

STUDIES IN GALATIANS

Study #12: Galatians 6:1-18

“You Were Running Well” (Until Bod Function Failed)

You Were Running Well UNTIL: Body Function Failed” – Galatians 6:1-18

Key verse 5:7 —“You were running well; who cut in on you that you should not obey the truth?”

We’re in study #12, [Galatians] chapter 6, verses 1-18 today.

You Were Running Well UNTIL: Body Function Failed

Key verses are verses 7 and 8. I’ll define that for you in just a minute but I’ve got to share a couple, three emails so you won’t forget me. I love this one.

A guy is driving around Wadsworth, Ohio and he sees a sign in the front of the house: “Talking Dog For Sale.” He rings the bell and the owner tells him the dog’s in the back yard.

The guy goes out in the back yard and sees a Labrador retriever sitting there.

“You talk?” he asks.

“Yep” the lab replies.

“So what’s your story?”

The lab looks up and says, “Well, I discovered that I could talk when I was pretty young. I wanted to help the government so I told the CIA about my gift and in no time they had me jetting all over from country to country, sitting in rooms with spies and world leaders. Because no one figured a dog would be eavesdropping. I was one of their most valuable spies for 8 years. But the jetting around really tired me out and I knew I wasn’t getting any younger so I decided to settle down. I signed up for a job at the airport to do some undercover security, wandering new suspicious characters and listening in. I uncovered some incredible dealings and was awarded a batch of medals. I got married, had a mess of puppies and now I’m just retired.”

The guy is amazed. He walks back into the owner and says “How much do you want for that dog?”

He says “Ten dollars.”

“Ten dollars! That dog is amazing! Why on earth are you selling him so cheaply?”

“Because he’s lying. He never did any of those things.”

And for all of you golfers, this one is a fun one!

It's in the locker room, and the guys are showering and getting dressed to go home. And the cell phone goes off on the bench there. And as these several men in the locker room listen in, the speaker phone is on the cell phone.

The man says "Hello?"

Woman says "Hi honey, it's me. Are you at the club?"

Man: "Yes."

Woman: "I'm at the shops now and I found this beautiful leather coat. It's only \$2,000. Is it okay if I buy it?"

Man: "Sure, go ahead if you like it that much!"

Woman: "I also stopped by the Lexus dealership and saw this new model. I saw one I really liked."

Man: "How much?"

Woman: "Ninety thousand."

Man: "Okay, but for that price I want to have all the options."

Woman: "Great! And one more thing, I just was talking to Janie and found out that house I wanted last year is back on the market. They're asking \$980,000 for it."

Man: “Well, then go ahead and make an offer of \$900,000. They’ll probably take it. If not, we can get the extra \$80,000 if that’s what you really want.”

Woman: “Okay, I’ll see you later! I love you so much!”

Man: “Bye, I love you too!”

Every guy in the locker room is just astounded at what he did. He looks at all of them and he says “Anyone know whose phone this is?”

And this is...I saved the best until last.

Our teacher asked us what our favorite animal was and I said fried chicken.

She said I wasn’t funny but she couldn’t have been right because everyone else in the class laughed.

My parents told me to always be truthful and honest and I am. Fried chicken is my favorite animal.

I told my dad what happened and he said that teacher was probably a member of PETA or something, they love animals so much. I do too, especially chicken and pork and beef.

Anyway, my teacher sent me to the principal's office. I told him what happened and he laughed too but he told me never to do that again.

The next day in the class my teacher asked me what my favorite live animal was. I told it was a chicken. She asked me why just like she'd asked the other children. So I told it is because you can make them into fried chicken.

She sent me back to the principal's office again. He laughed and told me not to do that again. I understand. My parents taught me to be honest but my teacher doesn't like it when I am.

Today my teacher asked us to tell her the most famous person we admire the most. I told her Colonel Sanders. Guess where I am now?

Oh that's awful.

Well, for the book of Galatians we have traveled many miles in the 12 hours that we've given to the book.

1. You Were Running Well UNTIL: NO Runs, No Hits, and a Big Error—They had a twisted gospel and troubled minds, these Galatian saints because they were listening to these legalistic Judaizing teachers.
2. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Forgot What God Was Doing in Your Life—And Paul gave his own personal testimony of what the grace of God had done for him after his Damascus Road experience.
3. You Were Running Well UNTIL: Divine Direction Was Not Discerned—That's when everybody went down to Jerusalem to settle the whole issue. Peter is preaching the same message that Paul is preaching to two different audiences. Peter is preaching to the Jews. Paul is preaching to the Gentiles.
4. You Were Running Well UNTIL: Peer Pressure Postponed Progress—That was such an emotional study for me because, you know, Peter failed so miserably on the night before the cross by denying the Lord 3 times. And in this situation it's almost like a replay because he is in a dining room with probably 500-600 people eating together and he was eating with the Gentiles when he came up to visit these folks in Antioch. But when some other Jews came in, he withdrew and went over and just sat at their table. Paul stood up and really let him have it about destroying

his Gentile ministry by the way he was acting. And I can just imagine that must have been a horrible, horrible experience. But for a lot of people, the story of their lives is they were running well until: peer pressure postponed progress. Somebody came into their lives and influenced them and as a result, they cooled off and failed to walk with the Lord in the way they should.

