

Fight for Your Life: Relational

Galatians 6:1-3

Perhaps one of the most difficult aspects of moving to Michigan for our family has been the absence of a chick-fil-a close by. We have to drive all the way to Toledo to taste the delectable goodness of waffle fries and chick fil a sauce. We have long loved chick fil a for a whole host of reasons, but our respect went through the roof recently over the actions of a teenage employee at a chick fil a near Atlanta.

He was working the drive through when a mother pulled into the parking lot panicking as her young child was choking in the back seat. He had somehow managed to get the seat belt wrapped around his neck and it was tightening and cutting off his air supply. Logan, the employee wasted no time and jumped out of the drive through window, ran over to the car, and used his pocket knife to cut the seat belt and save the little boy.

My favorite part of this story is that Logan's mom said that he came home from work that day and didn't mention anything about the incident for a couple of hours. Then, he casually said to his mom, "I saved a kids life today at work."

The story has gone viral and Logan should be praised for his quick thinking and response that really did save the little boys life. We love the story of a physical rescue from harm, but most people really don't like it when someone attempts a spiritual rescue from the life-threatening reality of sin. People say things like, "Don't get all judgey." "It's my life and I'll live it how I want to."

The reality is that fellow Christians sometimes get caught by sin in the same way that little boy got tangled up in his seat belt. And we need someone else to step in and rescue us from the strangle hold sin has on us because we can't do it ourselves. This morning we are moving from the personal fight against sin to the relational fight against sin and the next two weeks we will talk about the communal fight. We cannot engage this fight alone. We need one another if we are to effectively fight and I want to help us see that from Galatians 6:1-3. Let me read these verses to us.

This morning we are going to see **5 actions necessary to rescue a fellow believer from sin.**

1. Accept the Need (v. 1)

My biggest goal this morning is for this passage is to help each person in here feel the need for this type of action. We require other people to help us see our sin and we need to help others. I'm sure some of you automatically recoil from this. It's so intrusive. It's so judgmental. But let your mind be renewed by the Scriptures and see this from a biblical perspective and not a worldly perspective.

You can see in verse 1 that Paul begins his instructions here by calling them brothers. He's used this designation for the believers in Galatia repeatedly in this book. He calls them this at key instructional points in the book. As he's giving important teaching points he wants to make sure they understand that they are all in this together. They are responsible for one another.

They are responsible for one another in a specific circumstance. Look again at verse 1. If your brother is caught in a transgression. We know what a transgression is. It's a sin. A violation of God's law. But what does it mean to be caught in a transgression? Think of a trap that is set for a wild animal by a hunter. The animal is minding its own business when it is surprised by the trap. Of course, the implication is that the one who is caught is a believer and would not want to be in this trap. But they have been snared by this sin and need the help of another believer to extricate themselves from it. This will happen to all of us from time to time. We cannot imagine that it won't.

Remember the words of God to Cain in Genesis 4:7. We are in an adversarial relationship with sin and we need allies. Who are our allies? Look further into verse 1. You who are spiritual. Now, I know when you first read this it sounds like a "spiritual" person is a very godly, pious, and holy person. But in reality, Paul is just describing every follower of Jesus Christ.

Look back to 5:25. The spiritual of 6:1 are those who live by the Spirit. They have been given new life in Christ and have received freedom in Christ and so now are empowered by the Holy Spirit. In Galatians Paul is describing the incredible change that has come about through the coming and work of Jesus Christ. A new age has dawned, and the Holy Spirit indwells and empowers followers of Christ so that they are no longer enslaved to life in the flesh. Look at 5:16-17.

This new life of freedom and walking in the Spirit is meant to be lived for others and not for self. Listen to 5:13.

Sin wants to turn us inward and the Spirit wants to turn us outward to pursue the good of others. Think about that animal in a trap. The only way it gets out is for someone to help it out. Left to fend for itself it is done. Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it this way:

"Sin demands to have a man by himself. It withdraws him from the community. The more isolated a person is, the more destructive will be the power of sin over him, and the more deeply he becomes involved in it, the more disastrous is his isolation." - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

So, we are in this fight together. But what are we specifically to do?

2. Aim for Restoration (v. 1)

Look further into verse 1. We are to restore the brother or sister caught in a transgression. So, what does restoration involve? The word restoration means to make whole again. In the Gospels it is used of the disciples mending their nets. Nets get torn while fishing and you can't very well catch fish if there are holes in the net that allow them to escape. So, they must restore their nets.

Another way to think about this is to reset a dislocated joint. But, in order to put a dislocated joint back in place or to mend a net you have to know there is a problem. The person caught in the transgression must be made aware that he or she has been caught. This means graciously talking to the person about his or her sin and trying to help them see it.

Now, let's talk practically about this for a couple of minutes here. This is not a call to nitpick every single misdeed that you are made aware of. There's also the command in 1Peter 4:8 to "let love cover a multitude of sins." Proverbs 19:11 says it is a glorious thing to overlook an offense. So, how do we reconcile these passages with Galatians 6:1? Are we to confront others in sin or just let it slide?

