

▶ GLENSTONE CHAPEL ◀
Community Group Bible Study Guide

Passage: Galatians 6:1-10

For use June 8-14, 2008

**QUESTIONS TO USE IN GROUP
OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY**

LAUNCHING ¹

[5-10 minutes]

1. "A man reaps what he sows," (Gal. 6:7), a familiar proverb. When have you discovered that to be true in your life? Check (✓) **one or two; share with the group anything slightly embarrassing, as you are comfortable.**
___ A. "I neglected to study and flunked the exam/course!"
___ B. "I missed the deadline for _____ and missed out on _____."
___ C. "I lost my driver's license. . . ."
___ D. "I should have never bought that old luxury car and inherited so many repair expenses."
___ E. "After my vasectomy, I 'forgot' to go back for the final testing -- now I have another child!"
___ F. "I should have known better than to 'volunteer' as part of my military service!"
___ G. "'Lord, don't send me to Africa,' I prayer, and then that's exactly what happened."
___ H. "Why did I let my child climb up in that tree?"
___ I. Other: _____
2. If you've ever served as a coach, store manager, teacher, boss, pastor, etc., what kind of success have you had in **correcting** those under your authority when they needed it?
3. How hard is it, as a parent, to help a child see the value of persistence in tending a vegetable and/or flower garden?

UNDERSTANDING ²

[15-25 minutes]

1. Read the passage aloud. Ask someone who is often reticent to volunteer comments in group discussion to read.
2. As a group, identify the push-and-pull of "carrying your own burden" and "carrying the burdens of others." In conclusion, what's Paul trying to teach them about a unique Christian way of **connecting**?
3. According to verses 1-10, what characteristics would Paul use to describe someone who is a "good Christian"?
4. Verses 6-10 imply that making generous monetary contributions toward the pastors' salaries is an obligation for obedient Christians. What else might be a concern to Paul besides money?

¹Choose a question to move thinking into the theme of the passage; **note**, this is not an *ice-breaker*.

²Possible questions to discover Paul's meaning of Galatians 6:1-10.

5. According to Paul, how susceptible are Bible-believing, Spirit-filled Christians to self-deception?³ What seems to be at the core of this issue?

6. What kinds of "doing good" do you suppose Paul had in mind for the Galatians in verse 9? Why would they "become weary" in so doing?

7. What lies behind Paul's instruction to give special effort to *doing good* to fellow believers? What motivated him to make this priority clear?

REFLECTING ⁴

[10-15 minutes]

1. "How has coming to Christ changed your attitudes toward the common values and ideas of the world? Where do you find worldly things still pressuring you? What can the group do to help?"⁵ **Evaluate using *The Suburban Creed* on page 2. What do you learn about yourself from this evaluation?**
2. When someone comes to correct us about a sin (vs. 1), how can we accept the criticism, even if it seems to be unfair and untrue?
3. How can we as individuals "do good to all people," practically speaking? How might our community group do some good?"
4. What would my life be like today if I had learned earlier that *sowing to my sinful nature* (vs. 8) leads to a grim harvest? How can I forget what is behind?⁶

FURTHER REFLECTION (on your own)

- Gal. 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
- Gal. 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

³1 John 1:8 "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." James 1:22 "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."

⁴Choose one or two questions to make use of truths from Galatians 6:1-10 in daily life.

⁵1 *John/Galatians*, Serendipity House, page 62.

⁶Phil. 3:13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,

The Suburban Creed?

1. "How has coming to Christ changed your attitudes toward the common values and ideas of the world? Where do you find worldly things still pressuring you? What can the group do to help?"⁷
Evaluate using chart below. **Check one or more (✓)** for each item of the Credo.

Credo	I think it describes people I know in Union Co. and CLT.	I strongly believe this item..	I have believed this and never questioned it.	Maybe I should think about whether this merits to be my core belief.	This doesn't apply to me.
1. "My children must attend 'good' schools."			This governs my behavior more than I'd like to admit.		
2. "We must have one car per adult in our household AND one of these vehicles must be new or exotic." ⁸					
3. "Our children must be enrolled in and successful in ____." (Choose one or more, preferably several: music, sports, academics, character-building organizations [e.g., B.S.A.], horsemanship.)					
4. "New is always preferred to old: toys, computers, cars, tools, electronics, etc."					
5. "Security must be maintained at all costs: home security systems, insurances, children chaperoned 24/7, etc."					
6. "Our property must reflect an upscale subdivision, perhaps even professionally cared for."					
7. "When shopping, must go to high-end malls and stores. Or buy 'stuff' in Walmart that looks stylish."					
8. "We must live in neighborhoods with large brick homes, or at least brick-faced. The subdivision must have a pool and other amenities."					
9. "Whenever I am facing pain — or my children are — I must do everything I can do to avoid it."					
10. "What I want, I need! I will obtain it, one way or the another."					
11. "Our 'toys' and 'play' must be top-quality, stylish." ⁹					
12. Your addition: _____					

FOR PERSONAL PREPARATION

Passage: Galatians 6:1-10

⁷ *John/Galatians*, Serendipity House, page 62.