5. You Were Running Well UNTIL: You Said, I Do It Myself—Remember, 1 and 2 is personal, 3 and 4 is doctrinal, 5 and 6 is practical. And we're in the practical section now. And I've titled this study "You were running well until: body function failed." I'm sure that I'm sitting in company today that would remember when Ray Stedman was at Peninsula Bible Church in Palo Alto, CA. He was famous for restoring body life to the church and focusing on the fact that we are a body. We are gifted in unique ways, but just like there are many members to the body, so Ray was pointing out that fact. And it's probably mostly in exposition of 1 Corinthians 12 where Paul describes our giftedness by using the illustration of the body—a human body—and the different members have different functions.

Well, one of the biggest problems you have is a problem of people withdrawing from the body. They lose their accountability structure. They lose a lot of other things as well. And it is a serious matter. In the book of Hebrews 10:24-25, we read these words:

Hebrews 10:24-25

and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and to good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near.

I love that word “stimulate.” It’s the word for a cattle prod. We’re to be cattle prods to each other when we are together—stimulating and encouraging one another in love and good deeds. That’s the function.

What has happened in this situation is body function has failed because these Judaizing teachers have been successful and these Christians that are being circumcised and going along with the Law are withdrawing from the local fellowship simply because of all of that.

Someone said:

A group of logs burns brightly when they are all burning together, but when you take one out, the flame goes out.

And that is kind of the picture of the study today. I want you to have that as a backdrop because you’re going to see how the body of Christ functions in different ways in the verses that come before us.

And he put us there for all of these purposes that we might grow in the process.

You Were Running Well UNTIL: Your Body Function Failed (6:1-18).

You ready? Let's jump in.

v. 1 Brethren, if however a man be overtaken in a sin, you who are the spiritual ones restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, keeping an eye on yourself, lest you also should be tempted.

“Brethren, if however a man be overtaken in a sin, you who are the spiritual ones restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, keeping an eye on yourself, lest you also should be tempted.”

There is no place in a legalist's life for handling sin other than punishment or ostracizing them. This is grace.

Paul is describing here someone who has not deliberately decided to sin but was overtaken by the temptation. He was blindsided. So the key word is “overtaken.”

The way I want to do this today, to make it easier for you to listen and know how long you have to listen, there are TEN CHALLENGES that Paul's going to give.

It's altogether fitting that at the end of his wonderful letter to these Galatian Christians, that he summarizes everything. And there are ten things that he wants to leave with you.

Now you had two of them last week and you just didn't know it. So I'm going to give you the first two at the end of chapter 5 and then this is number 3, as we get to chapter 6, verse 1.

Back in verse 5:25 (the next to the last verse—from last week) we read:

“Let us also order our steps by the Spirit.”

Alright, he began by the Spirit. As believers, we grow and mature. We order our steps—our conduct—by the Spirit. The Spirit directs us, guides us, strengthens us, challenges us.

1. “Let us order our steps by the Spirit.”
2. verse 26 (the next verse)—“Let us stop becoming vain-glorious, provoking one another, envying one another.”

Now do you understand why they would be doing that? They'd be doing that because they're living in the flesh rather than the Spirit.

You studied the “works of the flesh” last week and so you can see the result of legalism and what it would do.

On the other hand, the Spirit produces fruit, doesn't He? And that fruit manifested in our lives.

3. (here it is) verse 1—"Brethren, if however a man be overtaken in a sin,"—he slipped, he lapsed. Maybe it was a habit. Maybe it was an addictive behavior. In a moment of weakness that happened to him.

You did this—here's a punishment. This is what's going to happen. As believers, that's not the way we are to act.

Here we are challenged with "you who are the spiritual ones."

Now you're saying "Well that disqualifies all of us because none of us are spiritual."

You see, that's a problem of definition. A spiritual person is God's normal, healthy child. You're spiritual because you are energized by the Holy Spirit. Your life is an explanation of what the Spirit can do in producing the fruit that we looked at last week.

So totally contrary to Law, we're supposed to go—"the spiritual ones"—and "restore."

Now there are **THREE THINGS** that are obvious when a person is overtaken by a sin:

1. he's out of fellowship with God. You grieve the Spirit by sin. You quench the Spirit by saying "no." He's been overtaken so he said "no."
2. he's operating in the flesh and not the Spirit because the Spirit has been grieved and quenched.
3. he's selfish. He's thinking now only of himself and wondering what the consequences are going to be.

Tragically the ones who have said it so well, the Christian army is the only army that shoots its own wounded. As believers we've got a completely different responsibility.

And the word that is given to us is the word "restore." That is a **MEDICAL TERM**. It means to execute a repair: to remove a growth: to set a broken bone.

The word "restore." It's letting people know that you still care for them. That you love them.

This is the epitome of what Paul is trying to do for the Galatian assembly. They have chosen legalism. They've chosen the Law. Paul is trying to restore them back to fellowship with one another so that they are once again walking by the Spirit.

Now, you will notice that there is an attitude that goes along with restoration. And sometimes this certainly does not show up. What does it say?

“restore such a one in a spirit of meekness.”

Now last week one of the fruitages of the Spirit in the fruits of the Spirit was meekness, wasn't it?

It is humility. It is an approachableness. It is being gentle.

