

## EXEGESIS OF GALATIANS 6:1-10

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Paul wrote his Letter to the Galatians to redirect the Galatian Christians to the authentic gospel of Christ. The Galatians had been persuaded by rival teachers to follow a Torah-based Christianity rather than the pure gospel Paul had taught them. One reason the rival teachers may have offered a Torah-based faith would be to help the Galatians overcome sin. The Galatians probably recognized that despite their conversion and receiving the Holy Spirit, they still struggled with sin and needed help.<sup>1</sup> Paul addresses their concerns in Galatians 5 and 6, showing how the Holy Spirit brings transformation and freedom. Thus the Galatians, having received the Spirit, could live in a way that pleases God without Torah regulation.<sup>2</sup> The Spirit is their key to overcoming the flesh and living righteously, as Paul demonstrates in Galatians 6:1-10.

In Chapter 5, Paul explains the role of the Holy Spirit in transformation. He shows how freedom in Christ, through transformation, leads to greater love and a desire to honor and serve others. In Chapter 6, Paul teaches the Galatians how to walk out their transformation in community. The practical nature of 6:1-10 demonstrates that Paul intends the fruit of the Spirit to characterize daily relations within the faith community.<sup>3</sup>

I consider 6:1-10 as a distinct unit that follows Paul's theological discussion of Spirit-led transformation (Chapter 5) and focuses on walking out transformation in community. Moo sees 5:25-26 as introducing the first part of Chapter 6.<sup>4</sup> Schreiner breaks 5:25-6:5 and 6:6-6:10 into distinct units.<sup>5</sup> Even so, Schreiner notes that Paul's use of ἀδελφοί in 6:1 could begin a new section,<sup>6</sup> as I am arguing. He notes that Paul's discussion of the Spirit links all these sections, and divisions are not necessarily set in stone.<sup>7</sup> I hold 6:1-10 together, as each part builds on the walk-

out of the transformation process in community. I see 6:10 as an ending boundary for this unit, as Paul's writing moves in 6:11 toward remarks that conclude his letter

Verses 6:1-10 cover only a few examples of community relationships which may relate specifically to the problems Paul is addressing in this letter.<sup>8</sup> Loubser observes that while Paul discusses at length how the Spirit produces Christ-like ethical behavior, he does not elaborate on specific ethical guidelines for the community. Loubser suggests that Paul intends for the community to contextualize its ethics as led by the Spirit.<sup>9</sup> Paul also presents a deeper understanding of the ethics of Christian community that arise from the transforming power of the Spirit.<sup>10</sup> Paul shows how the community can discern whether they are following the Spirit or the flesh.<sup>11</sup> Outward expressions of Christ's love result from inner transformation by the Spirit.

Where the Galatian Christians may have been concerned because their conversion and receiving of the Spirit did not result in a sinless existence,<sup>12</sup> Paul confirms that as they grow in the Spirit, they will still encounter challenges. The Spirit does not provide an easy answer but rather the authentic answer. Galatians 6:1-10 is Paul's teaching and exhortation for how to walk out this transformation process through love, honoring, and serving one another in community.

**6:1** Paul opens this verse with ἀδελφοί (brothers and sisters) which suggests he is addressing the Galatian Christian community as part of the family of Christ. As Moo suggests, Paul's use of ἀδελφοί also encourages unity in community rather than strife.<sup>13</sup> In his words leading up to this verse (5:15, 19-21, 26), Paul has warned about the dangers of strife, which comes by not walking in the Spirit. Paul introduces 6:1 following his teaching of walking by the Spirit (5:16, 25), and in 6:1-10 he applies that teaching to community.

The person who is "spiritual" (πνευματικοί) seems to refer to a person who walks by the Spirit. Paul's reference to "spiritual" must be read in the humble context of 5:26, 6:1, and 6:3, as

well as in the larger context of how the Spirit empowers transformation (5:16-26). Paul does not intend a sense of superiority appended to “spiritual” ones, but rather a sense of humility. Verses 5:16-21 have made it clear how strong the human tendency can be to gravitate toward fleshly behavior. It is the Spirit who makes it possible to overcome the flesh. In 6:1, Paul reminds his hearers they too can be tempted like the person they are trying to restore.

