

## Helping Someone You Love Find Freedom

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Galatians: Free At Last Series

Galatians 6:1- 5

I've been teaching a series from Paul's letter to the Galatians over the last several months. For those of you who have been here, you have heard that Galatians is a letter all about Christian freedom. The Apostle Paul wants these young Christian believers, who live in Galatia, to understand the freedom that is theirs through the gospel. When a person fully embraces the message of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and works out the implications of that message, that person is set free from condemnation for breaking God's law. The person is set free from having to observe Old Testament Jewish customs such as circumcision and laws of kashut, keeping a kosher home, and strictly observing the Sabbath. A person is set free from giving their lives and energy and passion to what is ultimately not God.

And when a church embraces the gospel, the church frees its members from having their worth or role in the church being determined by their gender, their economic status, or their race. And in the words of the great Bible scholar, John Stott, when you really embrace the gospel you are set from bondage to "your puny little self." You get to live for God and for others and for something beyond you.

And now that Christ has set us free the Apostle Paul turns in Galatians 5 and 6 to the question of how we live as free people. How do you maintain your freedom and live out the implications of the gospel to personally experience more and more freedom in your life? And so, for the last month we have talked about how we as individuals can experience the freedom that Christ came to give us by learning to walk, step by step, into increasing freedom by learning what it means to crucify the flesh. And by learning how to live in the Holy Spirit.

In chapter 6, the Apostle Paul is continuing the discussion of Christian freedom. In the text that we'll look at in just a moment, Paul addresses the number one reason why people spiritually fail in America. In Galatians 6, the Apostle Paul is going to address the reason why many people make a good start at Christianity and have some initial experiences of Christian freedom, but then fall back into their old habits and fail to make much traction as Christians. Have you ever asked yourself why with all the information that we have, with all the Christian books, and all the Christian teaching and online resources and CDs, why do we have so much failure in our churches to live free lives?

In chapter 6 we'll discover that the number 1 reason why so many people receive Christ as Savior, begin to walk in Christ, but then drop out along the way, is

because of individualism. We try to do the spiritual life alone. We Americans have become convinced that Christianity is entirely one's private and personal relationship with God totally detached from other people in the church.

I happen to believe that individualism, trying to go it alone with God without deep transforming, supportive Christian relationships, is a greater threat to your spiritual well-being and the spiritual well-being of your kids than is American consumerism, or American materialism, or the entertainment culture, or the sexual revolution. We need other Christians to begin the Christian life. And we need other Christians to move forward in our Christian life and experience the freedom that Christ came to give us.

The Christian life is a shared journey. We cannot discover freedom alone. I've titled today's message, "Helping Someone You Love Find Freedom."

### **Galatians 6:1 - 5**

1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If any of you think you are something when you are nothing, you deceive yourselves. 4 Each of you should test your own actions. Then you can take pride in yourself, without comparing yourself to somebody else, 5 for each of you should carry your own load.

The context for freedom: relationships

How do you live the life that God intended you to live? How do you live out your purpose and the destiny for which God created you for in the first place? How do you discover freedom so that living free from constant financial problems, or anxiety, or same-sex attraction, or prescription drug addiction or codependent relationships is not just a theory, but the reality of your life?

If you go back in the book of Genesis you will see in Genesis 1 that every time God created something – the land, the seas, plants, the sun, the moon, animals, human beings, the Bible says that God saw it was good. And then in Genesis 2, for the first time in Biblical history, we read that something was not good. God creates this beautiful world; God creates Adam; he puts him in a perfect environment; yet, we read in Genesis 2 that everything is not good. What's not good? What's the first thing that's not good that is recorded in the Bible?

### **Genesis 2:18**

The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Why was Adam alone? He had all the animals. He had a relationship with God. Why was he alone?

Well, you see, human beings are made in the image of God. And to be made in God's image is to be made as a relational being. This separates Christianity from every other religion on the face of the earth. Because in every other religion, God is impersonal as in Eastern religion – he doesn't weep; he doesn't rejoice. Or God is uni-personal as in Islam. God had no relationship with anything else until he created angels and human beings. So in every other religion relationship is secondary. Relationship is peripheral to the basic structure of the universe. In every other religion there was a time when relationship did not exist.

