

**Galatians 6: 4; “Examine Your Own Work”, Message # 56 in the series –
“Christ has Set us Free”, a Bible Study conducted on August 10th, 2016,
by Pastor Paul Rendall at his home.**

Verses 4 and 5 are a continuation of the subject which was brought to our attention in verses 1-3; that of the spiritual restoration of a brother or sister who has been overtaken in a trespass. Those who are spiritual in the local church are to “restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness”, considering themselves, lest they also be tempted. This consideration of ourselves is essential in the process of helping in another’s restoration. In verse 3 we find that it is possible to be a Christian who thinks too highly of yourself, because you have knowledge of God’s word and you are able to see the faults of others and realize where they are falling short. But you do not think about how you could be helping them; restoring them to God’s favor and His blessing upon their lives. As we have studied before, it is possible to become conceited in this regard, and to think that somehow you are a superior person because you have not fallen into certain particular sins that someone else has. Let us remember the truth of verse 3 – “For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.” In ourselves, apart from the grace of Christ, we are nothing. And as it says in 1st Corinthians 13, if we do not have love for our fellow-believers, we are nothing. The kind of love that we need is the kind of love that asks the question: What can I do which will help other Christians to grow up into Christ? 1st of all – I will be a help to other Christians, helping them to grow up into Christ, when I examine myself in regard to my own work. And then 2nd – I will be helping other Christians grow up into Christ when I am able to rejoice in myself alone in regard to my work. So let us consider these things more carefully so that we will be able to glorify God and help other people by the means that the apostle has laid out for us here.

1st of all – I will be helping other Christians to grow up into Christ, when I examine myself in regard to my own work.

It is a good thing to examine your own work. In order to examine your own work you should first consider your heart, and whether you have a right view towards yourself; a view which will lead you to do righteous and good works. Verse 3 says, “For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.” But you must then go on to ask yourself whether you, being nothing in yourself, see what God is making you into and what He would have you to do for Him? Seeing yourself as nothing should not lead you to a do-nothing attitude. Ask yourself: Am I a Christian person who is bearing other Christian’s burdens and thus fulfilling the law of Christ? If you are a true Christian, you should know that God is doing a great work of grace in your heart which will lead you to consider what actions that you can take to glorify Him in word and deed.

Turn with me over to Ephesians 2: 8-10. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.” “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” You can see from these verses that salvation is the free gift of God. It is not of works, lest any should boast. But you can also see that that this good work of the grace, which we receive in the regeneration of our hearts, is meant to lead us to consider what good works God has called us to do. We are His workmanship, not only in regard to our being born again, but in regard to the on-going imparted grace which is given to us as Christians to engage in good works which He has appointed; these works which He has prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Certainly this means every that Christian will be engaging in the good works which are commanded in God’s holy word; the Ten Commandments as a rule of life for the believer, and all

of the moral precepts and principles which are recorded in the New Testament Scriptures. But it also includes all that God has ordained specifically that we will accomplish by our life and ministry. God has prepared these works beforehand, which means that He has foreordained that we would glorify Him by our works in specific ways; ways which He has appointed for us. In other words, we should be thinking about what God would specifically have us to do with our gifts and abilities; our time and our talents, and once we have discovered these and are going about to do them, then we will also examine ourselves to see whether we are making any progress in what we are doing for Him. Turn with me over to 1st Corinthians 15: 10 and 11 and we will look at the apostle Paul himself in this regard. “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” “Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.”

Now you notice that the apostle Paul ascribes all the glory to God for what He was, at the time of his writing of this epistle to the Corinthians. “By the grace of God, I am what I am.” Grace had taken him from being a self-righteous persecuting Pharisee, a violent man and an aggressor, to a man who was no longer pursuing these hurtful things. He was no longer interested in boasting of his own attainments in the flesh. He was no longer interested in promoting his own righteousness according to the law. He was interested in promoting the righteousness, the grace, and the glory of God in Christ. He was interested in the work, and the works, to which God had called him. What God had called him to, was the preaching of the gospel, and a ministry to all the churches as an apostle and a prophet, and a teacher of both Jews and Gentiles. In this regard, he says that “he labored more than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” We will talk about how the apostle Paul was able to make this boast in just a few minutes, but I wanted you to see first that he was a Christian man who was examining his own work.