The spirit of gentleness (πραυτητος) refers to a fruit of the Spirit (5:23). The goal is not to shame but rather to restore (καταρτίζετε) to community. The people should build each other up,<sup>14</sup> rather than tear each other down (5:15, 26). In Paul’s instructions, Loubser sees the contrast between Spirit and law: restoration by the Spirit is different from condemning by the law.<sup>15</sup>

Schreiner considers the effect of gentleness in restoration not only for the person who needs help, but also for the person who offers help.<sup>16</sup> The spirit of gentleness, produced by the Holy Spirit, guides the person who is helping to minimize becoming trapped in the same sin. The minute the person thinks restoration comes from his self-righteousness, that person will stumble as well. Verse 6:1a is bookended by 5:26 and 6:1b (coming alongside as a fellow sinner), along with 6:3-4. A person’s sin is a call for loving restoration, not gloating or comparison.

The word καταρτίζετε suggests a process of putting a person back in right standing with God and community.<sup>17</sup> Verse 6:1 is a call to identify with and come alongside a person, a reminder that the community is meant to experience transformation together and to help each other on this journey. Those who come alongside the person who is struggling remember that all are sinners; no one is better than another. What matters is walking together in spiritual growth.

The phrase προλημφοθη ἔν τινι παραπτώματι (“overtaken in any trespass” RSV) does not seem to refer to willful sin. The construction of this phrase seems to indicate that a person has found himself slipping.<sup>18</sup> Following Paul’s distinction between gratifying the flesh and walking

in the Spirit (5:16), 6:1 seems to refer to a person who is trying to walk in the Spirit but slips up with a particular sin. Schreiner connects the way a person may stumble unexpectedly in sin with living in “the present evil age” (1:4 RSV).<sup>19</sup> Paul addresses the importance of the Spirit, community, and self-awareness within the reality of this age.

If the Galatians are concerned about sinning after receiving the Spirit, this verse is part of Paul’s answer. Transformation is a process to be walked out. Christian community plays a key role. In community, believers can distinguish between Spirit and flesh.<sup>20</sup> Confrontation in love prevents evil from destroying the individual and spreading to others.<sup>21</sup> Paul’s inclusion of *ἐὰν καὶ* (“even if”) underscores Paul’s expectation that individuals should continue on a Spirit-led trajectory of overcoming sin.<sup>22</sup> Grammatically this expression “indicates a possible yet not immediate condition.”<sup>23</sup> A relapse should be occasional rather than an everyday occurrence.<sup>24</sup>

**6:2** Verse 6:2 summarizes and expands the scope of Paul’s teaching in 6:1. While 6:1 is an example of bearing one another’s burdens, so are verses 6:6 and 6:9-10. In the context of Chapter 6, burdens do not seem limited to struggles with sin.<sup>25</sup> They extend to burdens of teaching and finances (6:6) and other needs (6:9-10). The present imperative active of *βασταζετε* (“bear you”) suggests that the process of burden bearing is ongoing in community.<sup>26</sup>

In verse 6:2, Paul summarizes the understanding he has built up in the previous chapter. In 5:13-15, Paul explains how freedom in Christ should (and should not) look in community. Verses 5:16-24 explain how the Spirit begins to transform people so they can live out their freedom in Christ-like ways. In verses 5:25-26, Paul reinforces 5:13-15. In verse 6:2, Paul characterizes a community that is following the Spirit and living in Christ-like freedom as a community that will bear each other’s burdens. Just as in 6:1 Paul shows that the person who

restores another will demonstrate gentleness, a fruit of the Spirit,<sup>27</sup> it is possible to see in 6:2 how the fruit of the Spirit (5:22-23) would characterize the process of burden bearing.

In the second part of 6:2 (RSV), Paul indicates that by bearing burdens for others, a person will “so fulfill the law of Christ.” There is a causal link between bearing burdens and fulfilling the law of Christ. Paul devotes the first part of his letter to charging the Galatians not to revert to Torah law. What is the law of Christ to which he refers here?