But in Christianity, at the very heart of the structure of reality, the most basic thing you could say about this universe is that it is relational. Christianity believes in a multi-personal God, a tri-personal God, a Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God existed in three persons from all eternity. There never was a time when there weren't relationships of love in this or any other universe. The Father loving the Son and the Spirit; the Son loving the Father and the Spirit; the Spirit loving the Father and the Son.

So the reason that a human being who is not in relationship with another human is not good is because we are made in God's image. We are made to love, to give love, to receive love, to know others, to be known. From beginning to end the Bible tells us that we cannot live the lives God intends for us to live, we cannot fulfill God's purpose for creating us, or experience the freedom that God intends by ourselves.

When God said to Adam in the garden, "It is not good for man to be alone," Adam didn't respond by saying, "Hey, God – you and me are sufficient." God said we can't fulfill his purpose in our lives in isolation. You cannot simply be an American individualist standing strong on your own two feet without the need for anyone else and fully experience Christian freedom. It is impossible because it is a denial of your very created being.

For 35 years since our wedding day Marlene and I have had a calligraphied scripture hanging over our bed. We've taken it with us from apartment to apartment and house to house. The scripture is from Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12:

**Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12**

9 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor.<sup>10</sup> If they fall down, they can help each other up. But pity those who fall and have no one to help them up! <sup>11</sup> Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? <sup>12</sup> Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Have you ever been in a situation where you've fallen and you've had no one to help you up? Have you ever been so isolated, so alone that there was no one

around to assist you when you became trapped, or overwhelmed, or wrapped up and enslaved by a particular problem? If you've ever been in a place where you've fallen down and needed help in getting yourself extricated and you didn't have someone to pull you up and pull you out, you know how devastating it can be. You find yourself in a relationship that is destructive, a pattern of living that is shredding you. We need someone to throw us a lifeline, to help us, to confront the lies of hopelessness and defeat, to lay out a path of restoration.

Ecclesiastes 4:10 says:

**Ecclesiastes 4:10**

Pity or woe to those who fall and have no one to help them up.

The context for freedom whether we are talking about a family member who has gotten themselves trapped in some addiction, or a leader who has fallen out of the saddle as the result of a sin of their own making, or by being abused by a church; the context of support and assistance for someone who is overwhelmed by life, perhaps they are the primary caretaker of a family member who has Alzheimer's, or they are a mom or dad or child who has leukemia or cancer; the context for any of us finding freedom is relationship.

With relationship as a backdrop we turn to Galatians 6:1:

**Galatians 6:1**

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

The Apostle Paul here discusses the problem of being trapped.

The problem of being trapped

Now, in Galatians 6:1 we discover who is being trapped.

Who is trapped?

**Galatians 6:1**

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

Paul is communicating to us in these opening words of chapter 6 two basic thoughts – first that the church is meant to be an extended family of brothers and sisters living interdependence with each other. The church is an interdependent family. The church is not just a collection of individuals who simply choose to meet together on Sunday morning at a convenient time at a mutual location to

worship God individually. The church is an interdependent family that is supposed to assist each other in times of need and also to challenge, to confront, to admonish.

So this little phrase, Brothers and sisters, tells us something about the nature of the church. We're an interdependent family.

And it also tells us that the focus of Christian attention when it comes to the issue of sin is other Christian brothers and sisters. Wow! If American Christians could just get this one down; if we would just say we have a limited ability to fix everything in the world, we're busy, we're stressed with life, so we're going to take 99% of our energy when it comes to sin and we're going to deal with other Christians in the church and we'll take 1% of our energy to correct the rest of society; I think our churches would be immeasurably healthier.

Brothers and sisters, when you read most Christian newsletters, or listen to most Christian radio (other than, of course, my own show!), you read most Christian fundraising letters from various organizations, the entire focus is on what is wrong out there – what the latest Hollywood outrage is, what the latest outrage is that is occurring in Washington.

Now, I totally support you as Christians participating in the democratic process, lobbying and voting and writing letters and doing what everyone else in a democratic society does to promote your values. I do that myself. But what I want you to see here is that Paul's primary focus when he is talking about sin is not what's going on in the larger Roman society. He is talking about sin in the church and sin in the life of a Christian brother or sister. And if we could just focus here our churches in America would be so much healthier. Because the Bible's concern is for the church to be a truly alternative society, a society that is radically different than the rest of the culture, a place where people discover and then help each other to live out their Christian freedom.