This is where Christian wisdom comes into play. We need discernment that comes from walking with the Lord, but the type of sin Paul is calling out here is persistent and habitual. This person is unaware of their sin or is persistently engaged in it without repentance. If you are riding with me and I go a little over the speed limit

and do a rolling stop at a stop sign I hope you won't point out every slight error in my driving. But, if I drive 100MPH into oncoming traffic, I hope you won't "let love cover a multitude of sins."

This is also not a call to argue over areas of Christian liberty or minor disagreement. This passage clearly tells us that the person is caught in a transgression. Let me show you a very clear example of this right within the book of Galatians. Flip back to Galatians 2:11-14.

Paul makes it quite clear here that Peter's actions were not congruent with the gospel of grace. He was making it seem as if the OT law was required for Gentiles to be Christians. Paul did not allow him to continue in this error, but lovingly and boldly confronted Peter in his sin.

You can see here that the word hypocrite is used several times in this passage. One of the most amazing things to me is how often you here people say things like, "well, the church is full of hypocrites." In order for the church to not be filled with hypocrites we have to deal with sin when it comes up. We can't allow one another to say one thing and live in the opposite way. If you profess to be a Christian and continue in unrepentant sin you are acting like a hypocrite. This passage also makes it clear that hypocrisy spreads. The way to root out hypocrisy is to call one another to holiness, not to ignore sin.

When transgression is present the goal is restoration. We want the sinner to be made whole again. You aren't trying to embarrass the other person. You aren't trying to prove that you have the moral high ground. And because the goal is restoration, you and I must approach the brother or sister caught with a particular disposition.

3. Acknowledge your Weakness (v. 1)

Look at the rest of verse 1. Gentleness is the opposite of harshness. Gentleness is sometimes translated meekness or humility. This word is actually one of the fruit of the Spirit given in 5:22-23.

Gentleness is necessary because we must all recognize that we are all sinners. The rest of verse 1 puts this clearly. We are all capable of being caught by sin. We still have the flesh warring against the Spirit. Listen to 1 Cor. 10:13.

Some of you are probably sitting there this morning thinking, I could never speak to another believer about their sin because I am so sinful myself! Understanding your own sin and doing battle against your own sin is actually one of the qualifications for helping others see their sin! Tim Keller put it this way:

"We won't be able to winsomely confront someone if we think we are not capable of similar or equal sin." - Tim Keller

The answer is not to avoid talking with another believer because you are a sinner. The answer is to keep watch on yourself. The answer is to be vigilant in your own fight against sin and be so focused on the other person that you want to help them. Of course, being focused on the other person is just another way of saying, love your fellow believer enough to say something. And that brings us to our 4th action.

4. Assist in Love (v. 2)

Look at verse 2. The controlling reality in all of our relationships, actions, and desires must be love. Paul has already put this pretty clearly in 5:13-14. The entire law is fulfilled by loving one another. But we are no longer under the Mosaic law. Now, he says here in verse 2 that we are fulfilling the law of Christ.

Jesus Christ becomes the paradigm for our concern for others. The rule or law we now live by as believers is to emulate his self-sacrifice. Listen to John 13:34.

But, rather than love, what typically motivates the way we deal with others caught in sin? Many times we operate out of fear. I don't want them to think bad of me. I'm afraid that they will think I'm judgmental. I'm afraid that they will not be my friend anymore if I talk to him or her about sin. Fear is the opposite of love.

Other times we are motivated by anger. Someone sins against us and rather than go and talk to them about what happened, we get angry and talk to everyone else about it. Rather than loving that person enough to talk directly to them we hate them so much that we try to tear them down in front of other people through slander and gossip.

Instead we are to give up our fear and anger and follow the example of Christ by responding in love. This means we are bearing one another burdens according to verse 2. A burden is a load that is particularly oppressive. It's heavy and weighs

the person down. The person may not even know they are carrying such a heavy load. What does love compel us to do when we see another believer struggling under the weight and load of sin? You cannot bear another person's burden by creating distance. You can only place your hand under his load by drawing close.

Of course, loving in this way requires you to have the right viewpoint of who you are. And that brings us to our last action.

5. Assess your Status (v. 3)

Look at verse 3. You can see that the first word of verse 3 is the word "for." Paul is giving us an explanation of how we can act in love and bear one another's burdens.

We have to rightly assess ourselves. Well, who are we? We are those who have been saved by grace and owe all we are to Christ. We are servants of the King. Servants. We do not exist for our own glory or pleasure. We exist for the one who has made us and saved us.

Romans 12:3 is helpful here when it comes to rightly assessing ourselves. But we tend to think too highly of ourselves. We tend to think I am something. When pride enters in like this we will avoid helping one another with sin. We won't look around and see the burdens that others are carrying because we are too self-centered. Instead, we live from the rich resources of the gospel and the example of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. 8:9.

So, 5 actions here to consider in order to rescue a fellow believer from sin. I want to end this morning by just giving you one very practical and hopefully helpful application point. I'm sure all of this sounds daunting and difficult. You want to care for one another but you've never really thought of things this way before. Maybe you know of a brother or sister who is caught in a trespass and your heart is to help but you don't exactly know what to say or how to handle it.

Please come talk to me or one of the elders. Get help. Listen, this type of help is literally one of the reasons I am here. I'm not saying I have all the answers, but my desire and job, according to Ephesians 4 is to equip you for the work of ministry. Bearing one another's burdens is the work of ministry and I would love to help.