Schreiner notes that Paul does not refer directly to Christ’s teachings as a substitute for the law.<sup>28</sup> If the law of Christ referred only to Christ’s teachings, it might sound like a new Torah rather than a transformational way of living, in which Christ’s love fulfills the righteousness underlying the Torah. Loubser agrees the law of Christ is not a series of Christ’s regulations to replace the old law. Rather, Christ teaches and models love. Love is not love if attempted to be enforced. Instead, the love of Christ is produced in the believer through obedience to the Spirit.<sup>29</sup>

Wilson discusses why some scholars relate the law of Christ to the Law of Moses, albeit with a different connotation. In keeping with the trend of interpretation within the immediate context of an individual Pauline letter, arguments include that Paul’s hearers would have heard 6:2 in the context of the Law of Moses referred to in 5:13:14.<sup>30</sup> Scholars also note the consistency of Paul’s use of νόμος in this letter in reference to the Law of Moses, and that the reference in 6:2 borrows from the language of the rival teachers to provide a new context for understanding how Christ fulfills the law.<sup>31</sup> Arguments for Paul’s use of “of Christ” include reorienting the Galatians toward Christ as the primary example of love and the One who fulfills the law.<sup>32</sup> The language indicates Christ as the key to fulfillment, which is significant in light of the Galatians’ possible doubts that they could live a life pleasing to God without the Torah.

Moo observes that the genitive construction distinguishes τὸν νόμον τοῦ Χριστοῦ from the Law of Moses.<sup>33</sup> Paul has explained the law of Christ in 5:13.<sup>34</sup> DeSilva adds that Christ has exemplified how to love others by giving His own life.<sup>35</sup> Loubser notes that Christian ethics are rooted in 2:21, by which Christ is formed in a person; ethics flow from “Christ’s loving-service and sacrifice”<sup>36</sup> through which “self-giving should be evident.”<sup>37</sup> As the Spirit forms Christ in a person, that person will exemplify Christ’s love.<sup>38</sup> Bearing one another’s burdens will show how Christ’s love is being formed by the Spirit in individuals and in the community. Christ’s “self-giving love for others” (5:14) is evident in genuine expressions of care for others (6:2).<sup>39</sup>

**6:3** Paul offers a contrast between verses 6:3 and 6:2. A person who exemplifies Christ’s love will lift up another person rather than oneself. If a person is conceited, that person does not exemplify the love of Christ.<sup>40</sup> Paul has already prepared the hearer in verses 5:25-26 that conceit is not produced through living by the Spirit. Schreiner notes that the use of γὰρ is not clear in the way it connects 6:3 with 6:2.<sup>41</sup> He suggests it is possible 6:3 indicates the true nature of a person who does not engage in burden bearing as called for in 6:2. Arrogance can prevent a person from helping others and can also lead to helping with the wrong motives, e.g., a sense of elitism.<sup>42</sup> Moo regards 6:3 as a particularization of 5:26.<sup>43</sup> The dangers of conceit would have been well-known to the Galatian Gentiles, as this verse reflects common wisdom in Greek philosophy.<sup>44</sup>

The concept “when he is nothing” does not diminish the value of a person in God’s eyes.<sup>45</sup> Hearers need to return to Paul’s statement in 2:20, in which he acknowledges the life of Christ within him, rather than his own flesh. In 5:22-24, Paul reminds his hearers that the Holy Spirit, and not a person’s own flesh, empowers the believer to be transformed. In the larger context of 6:14-16 that follows this section, not only a person’s fleshly ways, but also the world as a whole offers nothing, while Christ alive in the individual and community offers everything.

**6:4** In Greco-Roman culture, honor was considered a good to be sought.<sup>46</sup> The desire to claim honor for oneself could lead to competition, envy, and strife, tendencies Paul warns against (5:19, 21, 26). The transition from 6:3 with the phrase τὸ δὲ suggests that a person should check her own progress of growing in the Spirit, rather than claiming honor based on conceit. A person has no reason to consider herself superior, either in comparison to the person she is helping or because of her “ability” to help (6:1-2). The act of burden bearing is made possible only by the transforming work of the Spirit. Verse 6:1b provides an additional reality check, encouraging the person to be sure she is growing in the Spirit and not falling by the wayside herself.