But have you been around Christians like I have that just delight to take the assignment to go twerk somebody—straighten them out. It's amazing, you can almost write it down in your book that that person is probably living in the flesh and loves to have a brother who is also living in the flesh but would like to really criticize him.

It's almost like the scribes and the Pharisees in a sense.

There's a book called *Dancing with Broken Bones*. The guy says,

(Dancing with Broken Bones: Blessed are the Broken in Spirit for God can Make Them Whole by David Swartz)

Some people actually enjoy the confronting role, and their rebuke comes off as a verbal equivalent of the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. But anyone who savors muckraking through someone else's sin just to flex the muscles of his own spiritual pride is guilty of spiritual malpractice. (p. 46)

That pretty well says it. But you understand it. Now you understand. Why are we supposed to have a “spirit of meekness”?

“keeping an eye on yourself, lest you also should be tempted.”

St. Augustine said:

“There is no sin which one person has committed that another person may not commit also.”

(source unknown)

1 Corinthians 10:12 (NASB)

Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

That’s the “spirit of meekness” that is there.

John Ortberg is being blessed because he’s so transparent. He says:

(The Life You’ve Always Wanted by John Ortberg)

Those experiences from one day are typical of the thoughts that inhabit my mind time after time. My mind is like—to use a wonderful image from Henri Nouwen—a banana tree filled with monkeys constantly jumping up and down. It is rarely still or quiet. All these thoughts, like so

many chimps, clamor for attention: “How can I get ahead? Is someone trying to hurt me? How will I handle this problem?”

These thoughts are just a little soiled. I have some much darker thoughts that resemble big clods of dirt. The Desert Fathers had a word for them: *logismoi*. This Greek word refers to the false thoughts and desires that lead us to sin and despair. ...

What I lack is precisely “purity of heart.” (p. 180)

Realizing the fact that these thoughts go on in our minds, thank God that the Spirit of God is there to judge those thoughts so that they’re not put into action but is still a constant struggle in their lives.

Fenelon says: “To realize God’s presence is the one sovereign remedy against temptation.” (source unknown)

Knowing that the Lord is there and very much aware.

Ok, you got that one? That’s the third one. Now here comes the fourth one, verse 2:

v. 2 Keep on bearing one another’s burdens, and so observe perfectly the law of Christ.

“Keep on”—this is present tense (I’ve taught you the present tense. You do it every day)—“Keep on bearing one another’s burdens, and so observe perfectly the law of Christ.”

What he's saying here is, you don't just go and confront somebody. You enter into their lives in some kind of an accountability or discipleship structure—whatever the need is for the moment—and you are a servant to them. You “keep on bearing [their] burdens” in helping them to go on to maturity. And you are observing “perfectly the law of Christ.”

What is the “law of Christ”?

Love one another, wasn't it? John 13:34-35

So a serving Christian, lending a hand to someone who has a heavy load, they—in this context—would be fulfilling the “law of Christ.”

Don't you love the fact that he uses that word and shows the distinction between what would please the Lord.

So responsibility, challenge #4:

4. “keep on bearing one another's burdens.”

Now, what do you think some of those “burdens” are that you would be wanting to help someone?

Lillie said it earlier: “Helping somebody grieving.”

And she's had an opportunity of ministry because of the circumstances they faced in their lives. That's a wonderful thing. And some of the sweetest times come when someone

can sit with you who has had the very same experience that you've had and the Lord has been faithful and they can bear witness to that. That's powerful. The Lord uses that.

There's also this responsibility—and I love this illustration. Do you remember Simeon? He just showed up for the crucifixion and ended up carrying the cross. The Roman government demanded that you carry it at least for a mile if a soldier or anybody else asked you to do something, you took it for a while and carried it.

What are some things? I would say a crisis. It could be family. It could be job. It could you've allowed unbelief because of a tragedy or circumstances so that you're wavering in your belief (wondering whether or not it's real). So a crisis, an emergency, a time of sorrow, personal problems (whatever they might be).

As I shared with you back in one of the earlier studies, I went on a little journey of reading Isobel Kuhn's books. And I was not prepared for the last one. It hadn't been published but they found it after she died in 1957 in some of her notes. The title of the book is called *Second Mile People*. Wouldn't you love, in heaven, to be noted for all eternity that you were a second mile people? That you went above and beyond the requirements that were asked of you and you stayed by the stuff, and you were faithful. And there's an army of people who thank God because you are that kind of a person.

That's continually "bearing one another's burdens, and so observe perfectly the law of Christ."

That's "keep on bearing" the burden.

v. 3 For if a man is thinking himself to be something when he is nothing, he is deceiving himself.

"For if a man is thinking himself to be something when he is nothing, he is deceiving himself."

I love this. You see, you've got to be humble. You've got to be broken. You've got to be willing to get down there and wash feet.

And the Upper Room was full of proud hearts and dirty feet. There wasn't nobody that wanted to do that so the Lord took the messy task upon. And all Paul is doing is saying, when you're living in the flesh (that takes us back to chapter 5:26): "let us stop becoming vain-glorious, provoking one another, envying one another."

And so this is the reason that he gives that command. He is not deceiving others, "he is deceiving himself" because of the blind spots in his life.

Are there any biblical illustrations? I think probably:

3 John 9

... Diotrephes, who loves to be first [really gave a hard time to John], does not accept what we say.

