When dealing with someone who is in sin, there are three things you don't want to do:

- **Ignore them** – This usually stems from our desire to not be inconvenienced. It's often easy to look the other way because getting involved would mean a mess for us. But your intervention could be the difference-maker between rescue and destruction.
- **Excuse them** – Affirming someone's sin because of who they are or excuses they have does nothing to help them to the true path of recovery. We all have things that have happened (some to greater degrees) that make us prone to sin. We all have personality traits that are vulnerable to sinful responses. ***While acknowledging those obstacles, we also need to make sure we call sin for what it is.*** It might be offensive, but I was offended too when Jesus made it clear that I was a sinner.
- **Destroy them** – by immediately swinging a self-righteous, judgmental gavel when we see another person's sin, we can alienate that person from being able to receive grace and truth from us.

QUOTE

“It's easy to criticize and instruct someone while you're standing above them, but we are most like Jesus when, compelled by love, we step out of our world into theirs.”

Josh,

APPLICATION

Jesus showed us this by stepping out of heaven and stepping into the life of an adulterous woman who was about to be stoned. He forgives her and scatters her accusers, but also acknowledges her sin and commands her to sin no more.

DEFINITION: The word restore was used in ancient Greek to describe the resetting of a broken bone. Sometimes it's painful and seems harsh, but its intent is to put the bone back in its rightful place and ensure complete healing.

EXAMPLE: Kayla breaking her arm and us not knowing until after she went tubing and another doctor found the break on the X-Ray.

How it needs to be done: in a spirit of gentleness.

How you do something is nearly as important as what you need to do. In a spirit of gentleness considering ourselves – how do you want to be treated when you are confronted about your sin? We ought to give away the same grace we would want to receive. With firmness, yes, but also with gentleness.

EXAMPLE: How would you feel if you broke your leg and upon arriving at the emergency room, the doctor walks in with a chainsaw?

- What you have to do is going to hurt, so it's imperative to do it as gently as possible. If you approach someone with a self-righteous, harsh, condescending attitude, not only will you damage them, but you end up sinning yourself.
- Gentleness does not = wimpiness or cowardice. It doesn't = not speaking the truth or holding someone's sin accountable. ***It just means it's done in such a way that love is clearly seen and a heart for restoration is clearly understood.***

EXAMPLE: There are not many things I can cook, but I can make eggs. But I've learned that how you crack the egg can determine the experience you will have. Especially when teaching my young children how to do it. We have had many crunchy egg breakfasts.

When helping to restore a fellow Christian who has sinned, discernment is key. Sometimes you have to exercise spiritual discipline on the unrepentant. Sometimes you have to draw a boundary or line in the sand.

[Jude 1:22-23 NKJV] 22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction; 23 but others save with fear, pulling [them] out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

But when we have to do something difficult, may it be known that we did it with gentleness and not out of frustration, anger, or impatience.

APPLICATION: You want to throw out the lifesaver— not aiming for their head to knock them out, but for their arms that they might be rescued and restored to a place of safety and rest. But of course, much depends on the drowning person to respond. If you are being confronted with your sin, don't resist, harden your heart and stiffen your neck. That will only lead to your own destruction.

2

A dolly

2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

QUOTE

Burden

“An excessively heavy or unbearable load.”

ILLUSTRATION

EXAMPLE: Have you ever helped someone move? How many times have you been grateful for one of these (Dolly)? It's difficult to move a refrigerator, it's nearly impossible to get it into a truck without help.

- ***Sometimes we have burdens in life that require a dolly, and according to the Bible, the best spiritual dollies are fellow Christians.***

Sometimes you see someone falling behind the 8-ball, or seeming a bit distracted or off course. It's easy to assume things about a person based on the surface, but what you don't see is their mom dying of cancer, the child who contracted a disease, the demotion at work, the extra night job to barely make it, the elderly in-laws that just moved in, the death of a dear friend, the empty bank account, the extra dental bill, etc.

- **Who here hasn't been hit hard in some way by life when you were least expecting it.**

Just as with physical strength, we all have our limits and others have their limits. Sometimes life breaks those limits. Sometimes this is God stretching us and expanding what we can handle. Other times, God allows these things so that someone else can step up and fill the gap, be the dolly.

APPLICATION

I can't count the times when I felt like life was going to break me and when I looked up there was a faithful brother or sister in Christ who did something to lighten my burden.

- Be it an extra meal made, or someone who would drive down from Northern California to simply help us set up my house. From a little financial help to watching the kids to helping clean a bathroom! The body of Christ thrives when people are willing to unload the burden of someone else's shoulders.

By helping bear the weight, we fulfill the law of Christ. What is that royal law? The law that rules over and sits paramount to every other law?

John 13:34-35, "A new Commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Loving God and loving others is not conceptual or theoretical but practical and measurable.

[1John 3:17 NKJV] 17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

If you are looking for an example, look no further than Jesus, who was and is the ultimate burden-bearer:

[Isaiah 53:4 ESV] 4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;

APPLICATION

Like Jesus, we want to be burden bearers and burden lifters, not burden givers. The Pharisees and lawyers who taught the law in Jesus' day taught the letter of the law, but not the heart of the law:

[Luke 11:46 NKJV] 46 And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers (teacher of the Mosaic law)! For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers."

How can you bear someone's burden today? In doing so, you might look a lot like Jesus to them!

3

You need a mirror

3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

[Galatians 6:3 NLT] 3 If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important.