In his discussion of the second part of this verse, deSilva notes the possible understandings of εἰς.<sup>47</sup> If understood as “in,” the boasting would be based on one’s own spiritual growth and not be in comparison to someone else’s progress in the Spirit. If understood as “to,” the boasting would be kept to oneself and not shared out loud.<sup>48</sup> In either regard, contextually Paul seems to be emphasizing honor toward others, rather than competition and strife, as well as an internal examination of one’s own spiritual growth for purposes of staying the course. The Spirit-empowered Christian community is defined by care for each other instead of dissension.<sup>49</sup>

The future construction of the verb “he will have boasting” may provide an eschatological understanding of boasting in the Spirit’s work and examining where a person stands before God.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, an individual cannot take credit for anything God does in the community.<sup>51</sup> This makes sense in the context of 6:1-2, in which the Spirit does the work of restoration, and 6:5, in which each person must seek the Spirit for his or her own transformation.

The word ἔργον (“work”) suggests “all that a believer does,” while δοκιμαζέτω (“test”) means “examine to test genuineness.”<sup>52</sup> Paul’s hearers would have recognized this verse as calling for self-awareness, similar to the common Greco-Roman phrase, “Know thyself,” yet

considered in light of God’s standards of righteousness.<sup>53</sup> As Moo suggests, when a person examines himself before God, he will not be inclined to compare himself to another person.<sup>54</sup>

**6:5** The self-examination in 6:4 leads into 6:5, in which each person is accountable to God for himself. Schreiner notes the use of γὰρ as indicating that 6:5 is the “why” of 6:4.<sup>55</sup> Schreiner sees the self-accountability of this verse in the context of 6:1-5: a comprehensive call for a person to help others while also being realistic of where he stands before God.<sup>56</sup> In the even larger context that includes Chapter 5, the other-and-self dynamic of 6:1-5 demonstrates how living by the Spirit changes a person inwardly toward God and outwardly toward others.

In 6:5, Paul also indicates a limit that helps define the understanding of burden bearing introduced in 6:2. While the community is called to come alongside and help a person who is struggling, the goal is restoration (καταρτίζετε) which suggests wholeness, or “to be in a condition to function well,”<sup>57</sup> as well as “restoration to spiritual health and vitality.”<sup>58</sup> Burden bearing does not indicate one person carrying another person’s load indefinitely, but rather coming alongside temporarily for the purpose of restoring to wholeness. This verse, in the context of 6:1-4 and 5:16-26, suggests that transformation is not stagnant but rather has a trajectory with increasingly visible change (5:22-23) and restoration.

In the context of 6:1-5, burden bearing has a sense of “we are in this together” and yet does not negate individual accountability before God. Burden bearing is not an excuse for a free ride. All should be growing in the Spirit and making that ongoing effort to walk in line with the Spirit, seeking the Spirit’s transforming power. As deSilva notes, Paul distinguishes between responsibility (to help others) and accountability (for oneself).<sup>59</sup> Paul reminds his hearers that they, as a community, need to help each other stay in line with the Spirit. In relationship with 6:4, each person must also be accountable for his own growth that is pleasing to God, especially

from an eschatological judgment perspective.<sup>60</sup> Moo sees more of a distinction between the ongoing process of 6:2 and the eschatological perspective of 6:5.<sup>61</sup>

**6:6** This verse first appears to come from a different direction. Schreiner suggests that 6:6 continues Paul's discussion from 6:4-5 but with a corporate rather than personal focus.<sup>62</sup> Moo raises a question of whether *κοινωνεῖτω* is active or passive, as that perspective would shape the meaning of this verse. Passive would indicate sharing in the good things that are taught. Active would suggest sharing material goods with teachers. Moo notes that the active perspective is the most prevalent.<sup>63</sup> He also sees a distinction of meaning depending on whether 6:6 points to 6:5 or 6:7. If Paul is adding to 6:5, then verse 6:6 might clarify that even though each person is responsible for his own burdens, the Galatians should not withhold support from teachers. If verse 6:6 points to 6:7, Paul might offer 6:6 as an example of sowing gifts to teachers.