⁸ exotic = e.g., pickup truck, convertible, luxury vehicle, motorcycle

⁹ E.g., golf clubs, ski equipment, cycles, computer games, TV reception, music production, deluxe vacations [Rome, Caribbean cruise, Disney World].

• This our Lord peculiarly recommends; this He makes the distinguishing mark of His disciples.¹⁶

6. "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." (vs. 3)

- "He [sic] alone will bear their burdens who knows himself to be nothing."
- *If anyone thinks he is something.* Of himself; to have anything of himself, to do anything of himself. . . . "If he thinks he is strong, needs no help, will never need sympathy. . . ." • "Above his brothers, or by any strength of his own."
- *when he is nothing.* "Thinks he is a big number being nothing at all. . . . He is really zero." • ". . . owes his being and preservation and all the mercies of life . . . to God; has no **grace** nor gifts of himself but what he has received, and can do no good thing, not think a good thought, or perform a good action of himself and much less of himself procure eternal life and salvation. . . ."
- *he deceives himself.* . . . leads his own mind astray. . . . He deceives no one else. • . . . will find himself sadly mistaken, and wretchedly disappointed another day; OR whoever thinks himself to be some . . . excellent person . . . better than others . . . and of greater abilities, that he is . . . at least holier than others, and not liable to fall as others, whom he looks upon with disdain . . . he is destitute of the Grace of God. . . . This the apostle says to depress pride, and swelling conceit. . . ."

7. "Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else . . ." (vs. 4)

- *Each one should test his own actions.* • "Instead of commenting upon the weaknesses of others. . . . • "Not concern himself about the actions and works of others . . . let him examine, try and prove his whole conduct in life by the rule of God's Word . . . without bearing hard upon and censuring others. . . ."
- *he can take pride in himself* • ". . . EITHER ironically said, he will then see what reason he has to rejoice . . . in his own works, and . . . boast of his performances, and despise others; so far from it, that he will have reason to be ashamed of himself and to own . . . his unworthiness . . . OR if, upon such a review . . . of his works, it shall appear that he has had his . . . [lifestyle] in the world, by the Grace of God, in simplicity and godly sincerity, this testimony of his conscience will be his rejoicing."¹⁷
- *without comparing himself to somebody else.* • ". . . rejoicing in this, that he is better than others, and is not, as the Pharisee said, as other men are . . . he will have rejoicing in the testimony of his own conscience, and will have no need to compare himself with others; his glorying will be on account of his own actions. . . ."

8. ". . . for each one should carry his own load." (vs. 5)

- Christ calls his [load] light, though he terms those of the Pharisees heavy,¹⁸ meant for other people."

¹⁶John 13:34-35 "A new Command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (35) By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."

¹⁷2 Cor. 1:12 Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's Grace.

¹⁸Matt. 23:4 They tie up heavy loads and put them on men's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

- "Every one must bear his own burden of responsibility. . . . the burden of our account before God."
- ". . . EITHER do his own work, which God has allotted him to do . . . which he should patiently bear . . . and constantly and faithfully perform while in this world; OR he shall give an account of his own actions, and not another's, to God in the other world. He shall be judged according to his own works . . . and not by a comparison of other men's. . . . This the apostle says to take off men from . . . censuring the actions of others, and from making use of them. . . . buoy themselves up with vain hopes, because they are better than others; and also to engage them to attend strictly to their own actions, and consider them simply and absolutely. . . ."

9. "Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor." (vs. 6)

- *receives instruction in the Word.* • "EITHER of the essential Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, of His Person, Office, and Grace; OR rather of the written Word . . . and sometimes with such as the words of truth . . . of **faith** . . . of righteousness . . . of reconciliation, and . . . of this salvation, so called from the nature, use and subject matter of it."¹⁹
- *Anyone . . . must share all good things.* "It is fitting that teachers should be helped by their students, as much as they are able." • ". . . let him impart of his temporal good things. . . [shared] only a part . . . and yet the . . . [sharing] should be large and liberal, sufficient to support the teacher . . ."
- *with his instructor.* ". . . such as are under their instructions ought to impart of their worldly substance to them, for their . . . support and maintenance . . . it is but reasonable . . . that they partake of their carnal things. . . ."

