



BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS: WEEK 3

Welcome to week three of our One Another series. I'm excited about this one! Well, I'm actually excited about all of them, for that matter. We will be discussing what Paul said in Galatians 6:2; "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." Why did Paul say that? What did he mean? How does it fulfill the law of Christ? I'm looking forward to finding these answers together. Make sure you start your study with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to open your heart and mind to hear His sweet voice speak to you. And then, off you go! **Our Memory Verse is obviously going to be Galatians 6:2 in whatever translation you use. Can you learn it?**

1. According to Galatians 1:1, 5:2, and 6:11, who wrote this book?

Unlike other books in the Bible, the authenticity of Paul as the author is unchallenged. Many times, he would have another person pen the letter and then he would sign it. According to 6:11, Paul wrote this letter himself. If you're new to Bible study, you may not know who Paul is. Saul, whose name was later changed to Paul (Acts 13:9), was born a Jew in Tarsus of Cilicia, brought up under the teachings of Gamaliel, according to the strictness of the law (Acts 22:3). He was also a Roman citizen (Acts 22:25-28). Paul was of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, a strict Pharisee (Philippians 3:5-6). He was definitely a zealot for the cause of Judaism. He passionately persecuted those in the Church for abandoning Jewish traditions and calling themselves by the name of Christian (Acts 26:10-11, Acts 9:1-2). While chasing them down, he found himself on the road to Damascus. Something exciting happened to him that day that changed his life forever.

2. Read Acts 9:1-31. Describe Paul's dramatic conversion and the events that followed.

Paul became even more zealous as he traveled the world to share the Good News of the Gospel of Grace. He had a great love for his fellow Israelites (Romans 9:1-4, 10:1), but he was called by God to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15, 22:18, 21). The law was given to us through Moses, but on the road to Damascus, Paul learned that the law can't save us. We obtain salvation through faith in the person of Jesus Christ. Paul was God's missionary to the Gentile world.

Okay, so now we know who Paul was. But why did he write this letter to the Galatians? The believers in Galatia seemed to have a sincere heart for the Lord and a desire to grow, but they also seemed to lack spiritual discernment. False teachers had come in, telling them that they needed to put themselves back under the bondage of the Old Testament Law. Paul pens this letter in response to that report, passionately declaring that salvation is through Christ alone. Paul emphasizes the freedom of grace. Paul wrote this letter for three main reasons. The first was to correct false doctrine. The Christians were now free; free to love and serve the Lord and experience liberty in Christ. But the Judaizers were trying to make them stay under and observe the law, making them "Christian Jews," which put them right back under the law. Paul says, nope!

Paul's second reason was to defend his authority because the false teachers were attacking him and trying to discredit him. And third, he wrote to give them practical instructions on how to live out their Christian faith in love and service. He reminds them that walking in the Spirit produces fruit of the Spirit in their lives.

3. Now let's jump into chapter 6 where we find this week's **One Another**. Read verses 1-5. **What do you think verse 2 means?** (Remember, Paul is writing to combat legalism. In context, he wasn't advocating for them to "judge" others for their sins, but to restore them in gentleness. Legalism adds burdens to others, not bears them.)

4. How does “bearing one another’s burdens” fulfill the law of Christ? Read John 13:34, 15:12; Galatians 5:13-15, and Romans 13:8.

The word “bear” in verse 5 means to “take up or carry away.” It means to help and support one another through difficult and challenging times and situations, which may be physical, emotional, or spiritual. The word “burden” can also mean “weight”. Such a great reminder that God created us for community, and we aren’t made to handle everything alone. We know that God is always with us, but He also sends people to help “lighten our load” when we are overwhelmed, etc. We can bring aid and assistance which can make the difference between pressing on and giving up.

Recently I read a book about dolphins to my grandkids. I love dolphins, don’t you? The book taught us that dolphins live in groups, are playful, have great memories, and have actually saved people in the water. So cool. Because they live in groups, they help each other out. When a dolphin gets hurt or sick, they can sink, and since they can’t come up for air, they can drown. (They can’t breathe in water. They breathe through a hole on the top of their heads called a blowhole. They pop up about twice a minute for a quick breath of air.) When the dolphins see another one who is hurt, they gather around it and swim under the sick or hurt dolphin, pushing it up and down for air until it can swim again by itself. The picture in the book of that happening was amazing ... I wish I could show it to you! All I could think about was how this was such a great example of what it means to help each other and “bear one another’s burdens.”