In the larger context of 6:1-10, deSilva brings a different perspective to this verse as an example of burden bearing.<sup>64</sup> If teachers are to bear the burden of instructing the community, others need to bear the financial burden for supporting those teachers. The concept of reciprocity was commonly known in Greco-Roman culture.<sup>65</sup> The need for ongoing instruction is evident from the larger context of this letter. If growing in the Spirit is an ongoing process for the community, and if missteps will occur, as Paul has made clear in 6:1, the community will clearly benefit from ongoing instruction of all that Paul has taught and exhorted. If individuals and the community are prone to deceit (6:7; 3:1), teachers are needed to assist in discernment.<sup>66</sup>

Davis offers a different perspective on 6:6. Drawing from the writing of Severianus of Gabala, Davis proposes that the teachers in 6:6 refer to the rival teachers who are promoting circumcision and the Galatians' material support of those teachers.<sup>67</sup> Davis regards 6:6 as part of Paul's diatribal rhetoric, in which the maxim of 6:6 is not presented as a new instruction, but

rather as a setup for Paul's statement in 6:7.<sup>68</sup> In their deception, the Galatians have sown to the rival teachers rather than to the truth of Christ's gospel. This sowing could be both material and spiritual. Davis considers that Paul might have originally taught the maxim of 6:6 to the Galatians within a gospel context. The Galatians thought they were following the maxim by supporting the rival teachers, when in reality they were making a mockery of God's truth.<sup>69</sup> Davis further suggests that the "household of faith" in 6:10 (RSV) might imply that the rival teachers are not part of this household and thus should not receive the support of the Galatians.<sup>70</sup>

**6:7** This verse opens with a warning that is also an assurance. The Galatians may have been concerned that freedom in Christ, without Torah regulation, would lead to harmful behavior. Paul gives assurance that the Spirit will give discernment of what is Spirit and what is flesh. God cannot be fooled. As Paul goes on to show in the next verse, those who sow to the flesh will experience the consequences.<sup>71</sup> The warning in 6:7 reinforces Paul's warning in 5:21.<sup>72</sup>

The Greek word often translated as "deceived" (*πλανασθε*) in this verse is different from the word for deceiving oneself (*φρεναπατα*) in verse 3. The word *πλανασθε* can be understood as to "be mistaken in one's judgment,"<sup>73</sup> while *φρεναπατα* can be understood as "mislead concerning the truth." Both words additionally carry the meaning of deceiving oneself.<sup>74</sup> By highlighting two ways of deceiving oneself, Paul reinforces the importance of intentionally lining up with the Holy Spirit to stay in truth. In the context of this passage as a whole, Paul demonstrates how Christian community can help each other discern truth (6:1-2, 10).<sup>75</sup>

Moo suggests that "do not be deceived" is a rhetorical device and that "mocked" relates to those who did not take seriously the prophets' warnings of God's impending judgment.<sup>76</sup> DeSilva offers an additional perspective on "mocked," in that sowing to the flesh would make a mockery of the gift of Christ's death and God's invitation to sow to the Spirit.<sup>77</sup>

The way a crop is sown affects what is reaped, and Paul’s hearers would have understood that principle. Application of this metaphor to life was common in Greco-Roman and Jewish culture, especially in wisdom literature.<sup>78</sup> Paul reminds his hearers that the same principle, reflective of God’s design in creation, works spiritually. Loubser notes that while such maxims would be familiar to Greeks, the meaning is different in Paul’s letter because the principle is empowered by the Spirit and “characterized by self-sacrificing love for other people.”<sup>79</sup>

Paul’s insight summarizes his teaching in 5:13-26. Freedom in Christ does not mean freedom to live by the flesh (5:19-21). Freedom in Christ requires intentionally living by the Spirit (5:22-25) and loving one another (5:13-14). Through the transforming power of the Spirit, the person is set free from bondage to fleshly ways and empowered to reflect Christ’s ways.