He says in 3 John 9.

So basically he is addressing pride, unbroken will, selfishness, performance rather than relationship—because a lot of these folks are caught up in that.

But what are you supposed to do? Don't you love this?

v. 4 But his own work let each one put to the test, and then to himself alone he will have a ground for glorying and not to the other one.

“But his own work let each one put to the test, and then to himself alone he will have a ground for glorying and not to the other one.”

Challenge #5 then is:

5. “But his own work let each one put to the test.”

It's okay!

Psalm 139:23

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me and know my thoughts.

Isaiah 32:17

The work of righteousness will be peace ...

Are you at peace about how God is using you? Have we addressed the issues that are before us?

And so we are quiet and peaceful knowing that we did the right thing.

We had the funniest thing Monday morning. We have to leave by 7:30 to get over to Ft. Worth and get ready for the noon class. So, you know, you go down I-20 from Tyler. And when we got to the Hide-a-Way exit it was unison. "I'm at perfect peace at what we've done for 7 1/2 years."

We know that we did the best we could. We know that we were faithful to teach the Word. And for her to say the same thing was the neatest deal. It was a verification that yeah, we're going back to where we started from and that's Bible Teaching Resources and with no visible means of support. But we're trusting God because He's been doing it for 39 years. "On the Road Again" with Willie Nelson.

But that's what he's saying. You don't have to brag about that stuff. It's just you know in your heart that your heart is right and that you're doing what needed to be done in walking with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And he's just saying in #5, this is the thing that you can do personally.

I love:

1 Thessalonians 4:11

And to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your own hands, just as we commanded you;

2 Corinthians 10:17-18 (NASB)

But he who boasts, let him boast in the Lord. For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

So we're taught in scriptures to criticize ourselves. Not that we're putting ourselves down but evaluation.

I put:

2 Corinthians 13:5

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you—unless you would fail the test?

I'm kind of a book-aholic and a gluten for books that get my attention by the title.

I saw this book, I think it was mentioned in the *Daily Bread* booklet in fact. *Life is Like Licking Honey Off a Thorn*—I thought, that's my book. I'd like to read that because that's 2 Corinthians 12.

Well, it turned out that the book is written by a lady whose husband died of cancer and in the middle of the book she says "Because God Gave Me Herb." And you know, just reading some of the things she said about him. And it was used at his funeral services, they mention down at the bottom.

(Life is Like Licking Honey Off a Thorn: Reflections on Living Wisely in this World of Pain and Joy by Susan Lenzkes)

Because God Gave Me Herb

MANY A MAN CLAIMS TO HAVE UNFAILING LOVE, BUT A FAITHFUL MAN WHO CAN FIND?

PROVERBS 20:6

- My heart found a home outside its own skin.
- I know that faithfulness is a man, not just a word.
- I had a dearly loved friend by my side for thirty-two years.
- I am the mother of three incredibly unique and precious children.
- I know how it feels to share laughter, tears, unspoken thoughts, intimacy, change, struggles, and inside jokes that go way back.
- I've experienced the luxury of being cherished and nourished.
- I know that greeting cards are recyclable, and brown paper bags a superior gift wrap.
- I've learned to respect, and even delight in the differences.
- I have learned that, given enough time and love, tact can be acquired.
- I learned that salsa is breakfast food.

...

Tribute I shared at Herb's Memorial Service on March 3, 1995. (pp. 149-50)

I love that one! And on and on and on the list goes. It's a wonderful, wonderful little book you'll enjoy.

Now, verse 5. Now some of you think that you've slept during the first part because now he's saying something completely contrary to what you thought you heard back in verse 1, right?

What's he saying now in verse 5?

v. 5 For each shall bear his own burden.

“For each shall bear his own burden.”

Well we just learned back at the third one, at the beginning of the study, that we're to “bear one another's burdens.”

Now each is to “bear his own burden” is command #6.

6. “For each shall bear his own burden.”

If you'll get this word “burden” and translate it “soldier's pack,” you'll have a better idea of it.

There are certain things that each of us, just by the fact that we have life, that we can't share with others—that we personally are responsible for.

And so saying, there are things that each of us—in the body of Christ—must bear by ourselves.

I put:

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come unto Me, all ye who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke [take my pack—take my burden] upon you, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.”

You say, ok Don, define it. What do you mean by packs? Well I'd say:

1. SUFFERING—God has unique tools of suffering just for you.

Philippians 1:29

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;

There are things that you'll suffer because of the way you're made and because of the way Christ wants you to become and for the fruit of the Spirit to be shown. I can't bear your suffering and you can't bear mine because there's a unique curriculum for my life as there is for yours. And we must accept that.

2. DEATH—We all are terminal. We're going to die. Body function will fail. And what you do with that burden is between you and the Lord.

3. JUDGMENT—the Judgment Seat of Christ. Everyone shall give account of himself before the Judgment Seat of Christ—whether it’s good or bad. That’s your computer printout that’s laying on His desk. And mine is also there and there are things that only I can bear.
4. SIN—the consequences of sin can only be entered into with a brother and sister if restoration is involved. But as far as sin is concerned, the consequences of that sin is your burden and my burden for the sins I’ve committed.

David said it well:

Psalm 51:4

Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned
and done this great wickedness in your sight, ...

