

Cultivating Covenant Community
A Study of the One-Another Commands of Scripture

Lesson 7: Bear One Another's Burdens

Key Scriptures: Galatians 6:1-5

What is burden? A burden is a heavy load that we carry. It weighs us down and takes away our strength.

1. God desires to lift our burdens.

- a. God invites us to cast our burdens on Him.
 - i. Psalm 55:22: "Cast your burden on the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never permit the righteous to be moved."
- b. Jesus invites us to find rest from our burdens.
 - i. Matthew 11:28-30: "Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."
- c. Jesus exposes false teachers as those who place heavy burdens on others and do not help to ease them.
 - i. Matthew 23:4: "They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with a finger."
- d. The Holy Spirit desires to lay on us no greater burden than what is necessary for our spiritual welfare.
 - i. Acts 15:28: "For it has seemed good to the Holy and to us to lay on you no greater burden than these requirements:"
- e. God wants to help us with our burdens through the ministry of the local church.

2. God calls us to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:1-5).

- a. Stuart Scott: "This passage deals with helping a fellow believer who is going through a difficult trial. It is the responsibility of fellow believers to assist and help carry that burden. We can picture someone getting physically underneath someone else's burden to help shoulder it, like two oxen under a yoke. You get up underneath and help shoulder it because the person would otherwise be crushed by carrying the weight of the burden alone. A believer in Jesus Christ should not have to endure difficult trials by himself. It is the responsibility of fellow believers to help other Christians carry whatever heavy loads they are presently enduring. By obeying this 'one another command' to bear one another's burdens, believers create a beautiful picture of Christian unity and love."
 - i. Illustration: the Amish moving a barn.
 - ii. Some examples from the life of CPC.
- b. What is included in the concept of a burden?
 - i. You may be surprised to know that John Calvin thought this concept included both weaknesses *and* sins. This is suggested by the context.

- ii. William Hendriksen: “Though the term ‘one another’s burdens’ is very general, and applies to every type of oppressing affliction that is capable of being shared by the brotherhood, it should be borne in mind, nevertheless, that the point of departure for this exhortation (see on 6:1) is the duty to extend help to the brother that he may overcome his spiritual weaknesses.”
- c. What are different kinds of burdens?
 - i. The burden of being caught in a transgression (Galatians 6:1)
 - ii. The burden of having a responsibility for others and their welfare (Exodus 17:8-16)
 - iii. The burden of having too much for one person to do (Exodus 18:13-23)
 - iv. The burden of affliction (2 Corinthians 1:8)
- d. Why are we supposed to bear one another’s burdens?
 - i. Verse 2: It fulfills the law of Christ!
 - ii. 1 Corinthians 9:20-21
- e. This instruction is balanced. Bearing one another’s burdens do not mean that we take away another person’s personal responsibility.
 - i. Verse 5 does not contradict verse 2!
 - ii. “Burden” (Receiving Help- others may come alongside and help your weakness) vs. “Load” (Personal Responsibility- *you* must do the work!)
 - iii. Bearing one another’s burdens is not doing for someone else what they should be doing for themselves!
 - iv. 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:8- Paul worked hard so that he would not be a burden on the Thessalonians. In other words, he bore his own load.
 - v. We are called to come alongside each other and offer help, not take over.

3. Practical Applications

- a. This command raises questions for those who are shouldering heavy burdens.
 - i. Are you isolating yourself from others? (Proverbs 18:1!)
 - ii. Do you know your need for help?
 - iii. Are you willing to receive help from others?
 - iv. Are you trying to do more than one person can do?
 - v. Have you believed the devil’s lie that if you reach out for help, you will become a burden to others?
- b. This command raises questions for those who are strong and could help others with their burdens.
 - i. Are you looking for people who are weighed down with heavy burdens?
 - ii. Do you have compassion for those who are overwhelmed and need help?
 - iii. Do you ask questions like: Who is tired? Who is burned out? Who is struggling to keep up?
 - iv. Are you willing to do practical acts of service to help others?
- c. Bearing one another’s burdens is not “I’ll do this for you” but it is “I’ll help you. We will get this done together.”