**6:8** In this verse, freedom from bondage, along with the intentionality of living by the Spirit are understood more specifically. Bondage to fleshly ways means corruption, in both the present and eschatological sense (5:21). By contrast, freedom in the Spirit leads to eternal life and requires the active participation of the sower.<sup>80</sup> Moo suggests that the meaning of the Greek σπείρων εἰς (“sowing into”) is captured closely by the NIV translation of sowing “to please.”<sup>81</sup>

Paul highlights the two options for sowing and the consequences reaped by each option. This flesh-and-Spirit dichotomy, introduced in 2:20 and 3:3, reiterates Paul’s teaching in 5:16-25, which has already made clear what flesh and Spirit look like. The concept of sowing and reaping to the flesh implies an ongoing way of life, rather than the temporary slip-up of 6:1.<sup>82</sup>

Sowing to and reaping in the Spirit not only refers to the present life but also to the eschatological judgment.<sup>83</sup> The corruption (φθοράν) from sowing to the flesh is contrasted with the resurrection body.<sup>84</sup> There is a sense in which that eschatological process begins in the present, hence the urgency for walking by the Spirit. If a person sows to the flesh, he belongs to

the present evil age, which Paul contrasts, without reservation, with an eternal inheritance.<sup>85</sup> The action of “sowing” also indicates participation, not passivity, with regard to Spirit life. Moo confirms that Paul is arguing for both faith and response.<sup>86</sup>

**6:9** Paul’s hearers who have understood patience as a fruit of the Spirit (5:22) will appreciate his encouragement in this verse. Not only is sowing to the Spirit an ongoing process, as deSilva reminds us, but it is also an effort that requires diligent investment in the present for a future harvest.<sup>87</sup> The words *καιρω* (“time”) and *ιδιω* (“due”) indicate the time appointed for harvest. This is the kind of burden-bearing community Paul describes in 6:1-2 that invests in each other and in the work of the Spirit for the long run.

In 6:8 and throughout Chapter 5, Paul has made clear that this reaping comes by the power of the Spirit and that intentional participation is required on the part of the believer. This is not a works-based theology, but rather points to a deeper understanding of partnering with the Spirit to experience ongoing transformation and to become more Christ-like in daily living. The goal of reaping a harvest requires human effort and empowerment by the Spirit.<sup>88</sup> In the sociohistorical culture of Paul’s hearers, it was understood that when a gift (e.g., the Spirit) was given, the receiver was to respond (e.g., sowing to the Spirit).<sup>89</sup>

**6:10** This “good” is for everyone, not just for the Christian community. The larger scope is evident in Paul’s use of *παντας* (“all”) as well as *μαλιστα* (“especially”), which differentiates “all.” Moo notes that *μαλιστα* does not limit *παντας*, in that Paul redefines the household of faith by the new covenant in Christ and life of the Spirit.<sup>90</sup> While Schreiner acknowledges a wider meaning for doing good, he argues that Paul’s exhortation in 6:10 focuses on giving, including a “hierarchy of giving:” family first, then faith community, and then people in need outside the faith.<sup>91</sup> “Generous giving is not optional” but rather is evidence of sowing to the Spirit.<sup>92</sup>

The household of faith (οἰκείους της πίστεως) offers the connotation of a family household. Loubser also highlights Paul's emphasis here on the faith community as family.<sup>93</sup> In Paul's cultural setting, family dynamics included serving and honoring one another, removing shame, and taking care of each other.<sup>94</sup> Paul's pastoral focus on unity takes on overtones of Christ's family, which can also be seen in his address to ἀδελφοί that opened this unit. DeSilva notes additionally that new converts might have lost the support from their Gentile family networks and were especially in need of support from their Christian brothers and sisters.<sup>95</sup>

Galatians 6:1-10 demonstrates for the Galatian Christians how to sow together into the life of the Spirit, so the Spirit can transform their lives individually and as a congregation. Paul's discussion of how to walk out the work of the Spirit in community is also relevant for congregations today. Following are just a few of the applications of Galatians 6:1-10 that will help today's congregations live as individuals and communities in the ways God desires.