So, the first question that we need to ask and answer is who is trapped in their sin? Is the person who is trapped in relationship with Jesus Christ or not? This makes all the difference in the world. If you are trying to help someone you love find freedom and the person is discouraged, depressed, or trapped in addiction, the first question to ask is: is this one you love in relationship to Christ because if she isn't or he isn't, then you are severely limited in what you are able to provide and produce.

See, God can do so many things that you and I cannot do in another person's life. You are counseling someone; you are trying to help someone at work with their marriage; you're trying to help a family member get out of a destructive relationship; if God is not in their life, then what is the source of their power to change? How is this other person going to find real hope for the future? Where do they find meaning?

This passage applies to Christians.

What is the trap to Christians?

**Galatians 6:1**

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

Paul is talking about someone who wants Christ to be their Lord and Savior, but who has been taken hostage by some particular habit. Perhaps you overeat when you are depressed or angry – you regularly commit the sin of gluttony. Or you struggle repeatedly with explosive anger even though you are a Christian. You scream, you slam doors, you've broken things, you curse or you use foul speech. Perhaps you've gone so far as to physically hurt another person- your spouse or your child. You've pushed them; you've hit them. If someone recorded you during one of your rants and played it back to you when you calmed down, you would sound to yourself like a mental patient.

Maybe you are trapped in an eating disorder and you regularly purge yourself after eating; or you are starving yourself. Or your trap is the trap of pornography and you are regularly viewing pornography. Or you continue to practice sex outside of marriage.

Now, if you are a follower of Christ and you are trapped by any sin, I can guarantee you that you are not happy with that sin. You cannot have the Holy Spirit in you and happily sin for long.

Here is the problem of becoming a Christian. Before you came to Christ you could be happy in sin. I was a happy pagan. I didn't think twice about sinning. I didn't lose sleep over my sin. I wasn't bothered by my speech pattern, or by my lovelessness, or by my selfishness. I just rationalized all of that away. But now that I'm a Christian, the Spirit of God has gone to war with my sin. That's what we discovered in Galatians 5:17:

**Galatians 5:17**

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

The Spirit hates sin in our lives and he will continue to combat sin in our lives. A Christian never peacefully and happily sins. A Christian can sin, but they can't do so happily, they can't do so peacefully. And if you can sin and do it peacefully and happily, you've either thrown your conscience overboard or you are not yet a Christian.

So the trap is sin – compulsive behaviors, idolatrous behaviors – you are a Christian and you engage in certain behaviors. You feel terrible and you experience guilt and shame. You know you are offending God and living outside of his will for your life. You beat yourself up and say: I can't believe I did it again. You feel worthless. You wonder if you're really a Christian and there is all this discouragement and despair and it leads right back into: I need this thing to be happy.

How do you get free? How do you break the cycle?

How do we get freed from the trap?

**Galatians 6:1**

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

You don't get freed from the trap; you don't fully experience the Christian freedom that Christ came to bring by yourself. American individualism – me and God doing it on our own – will utterly fail you at this point? So, if you are trapped in a compulsive behavior or if you are what therapists call addicted in some way, if you've grooved out in your life certain habit patterns over years and decades, you will not be able to free yourself from it typically with God's help alone apart from other Christians. Hardly anyone ever recovers from an addiction or a compulsive behavior apart from deep connection to a support network.

Psychologist Henry Cloud, in his book, How People Grow, says this:

*Some may stop their addictive or compulsive behaviors apart from other people. But if their relational patterns do not change, they will relapse, if they are not involved in a group.*

Why don't we live out the freedom that Christ came to bring us? Because we're disconnected from each other. Because we live isolated lives. Because we're ashamed and we don't want anyone to know what we're doing or what we're about, or that we are struggling. We have a role in each other's lives to help recover freedom.

Now, the word that the Apostle Paul uses in Gal 6:1 is "restore".

**Galatians 6:1**

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

What we do with one another is we help restore each other. That word restore was used in secular Greek for setting a fractured or dislocated bone in place. The bone is broken, you restore it. You straighten it out. The Greek word is:

### Epanorthosis

See the root word “ortho”? It means to make straight, or to make right. An orthopedist is a person who straightens out your bones. An orthodontist straightens out your teeth. Orthodoxy straightens out your doctrine. And what “epanorthosis”, means is that we straighten out crooked beliefs or crooked behaviors. We mend what’s broken. We repair what’s ruined. We help someone who has fallen to get back up in the saddle. We restore a person to a place of usefulness and hope. We help a person get free from a sin that has them trapped.