APPLICATION

There's nothing that hinders our ability to minister to others more than pride. The best way to help another person is to first have an honest evaluation of yourself. This is why it's good to have a mirror. Mirrors don't show you what you want to see, they simply reflect what's there, good and bad.

James actually likens God's Word to a mirror for the soul.

APPLICATION

We must keep an honest assessment of ourselves according to the perfect standard... God's Word, Jesus Christ. That's the only way we will always see ourselves as we really are—nobodies, saved by grace, not above any task or any person.

One of my former pastors tells a story of his little league baseball days. After a loss one day, there was a kid who blew the game but was blaming everyone else's mistakes for his own. On the drive home, this pastor's dad said, "If I could buy that kid for what he was worth, and sell him for what he thought he was worth, I'd be a millionaire!"

[Romans 12:3 NKJV] 3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think [of himself] more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.

4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

APPLICATION

This language speaks to our tendency to compare our work to others and judge ourselves by ourselves.

EXAMPLE: *Man I'm doing better than so and so, so I must be good. Well, I'm not as lazy as that other person over there, so I'm doing good.*

[2 Corinthians 10:12 NKJV] 12 – But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

EXAMPLE: What if you hired someone to build you a custom home. Every time you were with the person they were criticizing and nitpicking some other builders work, but when it came down to it, they never double-checked their own plans or examined the job they were doing, ensuring it was done right. Would you want to live in that house when it was done?

When we compare ourselves with others, we can't help them because **we are too busy trying to be better than them.** When we compare ourselves to Christ we can have the **humility to be a blessing to all!**

4

You need a suitcase

5 For each one shall bear his own load.

APPLICATION

Now, wait a minute! Doesn't this statement seem to contradict what he just said about bearing one another's burdens? The same word for bear (to shoulder or carry). He just said bear one another's burdens, now he says each one must carry their own load.

Notice the two different words used:

- The word "Burden" in verse 2 means **an excessive, unbearable weight.**
- The word "Load" used in verse 5 is a different word. It speaks of an appropriate cargo.
 - The Greek usage speaks of the cargo of a ship. The ship is rated for a certain amount of cargo based on its capacity.

In essence, Paul is saying that while there are moments that we will require help from others, it doesn't release us from the responsibility of carrying our own, God-given responsibilities.

- Yes, we are all called to help each other carry the heavy loads of life, but we aren't supposed to carry someone else's suitcase because that enables them to live lives in which they are never held accountable for their actions.
- If someone's appropriate load is always carried by someone else, their muscles atrophy. They learn that they don't need to carry anything and they become entitled. All of a sudden, everyone owes them something. They become the victim to every circumstance and of every person because they never learned personal responsibility.

ILLUSTRATION

SUITCASE: It is designed to be handled by one person. In it are things that belong to me and things that I am responsible to lug around without burdening others. If I take my suitcase and throw it on someone who is already carrying theirs, not only do I unnecessarily increase the burden of another person, I neglect the responsibilities that God has given me.

APPLICATION

EXAMPLES:

- Bearing another's burdens does not mean providing free room and board to your adult son who is too lazy to work hard and keep a job, but has plenty of stamina to play video games all day.

[2 Thessalonians 3:10 NKJV] 10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.

- It doesn't mean paying the bills for your friends who use all their money to support their substance addictions.

We each have a suitcase. In it, God has placed responsibilities, ministries, gifts, talents, and yes, even some difficulties. He has called us to carry these with His help, not burdening others with everything that is a little difficult or heavy. Sometimes things that are too heavy require help, but sometimes a little extra weight is just enough to exercise us and make us stronger.

- In fact, I think it's safe to say that Paul is sharing this principle:

QUOTE

"You cannot effectively help others carry their heavy burdens if you are unwilling to carry your own load."

Josh,

ILLUSTRATION

Family of 4 carrying suitcases in the airport. If the entitled people hand off their suitcase, the helpful person won't have the capacity to help someone who actually needs help.

CONCLUSION

We need to have hearts that are for one another. We can't be guilty of swinging to the extreme ends of the pendulum. We have to be careful not to become hardened and calloused to the heavy loads that other people are carrying. At the same time, it's not helpful for a person when we become gullible and start carrying the responsibilities God has given them to carry.

This passage also has eternal significance. If you are living life without Christ today, you too are carrying an unbearable load. The problem is that there is no person alive who can bear that load, because that load is your sin. Your friends can't take that for you, your family can't take that from you. On your own, you will end up breaking your back under that load and carrying it all the way into eternity. But here is the good news, Jesus offers to take the burden of your sin and shame upon his shoulders.

- Jesus also had a load to carry, one that He alone was strong enough for. He carried it with strength and grace. It was the cross. And because He carried that, He now invites us...

[Matthew 11:28-30 NKJV] 28 “Come to Me, all you 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.”

QUOTE

“Love alone makes heavy burdens light and bears in equal balance things pleasing and displeasing. Love bears a heavy burden and does not feel it, and love makes bitter things tasteful and sweet.”

Thomas Kempis,

FINAL

So today, go with the right tools:

- Get out **your life ring** and be equipped to help rescue and restore those who are stumbling.
- Get **your Dolly** and have eyes to see and hearts to help brothers and sisters who are weighed down with burdens too heavy for them to bear alone.
- Stand in front of **your mirror** so that you can stay humble enough to be a blessing to others.
- Grab **your suitcase** and be faithful with the load of responsibilities that God has given you so that you might be a blessing and not a burden to others.

In doing so, you will be a good representation of the love of Christ to your fellow Christians, and to the world.