

- 1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.
- 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.
- 3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.
- 4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.
- 5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

On the passage that I just read: Galatians 6:1-5, Calvin says: “Were the pleasure [people] take in upbraiding equaled by their desire to produce amendment, they would act in a different manner. Reproof, and often sharp and severe reproof, must be administered to offenders. But while we must not shrink from a faithful testimony against sin, neither must we omit to mix oil with the vinegar.” He goes on to say: “No man is prepared for chastising a brother till he has succeeded in acquiring a gentle spirit.”

There are different kinds of offenses. There are those who are “carried away” with a sudden impulse, as surprised in it. Then there are those who sin through weakness; then there are those who are rebellious and deep-seated in sin. Christians may commit all of these, and each calls for a different kind of rebuke. One size does not fit all. The means that we use to cure the disease depends upon the disease. We do not use strong medicine or treatment for mild ailments—in fact, often mild ailments do not need any treatment, for the body itself is able to cure itself without any treatment.

- I. What is presupposed here is that it certainly is the task of God's people to care for one another, and to seek to cure diseases that may exist in the body. This is a positive command: restore one another. A loving, kind, gentle, and caring concern for each other is evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work among us. Another spirit had infected the Galatians, for they only pretended to care for one another; they had a false pretence of care for each other, manifested by biting and devouring one another, as Paul states in chapter five. The fruit of the Spirit described in chapter five must also be seen in the correction of one another. Two things especially are mentioned:
 - A. Ye which are spiritual: Paul is not being sarcastic, but is calling upon those who manifest the fruit of the spirit to do the job of restoration. These people have the love, the joy, the peace, the longsuffering, the gentleness, the goodness, the patience, and the faith to get the job done in a proper way. The wrath of man does not work the righteousness of God, and if we have a knee jerk reaction that is often motivated by a desire to hurt and get even, we will not cure, but will make the disease worse.
 - B. Compose your own heart before the Lord: it is God with whom we have to do, and we must arm ourselves with the fruit of the Spirit, for we do not overcome evil with evil, but we overcome evil with good.
 - C. Love and restoration is the idea and motive; not revenge and self-will.
 - D. Consider yourself: we must speak as dying men to dying men. I do not think that Paul is saying, “Be certain that you might fall into the same sin as the one you are rebuking,” but rather, “Beware that in the correction that you seek to work in others, does not in itself contain sin.” It is sometimes true that the sin in the would-be restoration is worse than the sin that is being rebuked. Sometimes what is in the eye of the one rebuking is worse than the mote that is in the eye of the one rebuked. James says the same thing in chapter 3, when he says that those who act like school-masters in the church are very often inflicted with a wisdom that is from the earth, not the wisdom which is from above. Beware what kind of wisdom controls your tongue, for the wisdom from below will make the situation worse, not better.
- II. In bearing one another's burdens, we fulfill the law of Christ. The key is to make the burden of the other our own, as Christ took our burden upon Himself. He made the guilt his own and took the punishment Himself. This love is the law of Christ and must be the energizing force in our lives. Calvin says on this passage: “There is an implied contrast between the law of Christ and the law of Moses. If you are very desirous to keep a law, Christ enjoins on you a law which you are bound to prefer to all others, and that is, to cherish kindness towards each other, He who has not this has nothing. On the other hand, he tells us, that, when every one compassionately assists his neighbor, he law of Christ is *fulfilled*; by which he intimates that everything which does not proceed from love is superfluous.” “Fulfill” means to complete, to fill up, as a ditch is filled. Leave nothing wanting—love is everything.
- III. Beware of pride and vain-glory.
 - A. The motive for rebuking must not be to make yourself something. It is not for the purpose of exalting yourself or lording it over other people. Some people have more temptation to this than others. The Apostle John in his third epistle warns the church of a certain Diotrephes who loved to have the preeminence. It is not to establish yourself that you rebuke others, but always for their good. You must not seek to gain importance by casting down the work of others, but prove your own work: build your own house, and do not fret yourselves so much about how others are building theirs. Usually those who are greatly occupied with the way others are building their houses are not paying near enough attention to their own work.

1. Romans 2: 17 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, 18 And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; 19 And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, 20 An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. 21 Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?
 2. The ability to condemn others is not the key to righteousness, for it does not take much intelligence to find fault in others;
- B. Remember that all that you do, you do as a steward for Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. What do you have that you have not received? Work very hard to prove your own work, and do not meddle with the work that He has given others to do. A proper understanding of the necessity for His blessings upon our work is necessary for a humble attitude toward others. If you are approved of God in your work, it will not be in comparison with the work of others, but in terms of the care and diligence with which you have done your own work. “What will this man do,” Peter said, and Jesus replied, “What is that to thee? Follow thou me.” Calvin did some of his greatest writing on this passage and cites the following passages among others:
1. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward. II Cor. 1:12
 2. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. Matt. 6:6
 3. We must always behave in the world with reference to God and our responsibility to Him.
- II. This is further emphasized by verse 5. The very best way to carry another’s burden is to carry your own, for ultimately, everyone stands by himself before God. 2 Corinthians 10:12 For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.
- A. There is only one person upon which you can have a great deal of effect: and that is yourself. Far more than anyone else.
 - B. The funny thing is this: the more you work on yourself and grow in the knowledge and grace of God, the greater effect you will have on others.
 - C. This is a wonderful thing—a seeming paradox. People are like sheep, and resist being driven, but they will follow. This is no contradiction to verse 3. The word burden is different in any case: in verse 2 it means a heavy weight; in verse 5 it means that which is laid upon us: either heavy or light. Sin is a heavy burden; Christ’s burden is a light responsibility and brings joy and gladness.

May God bless you.