This is something that you are called to do as well, as a Christian. Yes, you are to see yourself as nothing in regard to your past sinful life and your fleshly and earthly credentials. And yet, you are also to see yourself as a person who has been called to do good works for your God, in relation to fulfilling whatever personal ministry you have been given by him, in relation to the church which you belong, and in relation to everyone around you as well. Turn with me over to Romans chapter 12, verses 3-8. “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.” For as we have many members in the one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.” “Having then gifts differing according to the grace given to us, let us use them: If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

We see here that there is an alternative to thinking more highly of yourself than you ought. It is to think soberly, because God has dealt to each a measure of faith. Now, notice that Paul is speaking about the normative gifts given to the Church for the time period of this whole church age. And he is saying that each believer has been given a measure of faith. This phrase – “A measure of faith” means that there has been given to you as a Christian, along with the gift of regeneration, a measure of faith in relation to what you as a believer will do for God. You are to exercise this faith in relation to believing that what you are doing in accordance with the commands of the word of God, is pleasing to God, when you help others with the use of the particular gift or gifts that you have been given; gifts which relate to others in the body of Christ, and in particular, the church which you are a member of.

Now look at verses 9-17. “Let love be without hypocrisy. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.” “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.” “Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.” “Be of the same mind toward one another.” “Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble.” “Do not be wise in your own opinion.” “Repay no one evil for evil.” “Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.” Now, these things that are listed here are some of the works which you should be learning to do by the power of the spirit and which you will go about to do by the power of the Holy Spirit. These works are accompanied by righteous and loving attitudes, in which you will be attempting to exhibit to others around you, the fruit of the Spirit’s working in your life. What the text that we are studying tonight is saying is that you should often examine your own work to see if you are indeed humbly serving Christ in the way that is described here. Are you blessing those who curse you? Are you rejoicing with those who rejoice, and are you weeping with those who are weep? Do you hate what is evil? Is your love without hypocrisy? And we should go down the whole list and ask ourselves whether we are doing these good works. For if we examine ourselves and find that we are doing these good works from the right attitudes, then we are ready to receive the 2nd truth found here in verse 4 –

2nd – I will be helping other Christians grow up into Christ when I am able to rejoice in myself alone in regard to my work.

“But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.” The NASB says – “But each one must examine his own work and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another.” The word translated “boasting” or “rejoicing”, in the Greek is kauchema (καυχημα) in the Greek. The object that Paul is driving at here, is that when a man has his focus on his own work, and can see that it is the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit in his life that has led him to bear the burdens of others, and to engage in good works towards them, then real progress is being made, and this progress can be rejoiced in. It can even be boasted in, if done with a right spirit, for it will be a means of instruction to many other people around us. Turn with me over to 2nd Corinthians chapter 1, verse 12-14. “For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.” “For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand.” “Now I trust you will understand, even to the end (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast (your “reason to be proud” it says in the NASB) as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

You can see how Paul’s boast was in the testimony of his conscience that he and Timothy had conducted themselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity. They did not conduct themselves with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God. This good example of theirs lead to the same kind of behavior being cultivated by those at Corinth that they had preached to. The only reason that Paul and Timothy had, to boast in those at Corinth, is because they had examined their own work first. They had rejoiced in themselves alone first, as though the good result of their preaching and example might not bear fruit in others whom they preached to. But once they did see that their example had born fruit, they could legitimately boast, or rejoice, in the Corinthians who had come to embrace this same godly perspective on living the Christian life. The boasting that is being talked about in these passages is not boasting before God, but being able to righteously boast before men because his heart and his actions had been right before these believers whom he was preaching to.

The object of this lesson tonight has been to show you the right way to go about helping other Christians to grow up into Christ. The right way is not by comparing yourself with others to see if you are more knowledgeable, or more righteous, but rather to examine your own work to see if God will establish the goodness and rightness of it to the hearts of other Christians and others whom we would instruct in the way of the Lord. Let us close this time with thinking about these verses from 2nd Corinthians 10: 12 and 13: “For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves.” “But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves are not wise.” “We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us – A sphere which especially includes you.” “For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men’s labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man’s sphere of accomplishment.” “But he who glories, let him glory in the Lord.” “For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.”