The family couldn’t help him. Anybody else couldn’t help him.
This was something he did and so he prays:

Psalm 51:10, 12

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.

Restore to me the joy of my salvation ...

You see, all of that is PERSONAL. And that's his own pack. Those are the things that he must personally take responsibility for.

Now, when you get to verse 6, I have changed my interpretation in verse 6 because I'm getting older and I wanted to have some fancy new interpretation of something.

No, I'm just kidding you. But I want you to look at this because this (I'm in the minority here):

v. 6 Moreover, let the one who is being taught the word have a share with the one who is teaching in all good things.

“Moreover, let the one who is being taught the word have a share with the one who is teaching in all good things.”

Challenge:

7. “Moreover, let the one who is being taught the word have a share with the one who is teaching in all good things.”

Now the reason people believe that this is money is because he's going to say “sowing” and “reaping” in the next two verses.

And if you'll remember, back in 2 Corinthians when he was taking those offerings for the poor saints in Jerusalem he said in:

2 Corinthians 9:6

He who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully. Every man according as he purposes in his heart; so let him give not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

I mean, that's true. He used that illustration there. But remember, what he's talking about here is something that has to do with what the student does for the teacher.

I'm just telling you, if I had taught the Galatian church what's been written in this letter, I don't think there would be any money at all in the offering that was going to be taken because of the offense of the people that were hurt by it.

Why do we have to go to money in sharing good things? I'll tell you one thing that's happened through our month and a half here and it even happened today. Another card, another assurance of being on track and teaching the Word. Love, support and encouragement.

We're loaded with it on the last week of tour because everybody feels like they've got to scribble out a little note and I treasure every one of those and pull them out at the bad times to read them and encourage me. Pearl does the same thing.

When you share good things—you share emails, you share cards, you say words of affirmation—those things mean more than any dollar bill anytime or anyway. And to put money in the situation, I think it's completely out of context. I think it would be putting Paul in the position that because he's there and he's given of himself to them, they're obligated financially.

That doesn't mean that there are not financial needs and that we have responsibility for each other, for ministry, and doing that. And God delights in that and that's what he was telling the Corinthians that they needed for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

Are you with me on this? In sharing all the good things—that's command #7.

Gratitude, emails, cards, letters.

The interesting thing is that word “good things,” sharing the good things, is *agathos*, and it has to do with this very thing. It does not have to do with money, necessarily. It has to do with sharing, affirmation and things that are of that nature.

Ok, I got through that one. Boy I was a little nervous on that one I tell you. No, I wasn't.

“Good things”—the word is “spiritual and moral excellence.”

Now, here comes our TWO KEY VERSES. Are you ready?

v. 7 Stop leading yourselves astray, God is not being sneered at: whatever a man is sowing, this also he will reap.

“Stop leading yourselves astray, God is not being sneered at:”—you don't thumb your nose at God, that's what that Greek word means—“whatever a man is sowing, this also he will reap.”

So command and challenge:

8. “whatever a man is sowing, this also he will reap.”

It's the law of sowing and the law of the harvest. And we need to realize that when you sow the law to the flesh, you're going to reap something. And he's going to tell you what it is in just a minute.

When you sow the Spirit and you're under control of the Spirit—just like we saw the difference between the works and the fruits last week, watch what he's going to say here because it's going to be powerful in just a moment as we see it.

What are the things that we have to sow? And what would be the law of reaping?

Well, we do have money. We are a good people in the sense that the Lord has taken care of us. We are experiencing His strength in our weakness.

There was a day when we had youth on our side but for most of us we recognize that those days are gone but we still have old age and that's the finest of all. Isn't it? No "amen" on that one.

We've got a home. We've got occupations. We've got friends. We've got love. And we show gratitude and encouragement to each other.

I have shared with a few folks that I walk every morning early. And now they want a picture to verify the fact that I'm using my walker that I did my mileage this morning.

It was so funny being out there the other morning, this elderly lady in the complex—I'd not met her before—and it was dark anyway, but I could see her form coming down the street. And as she came before me I just decided I'm going to quote a verse of Scripture so she won't get nervous.

And I said "This is the day the Lord has made! We are rejoicing and glad in it!"

You want to hear what she said? I love it.

“Beautiful morning! It makes you believe it was worthwhile getting up!”

She made my day! I laughed in the early days when I was running marathons. You know, you get up around 4:30 or 5:00 to get in your miles. And after we finished one morning, I said “You know, I think one of the questions at the Judgment Seat of Christ is going to be ‘How many sunrises did you see?’” And we’ll get a chance to see how many people arose a great while before day.

Annie Dillard said:

If God intended for us to see sunrises all the time I would have put them in the middle of the day.
(source unknown)

v. 8 Because the one sowing unto his own flesh, from his flesh shall reap decay; But the one sowing unto the Spirit, from the Spirit shall reap life eternal.

What? Now look at the difference—the law of the harvest.

“Because the one sowing unto his own flesh, from his flesh shall reap decay; [boy that’s ugly isn’t it?] But the one sowing unto the Spirit, [in other words—the Holy Spirit is guiding and directing and empowering and filling] from the Spirit shall reap life eternal.”