5. What are some practical ways we can bear one another’s burdens physically?

6. What are some ways we can bear them emotionally?

- 7.** How about spiritually?

- 8.** How do we know when someone needs help with their burden?

- 9.** What place does empathy, willingness, and availability have in this equation?

- 10.** Are we supposed to help everyone with every burden? Explain your thoughts.

- 11.** Read Philippians 2:3-8. What does our mindset need to be, first and foremost?

- 12.** I found a story in Scripture that really painted a great picture of this. Please read Exodus 17:8-16 and explain how Aaron and Hur helped Moses “bear his burden.”

I think these guys were like dolphins! They came alongside him when he physically needed help. They recognized his fatigue. Holding his arms up eased his burden, taking away some of the weight. They also shared some of the responsibility of the outcome of the war, since they were only victorious if his arms were up and holding the rod of God. And they stayed with him until the battle was over. I believe it cost them something, don't you?

13. What are some reasons we don't come alongside someone when we see their burden? What might it cost us?

14. Read Galatians 6:5. Now Paul tells them to bear his own load. Is he contradicting himself? What do you think he means?

It's important to note that two different words are used for "burdens" in this text. In verse 2, the word in the Greek is "baros" which means a heavy weight, used here to represent cares, sorrows, and tribulations in life. In verse 5, the word is "phortion," which was more of an individual burden meant to be borne, not necessarily a heavy object or weight. One that's not transferable. We can't assume responsibility for someone else's behavior, but we can come alongside a struggling brother or sister and help shoulder the weight or the temptation that is threatening to pull him under. When a friend is staggering, we can help steady the load so he won't stumble. But some things we must bear ourselves, rather than try to pass them off onto someone else.

The Lord reminded me of two friends who really came alongside us to help "bear our burden" years ago. Many have done that over the years, but these two guys came to mind. When my daughter was in her teens, she had a stalker that

literally turned our lives upside down. Both my husband and I were a wreck, never knowing when he would appear, where he would appear, and how to protect her. We had dogs, cameras ... you name it, we had it. But neither of us were sleeping at all. She did, but Brian and I did not. She trusted us to keep her safe at night. I guess we were afraid we wouldn't hear him if he came in the night (yes, that happened once), so we just lay there, listening, which obviously made things worse. We were not only wrecks, we were fatigued wrecks. Two men recognized our fatigue and took action. Pastor Rick Mossa came over once a week at night and parked outside of our house. He stayed in his truck, but he wanted to assure us that he was watching over our house. We could sleep in peace, knowing he was there. Another man, David Barrigan, who was a marine in our fellowship, basically did the same. But he dressed in fatigues and hid in our back yard to "catch" any perpetrator. He was good ... our dog never even saw him. (Might have peed on him, but that's another story!) But again, we got to sleep through the night which strengthened us for another day. Talk about someone holding up our arms and lifting a weight when we were staggering. Yup, I'm crying right now. I will always remember these two dolphin-like men who loved us enough to sacrifice their own rest for us.

15. Can you think of someone who has come alongside you to help "bear your burden" in some way? How did it make you feel? Did you ever thank them?

16. How well have you "bore the burdens" of others in your life? If not that great, what is stopping, or has stopped, you?

17. This is an important thing to remember ... we are not called to end someone's suffering. We are not called to explain away someone's pain. We are called to walk alongside and help carry. For those of us who are "fixers," why is this so important to remember?

18. Who is the real Deliverer? Read Psalm 18:2 and 34:17.

19. Are you carrying a heavy burden right now? Read 1 Peter 5:7, Hebrews 13:5, Isaiah 41:10, and Matthew 11:28-30. How do these verses encourage you?

20. Read Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 12:15. What do you think he means? Does this encourage or convict you?

21. Last week we looked at "loving one another." How does bearing another's burdens relate to that?

Ladies, let's pray, listen, forgive, restore, show compassion, care, and concern, and be available for others, as the Spirit leads. Let's have our spiritual eyes and ears open to the silent cries of those around us. (Or maybe not so silent.) Help us not look away or refuse to make eye contact when we are just too busy. (Ever have a waitress do that??) Let's cook, clean, babysit, cry, pray, or offer whatever help we can.

I also hope that as we walk away from this week's topic, we don't focus on ourselves and feel sad that we don't have many "burden carriers" in our lives, but rather, focus on others and pray that the Spirit would show us how we can be a burden bearer for someone else.

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

Galatians 6:2

