



Carrying Each Other's Burdens

WEEK 4

Alpha Prayer Points

- Pray for God's light and love will continue to shine through the Christians serving with Fall Alpha and that participants will attribute that love to God and His goodness.
- Pray for God to be working in the hearts of participants, that they would be drawn to Him and be grateful for what He did for them.
- Continue to pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of those who came to Spring 2023 Alpha and who are meeting now in twice-monthly post-Alpha groups. Pray that as they learn and experience Spiritual Practices, they would feel drawn to the love of Jesus.

How Did it Go?

10 Minutes

PROVIDE SUPPORTS, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND ACCOUNTABILITY TO ONE ANOTHER FOR PUTTING THE WORD OF GOD INTO PRACTICE. TOGETHER, FIND WAYS TO LIVE OUT THE SCRIPTURE.

- What from the study last week were you able to put into practice this week?
- Did anything get in the way between you and living out the word of God that you studied last week? If so, what? How can you intentionally plan to counteract that this week?
- In the last week, who did you ask, "How can I pray for you?"

Read Aloud

Passage for this week: **GALATIANS 6:1-10.**

Head

15-20 Minutes

OBSERVE THE TEXT AND THE AUTHOR'S MAIN POINTS

1. What does Paul mean by this description in Gal 6:1, "...you who are spiritual"? Whom would he consider spiritual? See: Gal 5:16, 25; 1 Cor 2:10-15, 3:1-3.
2. The instructions about "burdens" in verses 6:2 and "load" in 6:5 seem to contradict each other. What is the difference? How do these two truths work together in daily life?
3. What do "reaping and sowing"¹ in v. 7 represent metaphorically in this letter to the Galatians? Why would agrarian imagery resonate with Paul's intended audience?

Heart

15-20 Minutes

ENVISION HOW THE TEXT—WHEN APPLIED—MIGHT TRANSFORM YOUR INNER LIFE IN TERMS OF YOUR THOUGHTS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS

1. What is the law of Christ?² Where in the Christian life does it apply? Pause to ask the Holy Spirit to show you whether your behavior within your communities of faith (the church, your small group, etc.) reflect at all times this law of Christ. Discuss.
2. Consider Paul's caution about restoring someone who is sinning. What would happen if you ignored these warnings? Few people intentionally fall into sin. What are ways you can "watch yourself"?

Hands

10 Minutes

**APPLY THE TEXT BY MOVING FROM INWARD REFLECTION TO OUTWARD ACTION
LOOKING FOR WAYS TO LIVE THE TEXT OUT IN OUR LIVES. THESE ARE SPECIFIC,
CONCRETE EXAMPLES BUT THEY ARE NOT THE ONLY WAY - THEY ARE IDEA-STARTERS
FOR HOW TO PUT THE WORD OF GOD INTO PRACTICE.**

Reaching Upwards: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- Re-read Gal 6:3. A popular saying in 19th Century America was: "Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a

¹ This metaphor of reaping and sowing appears throughout the Bible in the Old and the New Testaments (See: 2 Cor 9:6, Prov 22:8, Prov 1:31, Hos 10:13).

² The late Princeton Seminary Professor Charles Erdman, in his commentary on this passage, says, "While the apostle has been arguing for liberty, he now asserts there is a law that every Christian must obey. It is the law of love." Erdman, Charles R. The Epistle of Paul to the Galatians - An Exposition. Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1930. P. 115.

destiny.”³ That a person’s thoughts reveal who they really are aligns with biblical teaching, especially Proverbs. Pray that your thoughts will “please the Spirit” (v. 8) so that your destiny will be to “reap eternal life” (v. 8).

- In Gal 6:6, Paul reminds the Galatians of their obligation to share “all good things” with those who instruct them “in the word.” Paul consistently reminded churches of the importance of providing their pastors, teachers, and church planters with support for their material needs. See Philippians 4:14-19. Discuss how giving to the church strengthens not only the church but one’s own walk with Jesus. Give specific examples from your lives.

Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors

- Ask God to show you someone who is struggling to manage a heavy burden that you could help carry. Pray that God will give you opportunities to live out the full meaning of “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Consider carefully the sacrifices you can make without neglecting your responsibilities.
- What opportunities do you have right now to “do good”? Make a plan to follow through and do something each day to “do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers” (Gal 6:10). Jot down or journal about what good you do each day.
- As the holiday season approaches, be invitational with your neighbors. For example, if they have children, invite them to church on December 3 and join the family Advent Celebration in the Fellowship Hall from 11:45-1:00 pm. For those who love music, that same evening (12.3 at 7:30 pm) there is the annual Messiah Sing-Along, and Christmas Music Sunday is December 10 at 8:15 and 11 am. For others seasonal activities and planning go to fpchouston.org/worship/advent-2023.

Reaching Beyond

- What other way(s) could you put this passage into practice this week?
- Volunteers are needed for set up and all shopping days for the 22nd annual FPC Advent Missions Market held Sundays December 3, 10, and 17 from 8 AM - 1:00 PM in Palm Court. The market offers unique crafts from global partner artisans worldwide that make excellent Christmas gifts. Sales provide support and awareness for FPC global ministry partners. To learn more or sign up as a volunteer, please email Mary-Floye Federer at mffederer@fpchouston.org.
- For other upcoming outreach opportunities to serve at FPC, go to <https://fpchouston.org/serve/ways-to-serve/upcoming-opportunities>.



³ Some attribute this saying to Ralph Waldo Emerson, who used it in one of his writings, however, scholars do not agree on its origin(s).