10. "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows." (vs. 7)

- . . . he compares alms to a spiritual sowing which will have a most plentiful harvest, so that it will be very profitable. . . .":
- *Do not be deceived:* • "Humans often are."
- *God cannot be mocked.* • "They do fancy that God may be mocked. The immutable law of the spiritual kingdom shows that He is not." • ". . . to turn the nose up at one. That is done towards God, but never without punishment, Paul means to say." • ". . . nor will He be. Men may deceive themselves and others . . . yet they cannot deceive God, Who knows their hearts as well as their worldly substance . . ."
- *A man reaps what he sows.* . . . as to kind, quality, and quantity, generally speaking . . . if it is good seed he may hope for a good crop; and if he sows bountifully, he shall reap bountifully; but if he sows sparingly, he shall reap sparingly; and if he sows nothing, he can never reap any thing. • This is a proverbial expression, and may be applied to all actions, good and bad, and the reward and punishment of them. . . ." • "Our present time is seed time. . . . Those who live a carnal, sensual life must expect no other fruit from such a course than misery and ruin. But those who, under the guidance and influences of the Holy Spirit, live a life of **faith** in Christ and abound in Christian **graces**, shall of the Spirit reap life. . . ."

¹⁹Rom. 2:18 . . . if you know His Will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the Law. . . .

• "... the believer must be diligent in the employment of the means at his command of the moral and spiritual improvement of his life."

11. "The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life." (vs. 8)

- *The one who sows to please his sinful nature.* • "... he is such an one that pampers his flesh, gratifies and indulges the lusts of it. . . who spends his substance in a luxurious way upon himself and family; OR whose . . . employment, is to increase his worldly riches . . . to the neglect of his own soul . . . the poor of the church, and ministers of the Gospel. . . ."
- *The one . . . from that nature will reap destruction.* ". . . will reap a crop of fleshly lusts and ills. His carnal indulgence will end in moral ruin.²⁰ • The precise meaning turns on the context, here plainly the physical and moral decay or rottenness that follows sins of the flesh. . . . Nature writes in one's body the penalty of sin. . . ." • Death everlasting.
- *the one who sows to please the Spirit.* • That follows His Guidance in all his . . . [lifestyle] . . . • ". . . that minds and savors the things of the Spirit, lives in the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit. . . ."
- *the one . . . from the Spirit will reap eternal life.* • By the free **grace** and power of God. • He shall reap spiritually, and as a final harvest the spiritual life beyond, the life everlasting. . . . in the use of such spiritual means . . . OR . . . he shall attain to, and enjoy eternal happiness in the other world; OR of, and by the Spirit of God, by Whose **grace** and strength he sows, and does all the good things he does, by and of Him sanctifying him . . . and not of himself, or any works of righteousness done by him, shall he inherit eternal life. . . ."

12. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." (vs. 9)

- One day at a time. . . .
- We are all very apt to tire in duty, particularly in doing good. . . . Only to perseverance in well-doing is the reward promised. . . . We should take care to do good in our life-time, and make this the business of our lives, especially when fresh occasions offer, and as far as our power reaches.
- *doing good.* • This may be understood of . . . doing good works . . . of every sort; which are such as are done according to the Will of God . . . OR else acts of beneficence to Christ's ministers and poor in particular; which are . . . well pleasing in His sight . . . nor are they, when their . . . **grace** is in exercise, though they may meet with many things which tend to discourage . . . them . . . such as change in their own circumstances, losses in the world . . . the ungratefulness of some, and unworthiness of others. "
- *for at the proper time we will reap a harvest* . . . EITHER in this world, sooner or later . . . in God's own time, by enjoying an increase of the fruits of righteousness; for the seed sown shall spring up again . . . OR else in the other

world, or at the end of this; which will be the harvest time . . . the time of enjoying eternal life."

- *if we do not give up.* • Literally, "not loosened out," relaxed, exhausted as a result of giving in to evil . . . continue to the end, persevere constantly in doing acts of beneficence, and patiently wait . . . for . . . men must not expect to reap as soon as they sow; and therefore should not be . . . impatient in waiting, though they do not see as yet the appearance of the fruits thereof. . . ."

13. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." (vs. 10)

- A good verse for implementation in the community groups at Glenstone Chapel.
- *as we have opportunity.* • ". . . as occasion requires . . . as there is ability of well doing, and that continues while the time of life lasts, which is the time for sowing, or doing good works. . . . At whatever time or place, and in whatever manner we can. The opportunity in general is our lifetime; but there are also many particular opportunities.
- *let us do good to all people.* • . . . not only to our relations, friends, and acquaintance, but to all men; to them that are strangers to us, of whatsoever nation, Jew or Gentile; and of whatsoever religion or sect . . . even to our very enemies. . . .
- Doing good is . . . sowing to the Spirit.
- *especially to those who belong to the family of believers.* • Those that are of the household of **faith** . . . ought to be preferred before all others, yet in such a way that our generosity extends to all. • The Christian rule is to do good, but above all others to love, cherish and help the brothers. • For the obvious reason that they belong to the same family with necessary responsibility.

Information for community group leaders:

- **Introduction to the Ten Commandments, to be studied June 15-21; sermon on June 22.**
- **COMMANDMENT #1 -"You shall have no other gods before Me" (Ex. 20:3). To be studied June 22-28; sermon on June 29.**

²⁰ Hag. 1:4-6 "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?" Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it."