Well, the bottom line is right there. And he waits until now to really put the clincher. Do you want to live by the flesh? It's going to be a life of decay. But walk by means of the Spirit and you will not fulfill the desires of the flesh. Allow the Spirit of God to be the one who produces His life in each of us.

v. 9 Now, Let us not lose heart in doing that which is good, for at its proper season we shall reap if we are not being exhausted.

“Now, Let us not lose heart in doing that which is good, for at its proper season we shall reap if we are not being exhausted.”

Challenge:

9. “Now, Let us not lose heart in doing that which is good, for at its proper season we shall reap if we are not being exhausted.”

In other words, perseverance—stay after it, don't try to look for excuses or a way out, but be a person who is faithful. And at the “proper season we shall reap.”

I had a statement on my t-shirt when I was training:

“Failure to prepare is preparation for failure.”

When you don't prepare then you are preparing for your own demise.

Do you remember Sir Edmund Hillary? He was the guy who wanted to conquer Mt. Everest.

On that first trip, they lost one of the climbers and he went into a deep depression. All the distinguished people in the London Parliament had a big dinner for him and wanted him to share what he had learned from the failed expedition.

And they put a dramatic picture all across the back wall of Mt. Everest and then put the lectern in front of it. And he got up and he was so emotional that he just stood there and then he turned around and looked at that picture. And this is what he said:

(Tough Times Never Last, but Tough People Do! By Robert H. Schuller)

... “Mount Everest, you have defeated me. But I will return. And I will defeat you. *Because you can’t get any bigger and I can.*” (p. 204)

You know, that’s the spirit and passion of determination. And that’s what the Spirit of God wants to do in our lives to energize us to be able to do those things for His glory and for His honor.

(Between a Rock and a Grace Place: Divine Surprises in the Tight Spots of Life by Carol Kent)

. . . Oswald Chambers said: “Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of God whose ways you may not understand at the time.” (p. 43)

Don’t get exhausted. Don’t quit. Stay after it. Keep climbing. Keep going. Keep pressing on toward the goal is what he’s saying to them.

v. 10 So then as we are having opportunity, let us be working that which is good to all but above all to those of the household of the faith.

“So then as we are having opportunity, let us be working that which is good to all but above all to those of the household of the faith.”

Okay, what are we committed to? As the Spirit of God energizes us with love we minister to one another. You keep on doing the good things for others. But when you have to make a choice because of your age or your infirmities or your limitations, you do it primarily for “the household of faith”—for your brothers and sisters in Christ—is our responsibility.

And just jot down John 13 where Jesus washed the disciples feet. He stayed after and kept doing it.

So, the last challenge—the final one:

10. “let us be working that which is good to all but above all to those of the household of the faith.”

We never graduate from being a servant for Jesus’ sake.

John Ortberg comes right back again—he is so funny.

(The Me I Want to Be: Becoming God’s Best Version of You by John Ortberg)

Why does God allow difficult people in my life?

What other kind are there?

If God were to get rid of all the difficult people in the world—if he were to remove everybody with quirks, flaws, ugliness, and sin—you would get awfully lonely.

We always wish that God would give us a life without difficult people in it. But how many great characters in the Bible had difficult people in their lives? Moses had Pharaoh, Elijah had Jezebel, Esther had Haman, Jacob had Laban, David had Saul, John the Baptist had Herod. Even Jesus had Judas. If God loves you and wants to shape you, he will send some difficult people your way. But take heart. You are the difficult person he is sending to shape somebody else! (p. 204)

Now, that’s the end of the letter. Everything else is personal. So from verse 11 to 18 we’re just going to look at these words kind of briefly and understand the end of the letter.

v. 11 You see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

“You see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.”

Often he used a secretary, someone to whom he could dictate. Some believe that he wrote this whole letter because it was so personal and it was hard to write. And he was so upset by their departure into legalism.

Others believe that he picked up the pen here and wrote these final words after somebody had helped him with the previous ones. But that’s no big deal.

v. 12 As many as are desiring to make a fair show in the flesh, these are trying to compel you to receive circumcision only in order that they might not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

“As many as are desiring to make a fair show in the flesh, these are trying to compel you to receive circumcision only in order that they might not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.”

Paul makes it very clear that there’s a price to be paid when you resist Judaism and you follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

v. 13 For not even those who are having themselves circumcised are themselves keeping the law, but they are desiring you to be circumcised in order that in your flesh they may glory.

“For not even those who are having themselves circumcised are themselves keeping the law, but they are desiring you to be circumcised in order that they might glory in your flesh.”

They want to tell the whole world about how many converts they had from the Galatian Christians that are now living under bondage to Judaism.

Isn't it interesting that of those two verses you have the hidden motives of the teachers.

In verse 12: “to make a fair show in the flesh.”

Verse 12: “to escape persecution.”

Verse 13: “glory in the flesh”—there's somebody else.

ALL EXTERNAL MOTIVATIONS.

Don't you love verse 14?

v. 14 But far be it from me to be glorying except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom to me the world has been crucified and I to the world.

“But far be it from me to be glorying except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom to me the world has been crucified and I to the world.”

I am focused on what the Lord wants me to do and I am “glorying....in the cross of...Christ.”

I put 1 Corinthians 2:2. That's a wonderful verse.

1 Corinthians 2:2

I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

He is focused on the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ and that's where he's going and that's what he's going to do. He's counted everything but loss for that.

