

## Community of Restoration and Burden-Bearing

Galatians 6:1-5

### Scripture

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup> If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. <sup>4</sup> Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, <sup>5</sup> for each one should carry his own load. (NIV)

### Main Idea

#### Background & Focus

The word used in verse 1 for "restore" had an interesting usage in the ancient world. It was used to describe the mending of torn fishing nets and the setting of broken bones. Restoration is the act of bringing something back to its original state or purpose. That is what the gospel is all about – God restoring us to our original purpose (to reflect, glorify and enjoy Him). Our passage tells us that this restoration happens in community.

It also should be noted that many have struggled to make sense of an apparent contradiction in verses 2 and 5. Is Paul saying we should seek help in carrying our burdens or that we are individually responsible for our burdens?

Some translations may use the word "burden" (for different Greek words) in both verses. The first word (verse 2) is a word used for "a heavy weight someone is required to carry a long distance". The second word is used for the equivalent of today's backpack – something lighter meant to be carried for short time/distance. In verse 2, Paul is talking about those things in life that encumber us and weigh us down. He's calling those who are growing in their faith to be on the look out for those overburdened. At the same time he is calling for those helping with other's burdens not to compare "loads" with those they help. To guard against spiritual pride and comparison, Paul reminds us that we all are responsible before Christ for our own response to His grace. God does not deal with us by comparing us to others but according to the grace, talents, and gifts he has given us.

The focus of this study is to reflect on how your community can be a place of healing, mending and burden bearing. God, in this passage, is encouraging us who shepherd and lead his people to be on the look out for those caught and overcome by sin and those who are carrying around heavy burdens all by themselves. Our experience in community should help us all experience the freedom of Christ in the gospel.

### Starters

- What has been one of your life's most challenging accomplishments? How did you manage to get through it and what did you learn from it?

### Discussion

Q1: The passage says we can be "caught" (v1) in sin and need the help of others to break free. What is your response to this? Is it hard for you to admit you need spiritual help? To give spiritual help?

Q2: As a group, read through the supplemental article, "Asking for Correction". What is your reaction to this article?

Q3: Both the article and Paul, in verse 2, tell us that we can't fulfill the "law of Christ" apart from the messy business of bearing the burdens of others and allowing others to bear ours. How can we create an environment in this group where burdens are both shared and carried?

Q4. Paul is very concerned about spiritual pride in this passage (verses 3 and 4). How can spiritual pride creep into a community committed to restoring sinners and burden-bearing?

Q5: Restoration and burden-bearing fulfill "the law of Christ" according to Paul. Let's talk about how Christ restores us and bears our burdens and the implications each has on how we do these things for one another.

- a. How does Jesus model gentleness in His restoring us to God?
- b. And how does the gospel tell us that Jesus bore our burdens?

## Prayer

(If feasible, this would be a good time to break up into separate men and women prayer groups). Share a burden that you need help carrying. Pray as a group for each other's burdens and commit to ask each other about this burden in the weeks to come. As you share and pray, someone in the group may feel God is calling them to help bear another's burdens.