Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Bearing Burdens
Scripture: Galatians 6
Code: BQ42011

Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. For each one shall bear his own load. (Galatians 6:2–5)

Christians are continually (present tense) to **bear one another's burdens. Bear** has the thought of carrying with endurance, and **burdens** is from *baros*, which refers to heavy loads that are difficult to lift and carry. Used metaphorically, as here, it represents any difficulty or problem a person has trouble coping with. In this context the reference suggests **burdens** that tempt a sinning believer to fall back into the trespass from which he has just been delivered. A persistent, oppressing temptation is one of the heaviest burdens a Christian can have.

To be freed from a sin is not always to be freed from its temptation. The spiritual believer who truly loves his brother and sincerely wants to restore him to a walk by the Spirit will continue to spend time with him and make himself available for counsel and encouragement. Prayer is the most powerful weapon believers have in conquering sin and opposing Satan, and nothing helps a brother carry his **burdens** as much as prayer for him and with him.

The brother who has been delivered from a trespass has an obligation to let his spiritual friends help him carry his **burdens**, It is not spirituality but pride that makes a person want to "go it alone." James tells believers to "confess [their] sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that [they] may be healed" (James 5:16). God Himself is the believer's ultimate source of strength, and on Him we are called to cast our burdens (Ps. 5:22) and our cares (1 Pet. 5:7). But He often uses fellow believers as His agents to help carry the **burdens** of His children.

When believers **bear one another's burdens**, they **fulfill the law of Christ**. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you" (John 13:34). **The law of Christ** is the law of love, which fulfills all the rest of God's law (Gal. 5:14; Rom. 13:8, 10).

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Paul's command **for each one** to **bear his own load** seems to contradict what he has just said about bearing one another's burdens (v. 2). But he uses a different term here. *Phortion* (**load**) refers to

anything that is carried, and has no connotation of difficulty. It was often used of the general obligations of life that a person is responsible to **bear** on **his own**.

For a Christian, **load** can refer to “his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad,” for which he will give account “before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10; 1 Cor. 3:12–15). His **load** can also refer to fulfilling his personal calling and ministry for the Lord. Jesus assures His followers that the “load” [*phortion*] of service He gives them “is light” (Matt. 11:30). In either case, every believer is accountable to **bear his own load**, even the light one Christ gives him, and to answer for his faithfulness in so doing when he faces Him.

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