Now, look at verse 15. Oh this is so good!

v. 15 For neither circumcision is anything or uncircumcision but a new creation.

“For neither circumcision is anything or uncircumcision but [what’s the most important thing in all the world?] a new creation.”

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

That’s how you make “second mile people.” That’s how the manifestation of the fruitage of the Spirit begins to show up and God begins to do a good work.

I just stopped and sometimes I’ve got to sing a hymn.

Take Time to Be Holy

Take time to be holy;
Speak oft with thy Lord;
Abide in Him always,
And feed on His Word.

(“Take Time to Be Holy” words by William D. Longstaff, Hymn #155)

v. 16 And as many as by this rule are ordering their steps peace be upon them and mercy even upon the Israel of God.

“And as many as by this rule are ordering their steps peace be upon them and mercy even upon the Israel of God.”

See there are some Jewish Christians and he's saying “I want mercy to be on them as well as these who are ordering their steps by the Spirit of God and are standing against the Law and its legalism.”

Being a person who knows Jesus Christ and walks with Him.

Verse 17—don't you love this? It's like “Just back off! I want to tell you something, I've paid the price.” That's what he's saying in layman's terms.

v. 17 As for the rest, let no man furnish me trouble for I am bearing branded on my body the marks of Jesus.

“As for the rest, let no man furnish me trouble for I am bearing branded on my body the marks of Jesus.”

A shipwreck, stripes (39 times, several times), scars and marks of what he's had to pay as a price for being a person who is faithful to the Lord Jesus.

And then he ends it the way he started it, didn't he?

v. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit brethren. Amen.

“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit brethren. Amen.”

May God help us to listen and to obey.

Now, that was a long 18 verses so you aren't surprised that you have 15 lessons. Are you?

I mean, it's a little more extensive because he was dealing with the practical. And so I have dealt with the practical in trying to summarize all of it for you in these 15 lessons.

You Were Running Well! Are you running well now? And are you aware of the fact that you might not have been when we started.

But now because of what God has done in your life—maybe it's cleansing, maybe it's commitment, maybe it's consistency, maybe it's a concern for others—but whatever you brought to the table, the Spirit of God can do a new work in your life. Help you to grow and to mature into Christlikeness.

Well, I have one of my favorite stories that I want to share with you.

It's called "Music to My Ears."

It's a treasure and I'm sharing a part of me. But this is the way the body of Christ should function.

Music to My Ears

At the prodding of my friends, I am writing this story. My name is Mildred Hondorf. I am a former elementary school music teacher from Des Moines, Iowa.

I've always supplemented my income by teaching piano lessons—something I've done for over 30 years. Over the years I found that children have many levels of musical ability. I've never had the pleasure of having a protégé though I have taught some talented students.

However, I've also had my share of what I call "musically challenged" pupils. One such student was Robby. Robby was 11 years old when his mother (a single Mom) dropped him off for his first piano lesson. I prefer that students (especially boys!) begin at an earlier age, which I explained to Robby.

But Robby said that it had always been his mother's dream to hear him play the piano. So I took him as a student. Well, Robby began with his piano lessons and from the beginning I thought it was a hopeless endeavor. As much as Robby tried, he lacked the sense of tone and basic rhythm needed to excel. But he dutifully reviewed his scales and some elementary pieces that I require all my students to learn.

Over the months he tried and tried while I listened and cringed and tried to encourage him. At the end of each weekly lesson he'd always say, "My mom's going to hear me play someday." But it seemed hopeless. He just did not have any inborn ability. I only knew his mother from a distance as she dropped Robby off or waited in her aged car to pick him up. She always waved and smiled but never stopped in.

Then one day Robby stopped coming to our lessons. I thought about calling him but assumed, because of his lack of ability, that he had decided to pursue something else. I also was glad that he stopped coming. He was a bad advertisement for my teaching!

Several weeks later, I mailed to the student's homes a flyer on the upcoming recital. To my surprise Robby (who received a flyer) asked me if he could be in the recital. I told him that the recital was for current pupils and because he had dropped out, he really did not qualify. He said that his Mom had been sick and unable to take him to piano lessons but he was still practicing. "Miss Hondorf ... I've just got to play!" he insisted.

I don't know what led me to allow him to play in the recital. Maybe it was his persistence or maybe it was something inside of me saying that it would be all right. The night for the recital came. The high school gymnasium was packed with parents, friends and relatives. I put Robby up last in the program before I was to come up and thank all the students and play a finishing piece.

I thought that any damage he would do would come at the end of the program and I could always salvage his poor performance through my “curtain closer.”

Well, the recital went off without a hitch.

The students had been practicing and it showed. Then Robby came up on stage. His clothes were wrinkled and his hair looked like he'd run an eggbeater through it. “Why didn't he dress up like the other students?” I thought. “Why didn't his mother at least make him comb his hair for this special night?”

Robby pulled out the piano bench and he began. I was surprised when he announced that he had chosen Mozart's Concerto #21 in C Major. I was not prepared for what I heard next. His fingers were light on the keys, they even danced nimbly on the ivories. He went from pianissimo to fortissimo ... from allegro to virtuoso. His suspended chords that Mozart demands were magnificent! Never had I heard Mozart played so well by people his age. After six and a half minutes, he ended in a grand crescendo and everyone was on their feet in wild applause.

