

In the third and contrasting approach, **Caring Colin** dropped around after the small group. "I guess you couldn't resist the initial temptation to talk to the kids like that huh?," said Colin. "Are you sure you've been the cause of this? Are you feeling bad and angry at yourself? I don't think you can simply overlook it or suddenly make it right. This will take some time and energy to put right. Would you like some help to get it right with God and then we could talk about how you can do better with your kids and your ex-wife? I'd be happy to stay for a while now and come back again if that would help."



Here's a situation where all the fruit of the Spirit is required to restore a member of our Church from his self-confessed burden of sin. This is not a job for the conceited or immature. A mature Christian who is able to demonstrate the characteristics of the Holy Spirit will make for an environment in which the one who has fallen is able to get up and be restored.

- ⇒ Jim needed someone who would portray the gentleness that offers grace.
- ⇒ Equally, Jim needed someone who would consider the matter as grave concern and a real burden.
- ⇒ Lastly, Jim needed someone who would commit to go the distance with the complexities of restoring this pastoral situation to reconciliation.



Jesus gave quite firm and practical instructions about situations like this in the Church in Matthew 18:15-17. When we add to his instructions the necessary fruit of the Spirit that Paul speaks of in Galatians 5 we begin to see that the burdens of our sinful lives can be carried and supported by others.

## #6 Free to serve others

Galatians 6:1-18

### Introduction

*"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Gal 6:14 (NIV)*

**Galatians-  
Freedom in  
Christ**

### Recap

The Apostle claims in chapter 5....

*1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.*

Last week we looked at what that freedom might look like for an individual Christian who has the help of the Spirit of God. As we come to the last chapter of the letter, our focus is shifted to what a whole church might look like if it lives free from condemnation and empowered by the Spirit. Paul then returns to the main theme of the letter to bring it to a close. Chapter 5 of Galatians ends with the exhortation for Christians to **keep in step with the Spirit**. We have been given the freedom to live as God wants us to with God's help. Now, Paul urges us to take every opportunity God gives us by his grace to display an ever-maturing character of love, joy, peace, patience, and the other virtues by his power— in community. Love for others is the key.

### Loving one another

How do you know the Holy Spirit's at work in a community? Is it ecstatic experiences and miracles that determine this? Not necessarily. Paul suggests that it is love for other people that marks the spiritual person. When the situation demands forgiving love, that's when the test is most indicative of the Spirit's work.

### Gal. 5:26-6:5

- Q1. What positive and negative commands does the Apostle give in these verses? List them overleaf.

List here....

- Q2. What temptations can be present when seeing another Christian's sin?
- Q3. Read Galatians 2:11. Sometimes confrontation is necessary. How can gentleness and other "fruits" of the Spirit help?
- Q4. Heavy loads make you stumble and fall. The word "burdens" in 6:2 means that type of weight that would break you and make you fall. What burden is Paul talking of?
- Q5. In some translations, verse 5 sounds contradictory to verse 2. However, the Greek in vs. 5 speaks of a load like a **climber's back pack**. Why might we be instructed to carry this load ourselves? What does it represent?



## Sowing & Reaping

### Gal. 6:6-18

The principle of sowing and reaping holds these final exhortations and commands together.

- Q6. What is the agricultural principle Paul is referring to?
- Q7. What might verse 6 be referring to for his readers? ...for us?

Q8. How might you imagine people "mock" God, who judges all things? Why is this a vain pursuit?

Q9. Does the 'family of believers' deserve primary attention? (v 10)

Q10. Pride is not a Christian virtue. Yet Paul suggests a type of pride in verse 4 and a 'boast' in Christ in verse 14. How do these virtues compare to worldly pride?

## Going Further

Kenneth Haugk in his book "Christian Caregiving" gives us three caricatures of Christians who seek to correct others (the names have been changed to protect the guilty!). Only one has an affinity with the teaching of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Galatians.

Let me introduce you to **Harsh Henry, Libertine Lisa, and Caring Colin**. Let's imagine that Jim, a member of one of our small groups has sheepishly shared that he's been telling his kids all sorts of lies about his ex-wife Madeline whilst they have been in his custody. Jim spends a fair time expressing how bad he's feeling about it and doesn't know what to do. **Harsh Harry** is first naturally. He bobs up and says, "Well you'd better find out what to say- first to those kids, then your ex-wife, and then to God!! You were wrong- you know that don't you? **Libertine Lisa**- She grabs Jim after the group time. "Hey Jim, I can understand how you would say those things to the kids. You were really upset at the time. I wouldn't dwell on it though. You know how kids blow things out of proportion. Don't be hard on yourself. I wouldn't buy the whole story your ex-wife gave you either. You've got to look to the future. Let me just pray for you to have peace about this."