There is a great picture of this in the gospel of John 11. Jesus is called by his dear friends, Mary and Martha, to go to their little town of Bethany because their brother, Lazarus, is sick. Jesus waits; Lazarus dies. When Jesus gets there Lazarus is already dead for four days. He is in a tomb. Jesus comes; he tells some men to roll the stone away from the tomb. And then Jesus gives the command: Lazarus, come forth. Someone wisely remarked that if Jesus hadn’t specifically addressed his command to Lazarus, all the dead in history would have risen. Lazarus, come forth. And Lazarus comes out of the tomb like a mummy wrapped in grave clothes. Jesus turns to some of the people there and he says,

John 11:44

“Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

And so we see in this text the role that Jesus plays in someone’s life and the role that we play. We have no capacity to make someone else spiritually alive. We can’t set someone’s heart free to worship God. We can’t give someone the forgiveness of sins. We can’t make someone else born again. Only Jesus can issue that command: “come forth.”

What we can do is help each other to get unwrapped. Because we Christians are like mummies. We are alive spiritually, but we walk around wrapped up in ourselves and our crazy ways of thinking and all of our broken patterns. Jesus says to his church: Help each other to get out of the grave clothes. Help set one another free.

Now, there are alternatives to restoring. There are alternatives to helping other people get out of their grave clothes. We could, of course, gossip about the person. Doesn’t that person look really ugly with that funeral shroud on? Look at how they are stumbling around as they try to walk with strips of cloth wrapped around their legs. They look ridiculous. We could judge the person in our hearts.

They're getting what they deserve. We could tell the pastors and let the professionals do the unwrapping.

The chief alternative that we choose when we discover someone trapped in a problem or a sin or habit, is that we choose to do nothing. Isn't that the main way we deal with one another? We turn our faces away and we walk on the other side of the road like the priest and Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan? We choose to do nothing. We just let people lie in the road.

That is what American individualism teaches us. It's none of my business what anyone else does. If this other Christian in the church wants to get a divorce, that's his business. If she wants to overeat and wreck her health, that's not my concern. To each his own. I'm personally opposed to abortions, but I'm not going to talk to a woman who claims to be a Christian, a woman who goes to church, about their choice to abort. If someone in the church is sleeping around, or piling up debt, that's not my concern.

The idea that something that's ruining another person's life is none of my business is as old as humanity itself. One of the first statements in the Bible made by any person is the statement by Cain in response to God's question in Genesis 4:9:

Genesis 4:9

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Be honest, friends, how often have you become aware of a situation involving someone you have a relationship with, someone who is a professed Christian – you become aware of their problem, but you choose to rationalize your irresponsibility. I've got too much going on in my own life; I can't get involved with him or her. Am I my brother's keeper? The answer to which is: Yes, you are.

I am. I am my sister's keeper. You are your sister's keeper.

Well if the negative alternatives are gossip, judgment, or doing nothing, positively, what can we do?

One of the best things we can do is

We can pray

God is an awfully good restorer. God can bring about a set of circumstances in a person's life that really does produce change. You might say to yourself: Before I go to this other person, unless it is an emergency, unless it is critical, I'm going to

take the next month and pray for them to see what God will do without my intervention.

Now, there is going to come a time when because you love someone and you are committed to this relationship you can't comfortably watch them destroy themselves. You can't watch a person simply walk away from Christ or walk away from the church, or overthrow their marriage, or hurt their parents. There comes a time when Galatians 6:1 is operative in your life and you go. Positively we can pray. And positively,

### We can bear each others burdens

Now burdens may include the sins mentioned in verse 1, but I think burdens has a wider scope than that. I think it includes all that we experience from living in a fallen world. Burdens could include getting cancer, or having a loved one get cancer. It could be having a sick child, or a child with a disability like autism or asperger's. A burden could be the fact that the person you love was a victim of rape or incest or molestation. The burden may be that a person you love is getting divorced, or they've been betrayed by their spouse, or they just lost a loved one, or they experienced failure in ministry.

Paul says we are to bear one another's burdens. We are told in 1 Corinthians 13 that love bears all things. In the The New International Version, it is "love always protects." But literally, it is "love bears all things." There is in our interdependent family, called the church, this work of burden bearing where we assist other people who have fallen down under a load too great for them to get up.

