

Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
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“Bear One Another’s Burdens...” Part Two

SCRIPTURE LESSON: *“Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”* (New American Standard Bible) Galatians 6: 2.

GOAL: To understand and practice burden bearing in Christian love toward one another

OBJECTIVES:

1. Recognize burden bearing as a Christian responsibility to fellow believers
2. Discuss the difference between the two types of burden bearing (Galatians 6:2, 6:5)
3. To discover and understand practical ways to help bear one another’s burdens

ESSENTIAL INSIGHT/QUESTIONS:

At some time or another, every believer will experience some type of burden. Some burdens may be ongoing while others are fleeting. The emotional effects of burdens can produce stress and anxiety heavy enough to cause one’s heart to break. Some Christians may be unable to think or see clearly, and others may feel that they can barely make it. The burden can be so heavy, stressful, or agonizing, until one feels faint and barely able to stand under the weight of it all. This is why we need to identify with one another and offer spiritual support, to provide wise counsel, and strength to stand.

Burdens or weights can take many forms. Even a blessing can be a burden because of the responsibility that comes with it. Some burdens may be emotional, such as marital problems, a problem child, criticism, and depression. There are some who carry heavy burdens as a result of crimes against them such as assault, abuse, harassment, slander, or molestation. Burdens may be physical, (sickness), social, (rejection), financial (debt), spiritual, (trials, persecutions), educational, (tests, papers, homework), material (lack of transportation, adequate housing, personal and household needs), or obligations (care of a relative, work assignments), and so on. Acts of transgressions can bring on some of these burdens. The weight of them can vary in difficulty, guilt, anxiety, stress, anger, bitterness, or heaviness. Loads of this type affect the young and old alike and require the help of another person in bearing them.

In contrast, Galatians 6:5 speaks of each one bearing his/her own load (burden). This is not a contradiction. There are certain Christian responsibilities or burdens each believer must bear which cannot be shared with others. Here in Galatians 6:5, the word ‘load’ has no connotation of difficulty. Instead, it refers to life’s routine obligations and each believer’s ministry calling. (Matt. 11:30; I Cor. 3:12-15; II Cor. 5:10.)¹ Some examples of routine

¹ John MacArthur Study Bible, notes

obligations may be home responsibilities, parenting or job duties, etc. Christians ultimately have the responsibility to carry their own burden however; we have the ability to identify with them and to receive spiritual help from the Lord. We can help others in their difficulties understand that we are available to listen and offer support especially when we have come through a similar struggle. Just remember that we are yoked to the Savior, who shares the load with us. (Matthew 11:30) (A yoke couples two things together.) Jesus is under the load with us. What a comforting thought!

The Believers' Corporate Responsibility

In Galatians 6:2, we find that God is interested in a sense of, unity and community in carrying the loads or burdens of one another. Just as families rally together to care for a child, an elderly parent or a family member experiencing trouble, so God desires that His spiritual family bear one another's burdens.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, we find a man who risked his own well-being and hostility from others to bear the burdens of a man robbed and wounded by thieves. The Good Samaritan helped by carrying the man's burden and by caring for his physical needs; he paid for his room and board.

One Thanksgiving eve, on the coldest night of the fall season, there was a modern day Good Samaritan who came to the rescue of a man that was wounded, stripped of clothing, and deserted on I75 Freeway in the city of Detroit. Other motorists looked at him from their moving cars and kept going. One man, though, "stepped out in faith", stopped, picked him up, gave him his coat, and took him to the hospital. He was indeed a twenty first century "Good Samaritan" who helped to shoulder this man's burden.

God chooses to work through us. He sent His Holy Spirit to guide us, to teach us, to comfort, and empower us. "We, who are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak". (Romans 15:1) With the Holy Spirit enabling us, we can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens us. (Philippians 4:13)

Bearing the Load

In sharing the load of others, we are to do it in a spirit of love and practical consideration. (Romans 15:1, I Corinthians 9:19-22, Philippians 2:2-4, Galatians 6:2). When we bear one another's burdens, motivated by a spirit of love, we fulfill the Law of Christ. Helping our brothers and sisters while demonstrating the Fruit of the Spirit (meekness, gentleness, kindness, love, peace, goodness, and patience) [Galatians 5:22] pleases God. How much good would it serve if we with a prideful attitude scorned the individual for their shortcomings while offering some tangible help? It would not be well received and it certainly does not glorify God.

There are many ways to bear the burdens of others. Spending time with them in prayer is effective. Establishing a prayer partnership with them can enable them to make it day by day. Offering words of encouragement, scriptural passages, personal time, or a listening ear are appreciated. Phone calls, hospital and home visits, and spiritual counseling are

additional ways to bear burdens. Sometimes, transportation, physical assistance, professional help, or monetary assistance may help to ease the burdens. Just spending time with another person can do wonders for their spirit.

In bearing the burdens of others, we must stay connected to the Lord, attend church regularly, daily read the Word, and immerse ourselves and the situations in prayer so as not to overburden or burn ourselves out. We must be sure to maintain a spirit of confidentiality; some things are not to be shared. Maintaining a spirit of meekness as we seek to help others bear their burdens glorifies Jesus.

SUMMARY/REVIEW/CLOSURE:

As we grow spiritually, we cherish the saints God sends to help with our burdens along the way. He gives us people who provide His support in a personal way when we did not know what to do and the burden seemed more than we could bear. There are other people who need to know that God is aware of their situation and that there are some compassionate people to walk with them. Everyone needs someone praying with them and offering support in some way while they carry a burden.

God extends His grace as He chooses to work through believers. We share God's love when we help bear someone else's burdens. It is to be regarded as an act of gratitude for our salvation. Because we have been blessed, we are expected to extend this same love to others. He comforts us in our troubles; we are to comfort others with the same comfort He has given us. (2 Corinthians 1:4)

Jesus met people with burdens, and first healed their immediate need—then He ministered to them. It has been said that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Jesus gave us a pattern of love and compassion as a way to reach people and become His fruit bearers by helping others in their time of need.

Jesus taught that we would all have trials and our faith may falter, but we must remain steadfast and pray. *And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brother."* —Luke 22:31, 32. *Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.* [Hebrews 7:25, ESV].

Have you grown enough spiritually for God to use you in bearing someone's burden?
Are you available to help someone in his or her struggle to walk in the newness of life?

DISCUSSION/ APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- 1) In what ways can we make ourselves available to bear the burdens of others?
- 2) Discuss some difficulties we may have in approaching a brother or sister experiencing a sin burden?
- 3) What are some loving Christian ways to respond when a brother or sister is offended by overtures to help them?