

Grow Upward By Bearing One Another Աճեցէ՛ք Զիրար Կրելով

Galatians 6:1-10

One more time let's review the fruit of the Spirit and its nine flavors: **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

Illustration: The Amish community is absolutely fascinating. I did not know much about them until I visited my sister-in-law many years ago in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Although I disagree with their interpretation of the Bible concerning some issues, yet I can learn from them the discipline of bearing and restoring each other.

The Amish refuse any new invention from entering into their community. Electricity and telephone are not allowed. Lately I saw a documentary about them and I learned why they did not want the telephone to enter their homes. They refused the telephone because they realized that by using this instrument they would stop visiting each other and eventually they would be isolated. That is not what God wanted for His creation. We are created to have relationships.

The Fruit of Spirit can be manifested in your **relationships**. In the New Testament, 58 times we find the phrase **one another**. Love **one another**, greet **one another**, care **one another**, help **one another**, encourage **one another**, serve **one another...** and **BEAR one another...** You cannot fulfill God's plan by yourself. The Fruit of Spirit will be manifested in the church, in the community, in the kingdom of God.

Today's topic is bearing each other. It is not easy. **We are all born dependent.** Our parents feed us, change our diapers, help us to learn how to walk, to run, to eat, to write, to talk, to get dressed, to take a bath, to ride a bicycle, to drive a car... and more and more until we become independent. Eventually, we graduate from college, find a job, and become self-sufficient and independent. We enjoy this independence, but only for a while. "If I become free from everyone, free from friends, free from parents, free from God, I am not free at all but merely lonely, isolated."¹

The ideal is **not independence, rather, interdependence**. With that understanding let us read these words:

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal 6:1-2)

Two important words appear here: **restore** and **bear one another**.

1. Restore: in Greek it means to render, to fit, to complete, to adjust.

How appropriate is this word for being connected to each other? We need to complete each other, we need to fit and restore each other. We are a community with a variety of strengths and weaknesses. We all have limitations. Sometimes we are the person who steps in to help; sometimes we are the person who is helped in the time of need. All of us begin in ignorance and we need guidance and enlightenment. Sometimes we are careless and we need discipline.

However, as we help and restore each other, **we are not in the condemnation business, as we often think we are. We are in the restoration business**, which we seldom do. I guess it is easier to point our finger at people rather than thinking that this person is weak and fallen and needs a restoring hand.

For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. (Gal 6:3)

Know yourself; know who you are... Paul says we need to restore each other, complete each other in the spirit of **meekness (gentleness) (praotes)**. This is one of the flavors of fruit of the Spirit. We cannot restore each other with pride and a self-righteous attitude. Let me remind you the three explanations of what it means to be meek: **being submissive** to the will of God; being **teachable**; being **considerate**.

We cannot restore anyone when we are not resorted ourselves daily by the Spirit of God. When I am submissive to His will, when I am teachable and

considerate, God will shape me, transform me into Christ's image. Through Him I can help, serve, counsel, discipline, encourage and rebuke a brother or sister. Paul tell us to listen to the Spirit and not the flesh: **"For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."** (Gal 6:8)

Are we really a community of believers restoring each other in meekness?

2. The second important command: **Bear one another**

What does it mean to bear each other? What is Paul saying?

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (6:2)

What is the law of Christ? If you read Galatians one can see how Christ freed us from the law.

Yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. (Galatians 2:16 ESV)

We are justified and saved through faith in Jesus Christ. So what is the law of Christ (it appears only here)? I believe in the context that we are reading, it is "love your neighbor as yourself." We turn back again to the most important attribute of the triune God: LOVE.

If I have HIS LOVE, I will be able to bear someone. Bear someone else's burden.

We avoid this. We have many reasons to avoid bearing each other. We are busy; we do not have time; it is not our concern; someone else can take care of that need...and so on.

But I find that another reason that we do not bear each other. **It is the wounds of resentment.** We have difficulty to forgive. When we do not forgive, we create a distance between ourselves and that person. This also creates alienation from God.

Paul says:

¹²Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
Colossians 3:12-14

Forgiving each other. It starts with me. Did I experience God's forgiveness? (See the sermons about forgiveness and restoration from the Lord's Prayer Sermons).

3-There is something that hinders us from growing in Christian life. **That is unconfessed sin.**

We try to justify it, rationalized it, or escape from it by ignoring it. It is there and will hinder us from running the race. And, by the way, our race is not against each other; **we run the race together by helping each other run the race (bearing one another)**. So many of us **walk with guilt**, unconfessed sin, and it is a heavy burden. God does not like to see you **living in guilt and shame which is not confessed and cleansed**. And the guiltier you are, the more judgmental you become. Because you live with the sins of the past, you cannot share the freedom that Christ brings to your life. Throw off everything that hinders....the sins that are not confessed.

Here are some practical steps to confess your sins to God:²

1. Examine your heart. Open your heart. Write them down. Take time and write them.

2. Repent, meaning turn around 180 degrees and surrender to God. Bring your heart to God and ask for forgiveness.

- a) Do not rationalize them;
- b) Do not blame others;
- c) Acknowledge them and get them off your chest.

“the greatest hold up to the healing of your hang up is YOU.”

3. Pay it back

If it is possible. Sometimes that is not possible. They are gone, or they are not around you. Zacchaeus is a good example. His life was changed and he wanted to repay for his mistreatment.

4. Experience His Grace.

We will receive His grace and mercy when we surrender to Him and ask forgiveness. “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”
(Hebrews 4:16)

5. Share it. God will forgive you. But if you reveal your sin to another person, like a pastor, or an elder, it helps you to let it go from your chest. It gives you healing.

James did say this:

“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” James 5:16a (NIV)

Are you forgiven? Have you experienced God’s forgiveness?

Or are you carrying the guilt and the shame of your sins?

Then do you forgive other? Can you forgive others?

Let us bear each other. Let us be aware how God bore us and gave us a new life. Let us learn that from Christ and apply it.

“A man fell into a pit and couldn’t get himself out.

-A subjective person came along and said, "I feel for you down there."

-An objective person walked by and said, "It’s logical that someone would fall down there."

-A Pharisee said, "Only bad people fall into pits."

-A mathematician calculated how deep the pit was.

- A news reporter wanted the exclusive story on the pit.
 - An IRS agent asked if he was paying taxes on the pit.
 - A self-pitying person said, "You haven't seen anything until you've seen my pit."
 - A fire-and-brimstone preacher said, "You deserve your pit."
 - A Christian Scientist observed, "The pit is just in your mind."
 - A psychologist noted, "Your mother and father are to blame for your being in that pit."
 - A self-esteem therapist said, "Believe in yourself and you can get out of that pit."
 - An optimist said, "Things could be worse."
 - A pessimist claimed, "Things couldn't be worse."
- "Jesus, seeing the man, took him by the hand and lifted him out of the pit.""³

1 Eugene Peterson, *Traveling Light* P 174

2 Rick Warren, *The Prayer of Cleansing* from *Daily walk*

3 (SermonCentral illustrations.)

I love my iPhone, but also I see how this new smart phone is isolating the young generation from each other. I was reading an article that mentioned that a larger percentage of teenagers do not want to learn to drive, because they do not feel the need to. They do not feel the need to visit each other. There is Skype, Facebook, texting, iMessage, tweeting ,and more. Although the Amish community's view point is radical, but they have a point.