At Senator Ted Kennedy's funeral, his son, Ted, Jr., gave the eulogy. He said that when he was 12 years old he was diagnosed with bone cancer. After a few months he lost his leg. Here is what he said:

*"There was a heavy snowfall over my childhood home outside of Washington DC and my father went to the garage to get out the old Flexible Flier, and he asked me if I wanted to go sledding down our steep driveway.*

*I was trying to get used to my new artificial leg. The hill was covered with ice and snow. It wasn't easy for me to walk. And the hill was very slick. As I struggled to walk, I slipped and I fell on the ice. I started to cry and I said, "I can't do this." I said, "I will never be able to climb up that hill." And my dad lifted me up in his strong, gentle arms and said something I will never forget, he said, "I know you can do it. There's nothing you can't do. We're going to climb that hill together, even if it takes all day." Sure enough, he held me around my waist and we slowly made it to the top. And you know, at age 12 losing your leg seem pretty much like the end of*

*the world. But as I climbed onto my dad's back and we flew down that hill that day on the sled I knew he was right. I knew I was going to be okay."*

I want to show you a wonderful video of burden-bearing. It is a video of Derek Redmond at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona where he tore his hamstring in the 400 meter semi-final. Let's watch the video.

#### VIDEO – Derek Redmond

Imagine being part of a church in which we helped carry each other like this.

I want to say something to any of you who are falling on the track under a load too heavy for you to bear. So often in our American individualist society we say to ourselves, "I don't want to be a bother to anyone. I will just lie here in the road and be silent under my burden."

You know, carrying your burden by yourself, stuffing your pain, maintaining a stiff upper lip is part of the WWII generation. It is not necessarily Christianity. Toughing it out on our own is not what the Bible teaches. It may be good, old-fashioned American self-reliance; it may be good old-fashioned pride – I can do anything; I'm tough; I don't need anyone. But handling your problems by yourself is not biblical Christianity. We are invited by the Lord to cast our burdens on him. We're told in Psalm 55:22:

Psalm 55:22

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.

And we read these words of Jesus in Matthew 11:28:

Matthew 11:28

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

We have a Divine burden bearer who we can always go to and who invites us to take the load off of ourselves. And Jesus provides us with each other to help bear loads that are too great for us. God uses other people to lift us up. If we could just repent of our American individualism, the attitude that says "I've got this problem in my life and I have to deal with it between me and God alone; I don't want to open up to my spouse even though they keep asking me about it; I don't want to join a small group or a support group. And if I do, I certainly won't tell them what's really going on inside." If we could just repent of our individualism, so often in the Bible God uses other people to support the burden.

If you are carrying a load, friend, have you considered the fact that God may want to help you carry it through the assistance of your brothers and sisters? Don't push away the help that God wants to give you because of your pride or

your self-sufficiency. The way you are going to know in a deeper way that God loves you, that God is there for you, that God cares about you, you who are overwhelmed, is by bringing into the light a burden, a concern, a situation that is overwhelming you with brothers and sisters who could help you.

We have many ministries of burden-bearing here:

| <b>Vineyard Support Ministries</b>      |
|---|
| Lay Counseling                          |
| Job Loss Support Group                  |
| Grief Support – for adults and children |
| Divorce Care                            |
| Unplanned Pregnancy/<br>Infertility     |

Along with hundreds of other small groups, women's groups and men's groups, we have support groups which are essentially burden-bearing groups. They are there to help us complete our run around the track when we fall and we can't make it around in our own strength.

How do we restore?

The Apostle Paul says in Galatians 6:1:

**Galatians 6:1**

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

We restore with gentleness

We restore with gentleness. If you come upon someone who is trapped in a sin, the way we are supposed to approach them is with gentleness. That's one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. You go to people who are wrapped up with the Fruit of the Spirit – with love, with joy, with peace, patience, kindness, with goodness and faithfulness and gentleness and self-control. That's what it means to be spiritual. That's why he says: You who are spiritual. You who manifest the Fruit of the Spirit, go. Go with the Fruit of the Spirit.

Gentleness is the way that those who have power always need to approach those who have less power. Gentleness, meekness, is the primary attribute needed by bosses towards their employees. Gentleness, meekness, is the primary attribute needed by parents towards their children, counselors towards clients and pastors toward their congregations. Gentleness, meekness, is the primary attribute needed for those who are attempting to restore someone need to develop in approaching someone who is trapped, particularly when the discussion is going to produce shame in an individual. We restore with gentleness.

