
Words of Truth

Burden Bearing

By: Brian A. Yeager

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden” (Galatians 6:1-5).

There is a lot we could discuss in the Scriptures quoted above. What we are going to focus on though is, the instructions regarding burden bearing. In particular, how we see that saints help each other with their burdens, but at the same time how each of us must at some point bear our own burdens. In other words, we cannot always expect help.

It is great to have brethren that you can depend on. It is helpful for us not to have to always bear things alone. Think about the following: *“Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (I Thessalonians 5:11-14).*

Faithful brethren will often care about you even more than their own well-being. As an example, take some time to read about Epaphroditus (Philippians 2:25-30). Faithful Christians will help bear the weight of things from one’s overbearing conscience (Romans 15:1-3), restoring a brother who has fallen (James 5:19-20), and even in some physical matters of need (Romans 15:25-27). These things ought to be comforting to us. As a faithful child of God you know that you have brethren who are looking out for you. You must not take advantage of that.

What about those that become overly dependent on others? What about brethren who become leaches on the spiritual and physical resources of their brethren both individually and collectively as a congregation? God, in His great wisdom, gives us each other for aid. However, He also limits such so that some brethren aren’t always carrying all the weight of others. When it comes to bearing burdens, this is why the context we started this study with went on to say that every man shall bear his own burden.

Others Cannot Be Faithful For You

On the Day of Judgment, we will stand before the Lord as individuals accountable for what we each have and have not done (II Corinthians 5:10; cf. Matthew 16:27 and Revelation 22:12). If you would keep reading after Galatians 6:1-5, you would then read this: *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not”* (Galatians 6:7-9). You cannot reap what you have not sown. People cannot do your “good works” for you. You’ll not be rewarded for what others have done.

In a context dealing with teachers doing their own work, Paul wrote: *“Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour”* (I Corinthians 3:8). However, this isn’t just about the Day of Judgment. Even before our Lord returns, if we look upon our brethren and they are not doing anything; that tells us that those individuals are spiritually dead (James 2:14-26). You cannot resurrect a brother or sister’s dead faith. Each of us are individually accountable to make sure that we are not losing what we have worked to accomplish (II John 1:8). This point doesn’t just apply to spiritual things either.

Others Cannot Provide For Your Physical Responsibilities

I hope that if you are reading this article, you realize that there are exceptions to some things. For example, to the points I am about to make, there are some saints that CANNOT provide for themselves and need help as far as the Scriptures authorize others to provide (Acts 11:27-30 and I Timothy 5:3-16). Having said that, what about those whom can provide for their own physical needs; but they are not doing it? The word of God says that if we have brethren that won’t work they should not eat either. The fact is, we cannot help them and may even have to withdraw ourselves from that type of individual (II Thessalonians 3:6-15). One who does not provide for their own responsibilities is worse than an infidel (I Timothy 5:8). Furthermore, if brethren are heavy spenders, poor planners, slaves to lenders, etc.; they have to bear that burden on their own and suffer through their bad decisions (Proverbs 6:6-11, Proverbs 18:9, Proverbs 21:5, Proverbs 22:7, and Proverbs 24:30-34). The aforementioned is that principle of you reap what you sow.

Conclusion

If you need the aid of your brethren, make it your goal for such to be temporary. Use that help so that you can stand up on your own. Don’t abuse that help by looking to others to take care of the responsibilities, spiritually or physically, that the Lord expects you to take care of. Be a doer, a giver, and strive not to be a taker (Acts 20:33-35 and James 1:21-27).