Paul helps today's readers understand that transformation is a process. Receiving the Holy Spirit does not necessarily bring complete change in a person's freedom from sin. Rather, the Spirit begins to work in cooperation with the individual to change her heart from the inside out. As the fruit of the Spirit is produced in a person's heart, she finds herself living more in the ways God desires.

Transformation is an individual and corporate process. As individuals grow in the Spirit, and the Spirit produces fruit in their lives that is pleasing to God, the congregation as a whole should reflect this growth. Individuals should also take responsibility for coming together to sow to the Spirit intentionally as a community. In modeling this transformation process authentically within community, people who intentionally sow to the Spirit with their lives and with each other will, in turn, reflect a way of life that will draw others to join in with their own lives.

By understanding Galatians 6:1-10 in the context of Paul's teaching about the role of the Spirit in transformation (including 5:13-25), the Christian community today has a guideline to determine what kind of fruit they are producing. When people are intentional to notice visible fruit in their own lives and in the corporate life of the congregation as a whole, they can determine the areas where they are successfully sowing to the Spirit and areas where they are still sowing to the flesh. For Paul, the distinctions are clear. The fruit will show the truth.

Because sowing requires an active, ongoing commitment, and because transformation points to a trajectory leading to greater wholeness, the struggle with a particular area of sin shows where further work is needed. Thus, the person can see an area of sin where she needs to submit to and participate with the Holy Spirit. The individual has the privilege to ask others in the community to come alongside in this process. The individual thus charges sisters and brothers in Christ with lovingly helping her recognize her fruit in ways that reflect the humility and love of Christ, for the purpose of restoring her to wholeness by the power of the Spirit.

By connecting the transforming work of the Spirit with particular challenges encountered in Christian community, Paul's teachings and exhortation in 6:1-10 help today's congregations see that challenges are an opportunity for growth. Rather than being tempted to "keep" a false peace at all costs, a congregation can embrace authentic transformation in relationship with each other. What they will experience is genuine peace, as Paul desires for them in 6:16. This peace comes from understanding the goals of living together in community: loving and serving each other with the genuine love of Christ, restoring each other with the humility of Christ, walking together in transformation by sowing to the Spirit, taking individual responsibility to assess one's own fruit, and being genuine and transparent with others in community about one's own struggles with sin and how that process is being walked out in cooperation with the Spirit.

Paul's teaching on bearing each other's burdens helps today's congregations understand what it means that "we are all in this together." Congregations are called to genuinely invest in each other at the individual and corporate level. When a person is struggling, whether with a particular sin or with a burden in life, the appropriate response is not simply to say, "I am praying for you." The response needs to be a genuine commitment to walk alongside the person through this period of struggle. Not every individual can do this for every other individual, but the community as a whole can actively invest in bearing each other's burdens. This might look like a small group walking alongside someone in their time of struggle; one or two individuals committing to help one person, while a few others commit to help another; or the congregation pooling their resources to intervene in a family's difficult situation. The important result is that the person will know the congregation is committed to seeing him or her through to restoration.