And

We restore with carefulness

**Galatians 6:1**

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

And verses 3 and 4:

**Galatians 6: 3 - 4**

If any of you think you are something when you are nothing, you deceive yourselves. 4 Each of you should test your own actions. Then you can take pride in yourself, without comparing yourself to somebody else,

The “carefulness” that the Apostle Paul is speaking about here has to do with the extraordinary temptation to pride and self-superiority that often accompanies our correction. It is easy to feel superior to someone else who has fallen. After all, you haven’t fallen in the same way. Or you haven’t fall in the same ditch. You wouldn’t do what they’re doing. You are not tempted as they are. Your attitude might be: I’m glad I’m wise and didn’t get my girlfriend pregnant. I’ve never abused drugs. I’ve never had an affair.

We approach other people with gentleness and carefulness. And part of our interdependent family is that we are committed to restoring ministries. One of the most wonderful restoring ministries in our church that we have been committed to for years is a ministry called Begin Again. Begin Again is designed for those of you who are married who have run out of hope for your marriage. Begin Again is designed for those of you who are contemplating a divorce, or who may have already sought out the help of an attorney. It is for any of you who have been victimized by an affair, for many of you who have lived for years in an unhappy marriage, who are saying: I want to give my marriage one last shot before I end it. Or I want to give my marriage one last shot before I give up and live hopelessly in this marriage.

We have about 15 couples who have been trained in the church to assist other couples to be restored in marriage. We need many more: if you have a healthy marriage and want to find out how you and your spouse could have a joint ministry together by encouraging other married couples, get in touch with our Marriage and Family Pastor, Ron Hitchcock. We have so many groups here that will help restore you.

| Vineyard Recovery Ministries   |
|--------------------------------|
| Celebrate Recovery             |
| Childhood Sexual Abuse/Trauma  |
| Men's/Women's Sexual Wholeness |
| Addiction/Substance Abuse      |
| Dealing with Anger             |

But, friend, if you are going to be restored you have to repent of American individualism which says: I'm not going to let anyone know that I've got a problem. Everyone of us has problems. We need each other.

I want to close with:

A cautionary word to restorers

The Apostle Paul rounds off his discussion about restoring and burden bearing with this cautionary word, this balancing admonition in Galatians 6:5:

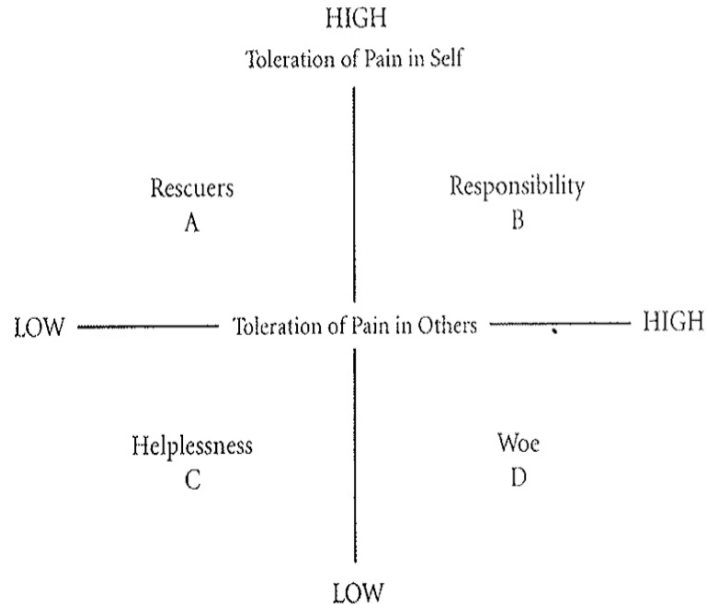
**Galatians 6:5**  
for each of you should carry your own load.

See, he has talked with us about our responsibility to each other. Don't let someone lie in the road. Carry each other's burdens. Don't write people off. Don't say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Don't judge each other and gossip about each other. Restore one another. For four verses he has commanded us with all of his apostolic authority to help each other, to be there for one another.

But now he adds this balancing word, this cautionary word in Galatians 6:5:

**Galatians 6:5**  
for each of you should carry your own load.

I want to show you a graph:



Now, the place we want to live is in Quadrant B. It is the person who can show a high degree of toleration of pain in themselves and in others. They take responsibility for themselves and they challenge other people to take responsibility for their own lives.