Overcome and in tears I ran up on stage and put my arms around Robby in joy. “I've never heard you play like that Robby! How'd you do it?”

Through the microphone Robby explained: “Well Miss Hondorf ... remember I told you my Mom was sick? Well, actually she had cancer and passed away this morning. And well ... she was born deaf so tonight was the first time she ever heard me play. I wanted to make it special.”

There wasn't a dry eye in the house that evening. As the people from Social Services led Robby from the stage to be placed into foster care, I noticed that even their eyes were red and puffy and I thought to myself how much richer my life had been for taking Robby as my pupil.

No, I've never had a protégé but that night I became a protégé... of Robby's. He was the teacher and I was the pupil. For it is he that taught me the meaning of perseverance and love and believing in yourself and maybe even taking a chance in someone and you don't know why.

Robby was killed in the senseless bombing of the Alfred P. Murray Federal Building in Oklahoma City in April of 1995.
(source unknown)

Father, we thank You for the encouragement that comes from people that are so transparent to tell the story of how they feel and how they're so surprised by the perseverance, the personal fortitude and love to be what they need to be even in an 11-year-old boy.

Thank you, Lord, for the way You've used Your Word in our lives tonight and ask that You will continue to do so in the days that are ahead. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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STUDY NUMBER TWELVE – UNTIL: BODY FUNCTION FAILED – GALATIANS 6:1-18

KEY VERSES 6:7, 8

v. 1 Brethren, if however a man be overtaken in a sin, you who are the spiritual ones restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, keeping an eye on yourself, lest you also should be tempted.

v. 2 Keep on bearing one another's burdens, and so observe perfectly the law of Christ.

v. 3 For if a man is thinking himself to be something when he is nothing, he is deceiving himself.

v. 4 But his own work let each one put to the test, and then to himself alone he will have a ground for glorying and not to the other one.

v. 5 For each shall bear his own burden.

v. 6 Moreover, let the one who is being taught the word have a share with the one who is teaching in all good things.

v. 7 Stop leading yourselves astray, God is not being sneered at: whatever a man is sowing, this also he will reap.

v. 8 Because the one sowing unto his own flesh, from his flesh shall reap decay; But the one sowing unto the Spirit, from the Spirit shall reap life eternal.

v. 9 Now, Let us not lose heart in doing that which is good, for at its proper season we shall reap if we are not being exhausted.

v. 10 So then as we are having opportunity, let us be working that which is good to all but above all to those of the household of the faith.

v. 11 You see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand.

v. 12 As many as are desiring to make a fair show in the flesh, these are trying to compel you to receive circumcision only in order that they might not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

v. 13 For not even those who are having themselves circumcised are themselves keeping the law, but they are desiring you to be circumcised in order that in your flesh they may glory.

v. 14 But far be it from me to be glorying except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom to me the world has been crucified and I to the world.

v. 15 For neither circumcision is anything or uncircumcision but a new creation.

v. 16 And as many as by this rule are ordering their steps peace be upon them and mercy even upon the Israel of God.

NOTES

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NOTES

v. 17 As for the rest, let no man furnish me trouble for I am bearing branded on my body the marks of Jesus.

v. 18 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit brethren. Amen.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Galatians 6:1-18 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What should be our response to one who has fallen into sin as a fellow Christian, according to verse 1?

3. How do you fulfill the command of verse 2?

4. What is meant by “his own load” in verse 5?

5. Explain what Paul means in verses 7 & 8.

6. What are we commanded to do in verses 9 & 10?

7. What is Paul “glorying” in, according to verse 14?

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8. What is the most important thing, according to verse 15?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The Lord has provided the church, the body of Christ, so that we might function effectively in our witness to a lost and dying world.

LESSON #2: The church, the body of Christ, provides us with an opportunity to exercise our spiritual gift or gifts, to have a level of accountability, to learn about loyalty, and to learn about integrity.

LESSON #3: There are ten areas of challenge presented by the apostle here in chapter 6. The first two were in the end of chapter 5. Challenge #1: "If we are living by the Spirit, let us also be ordering our steps by the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25). Challenge #2: "Let us stop becoming boastful or conceited, challenging one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:26).

LESSON #4: Challenge #3: "Brethren, if however a man be overtaken in a sin, you who are the spiritual ones restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, keeping an eye on yourself, lest you also should be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).

LESSON #5: Challenge #4: "Keep on bearing one another's burdens" (Galatians 6:2).

LESSON #6: Challenge #5: "But his own let each one put to the test" (Galatians 6:4).

LESSON #7: Challenge #6: “Bear [our] own load” (Galatians 6:5).

LESSON #8: Challenge #7: “Let the one who is being taught the word be having a share with the one who is teaching in all good things” (Galatians 6:6).

LESSON #9: Challenge #8: “Whatever a man is sowing, this also he will reap” (Galatians 6:7).

LESSON #10: Challenge #9: “Let us not be losing heart while doing that which is good” (Galatians 6:9).

LESSON #11: Challenge #10: “Let us be working that which is good to all but especially to those of the house of the faith” (Galatians 6:10).

LESSON #12: The easiest person in the world to deceive is ourselves.

LESSON #13: Do not quit before you are finished.

LESSON #14: Use every opportunity you have to do good for others.

LESSON #15: Are you bearing any brand marks of Jesus in your flesh?