While the exact content of the rival teachers' words to the Galatians is not known, the evidence in Paul's Letter to the Galatians suggests that, among other concerns, they might have been worried about how to walk in ways pleasing to God without the aid of the Torah. One of the many contributions of Paul's letter is to give the Galatians instruction and assurance of the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming them, so they can grow as people who live in ways pleasing to God. In Galatians 6:1-10, Paul shows the people the importance of their response and participation in sowing to the Spirit. He also demonstrates the role of the community in helping each other to live a life of sowing to the Spirit. Paul leaves his hearers with the basic steps of walking together, with each other and the Spirit, through this process of transformation – individually and corporately. His teachings and exhortation in Galatians 6:1-10 invite the people to begin living fully by the Spirit in Christian community.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> David A. deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2018), 10, 443; Douglas J. Moo, *Galatians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 340; Gys M. H. Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” *Neotestamentica* 43 (2009): 356, 358, 359.
- <sup>2</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 443.
- <sup>3</sup> Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” 365.
- <sup>4</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 371.
- <sup>5</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary Series on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 504.
- <sup>6</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 504.
- <sup>7</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 504.
- <sup>8</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 480.
- <sup>9</sup> Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” 365, 367.
- <sup>10</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 340; Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” 355, 360.
- <sup>11</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 479; Moo, *Galatians*, 371-372.
- <sup>12</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 10.
- <sup>13</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 370.
- <sup>14</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 508.
- <sup>15</sup> Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” 366.
- <sup>16</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 505.
- <sup>17</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 375.
- <sup>18</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 374.
- <sup>19</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 508.
- <sup>20</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 481; Gys M. H. Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” 369.
- <sup>21</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 515.
- <sup>22</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 480.
- <sup>23</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 374.
- <sup>24</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 480.
- <sup>25</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 483; Moo, *Galatians*, 376; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 509.
- <sup>26</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 376.
- <sup>27</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 482.
- <sup>28</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 511.
- <sup>29</sup> Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” 362.
- <sup>30</sup> Todd A. Wilson, “The Law of Christ and the Law of Moses: Reflections on a Recent Trend in Interpretation,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 5 (2006): 134-135.
- <sup>31</sup> Wilson, “The Law of Christ and the Law of Moses: Reflections on a Recent Trend in Interpretation,” 135.
- <sup>32</sup> Wilson, “The Law of Christ and the Law of Moses: Reflections on a Recent Trend in Interpretation,” 136.
- <sup>33</sup> Moo, *Galatians*,
- <sup>34</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 483-484; Moo, *Galatians*, 371 (not only 5:13, but also 5:6 and 5:14).
- <sup>35</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 484-485.
- <sup>36</sup> Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” 361.
- <sup>37</sup> Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” 362.
- <sup>38</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 485; Moo, *Galatians*, 378.
- <sup>39</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 521.
- <sup>40</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 485-486.
- <sup>41</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 505.
- <sup>42</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 511.
- <sup>43</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 379.
- <sup>44</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 485.
- <sup>45</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 379.
- <sup>46</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 486.

- <sup>47</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 487-488.  
<sup>48</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 487.  
<sup>49</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 505.  
<sup>50</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 513.  
<sup>51</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 513 (citing Witherington).  
<sup>52</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 379.  
<sup>53</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 380.  
<sup>54</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 381.  
<sup>55</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 506.  
<sup>56</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 505, 512.  
<sup>57</sup> BDAG, 526.  
<sup>58</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 508.  
<sup>59</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 480.  
<sup>60</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 489.  
<sup>61</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 381.  
<sup>62</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 521.  
<sup>63</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 382.  
<sup>64</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 490.  
<sup>65</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 490.  
<sup>66</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 522.  
<sup>67</sup> Basil S. Davis, “Severianus of Gabala and Galatians 6:6-10,” *CBQ* 69 (2007): 298.  
<sup>68</sup> Davis, “Severianus of Gabala and Galatians 6:6-10,” 300.  
<sup>69</sup> Davis, “Severianus of Gabala and Galatians 6:6-10,” 300.  
<sup>70</sup> Davis, “Severianus of Gabala and Galatians 6:6-10,” 301.  
<sup>71</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 479-480, 491.  
<sup>72</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 491.  
<sup>73</sup> BDAG, 822.  
<sup>74</sup> BDAG, 1065.  
<sup>75</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 497-498.  
<sup>76</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 384.  
<sup>77</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 491-492.  
<sup>78</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 492; Moo, *Galatians*, 385.  
<sup>79</sup> Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” 367.  
<sup>80</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 494.  
<sup>81</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 386.  
<sup>82</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 493-494.  
<sup>83</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 494; Schreiner, *Galatians*, 525.  
<sup>84</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 386.  
<sup>85</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 525-526.  
<sup>86</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 387.  
<sup>87</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 493-495.  
<sup>88</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 387.  
<sup>89</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 496.  
<sup>90</sup> Moo, *Galatians*, 389.  
<sup>91</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 527-528.  
<sup>92</sup> Schreiner, *Galatians*, 528.  
<sup>93</sup> Loubser, “Life in the Spirit as Wise Remedy for the Folly of the Flesh: Ethical Notes from Galatians,” 365.  
<sup>94</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 497.  
<sup>95</sup> deSilva, *The Letter to the Galatians*, 496.

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