And in Quadrant C on the other corner we have someone who has a low tolerance of pain in themselves and a low toleration of pain in others, who acts helplessly whenever they have a problem, they just lie down. And they commiserate with other people who lie down in the road. They have the attitude that misery loves company.

And in Quadrant D these are the people who have no problem handing their bill to someone else. They reject wise counsel for their lives. They reject every attempt that others make to correct them. They refuse the work of straightening out. They push away every lifeline towards freedom. But they keep demanding help and they make the rescuing people in Quadrant A feel guilty.

Now, we often think this person down in Quadrant D who has lots of problems is the person whose load we need to shoulder. But I believe this person in Quadrant A, the rescuer, otherwise typically known by the name "mom" who is the one who really needs the church's ministry of burden bearing. See, rescuers, many of whom are mothers, are folks who have a high degree of tolerance for pain in themselves, but they have a low degree of tolerance of pain in others. Whenever my child, my husband, or my close friend, or my sister, brother, father, or mother has any degree of pain, the rescuer runs to relieve the pain. Hand me the bill, I will pay it - your alcoholism, your debts, your horrible relationship decisions, your friends or girlfriends, your terrible marriage. Whatever bad

choice you have made in your life, give me the bill. I will take care of it. Whatever is wrong, I will fix it. I don't mind being walked on. I don't mind being abused. I just can't bear watching someone else suffer.

I want to close with this story. One of the best books I've ever read on finding freedom is a book by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend called "How People Grow." We have copies in our bookstore.

In the book Henry Cloud tells the story of growing up with a terrible disease. When he was 4 years old he had a bad disease that left him bedridden and then in a wheelchair for several years. And then in braces and on crutches for two years. He went almost overnight from being a really active child to being a child with a serious disability. And his doctor wisely told his parents that it was imperative that they make little Henry do things for himself and not spoil his character by doing everything for him.

Dr. Cloud says:

*I remember being at church as a child and I was struggling up the stairs with my crutches. I was taking a long time, but my parents were prodding me along saying, "Come on. Come on."*

He stumbled, but got re-corrected one painful step after another on crutches up this long flight of stairs. It was painful to watch.

Behind him he heard a woman say to her husband, "Can you believe those parents are making that child do that? How cruel."

Well, Henry Cloud grew up and he said he began wondering how did my mother do that? My mother is one of the most caring persons I know. She is one of the most caretaking people I know. She is the kind of person who has difficulty making her dog go outside when it is raining. He began wondering how did she let Henry suffer what he had to suffer through without rescuing him.

So one day as an adult he said to his mom, "Mom, you are one of the most codependent people I know. You can't let anyone suffer. So how in the world did you let me suffer what I suffered without constantly rescuing me?"

Do you know what her answer was? She said, "Emma." Emma? That was his mom's best friend. His mom said, "Every day when I had to do something that I just could not face doing with you, I would call Emma and cry my eyes out and listen to her tell me, 'Joan, you have to do it.' She would lift me up and help me every single day. It was awful, but with her help, I was able to do it."

Emma was an amazing Christian woman. She helped her friend's burden and assisted her friend to work contrary to her instinct and not continually rescue her

disabled son. And because Emma faithfully fulfilled her role, and mom was able to draw the line regarding what she needed to carry and what she needed to let her son carry, her son, Henry Cloud, grew up to be one of the most productive Christian psychologists working in America today.

Sometimes, friends, the person's burden that we need to carry is not necessarily the person who has fallen. Sometimes the person whose burden we need to carry is the rescuer, who needs to grow in their ability to allow others to experience pain. Jesus is our wise burden bearer. He knows what to take from us and what not to take. Let's pray.

## Helping Someone You Love Find Freedom

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Rich Nathan  
June 6, 2010  
Galatians: Free At Last Series  
Galatians 6:1- 5

- I. The context for freedom: relationships (Galatians 6:1)
- II. The problem of being trapped (Galatians 6:1)
  - A. Who is trapped?
  - B. What is the trap?
  - C. How do we get freed from the trap?
- III. The way of restoration
  - A. Alternatives to restoring
    1. Negatively
    2. Positively
      - a. We can pray
      - b. We can bear each other's burdens (Galatians 6.2)
  - B. How we restore? (Galatians 6: 1, 3, 4)
    1. We restore with gentleness
    2. We restore with carefulness
- IV. A cautionary word to restorers (Galatians 6:5)