

Bearing Burdens
Galatians 6:1-2

Sin is a reality of life in a fallen world. Christians, of all people, should not be caught off guard when others become entangled in sin. Instead, God teaches us how to respond, and urges us to watch our own hearts as we reach out to restore our struggling brother to help him carry his load.

The Situation is described in verse one, *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin*. This happens when someone's sin becomes known to you: a friend spent the weekend with a woman not his wife, a young man is hanging out and getting drunk on weekends, a damaging lie has been traced to its source. Here is the basic image: Satan has laid a trap, a brother has stepped in it and is caught. Now, you come upon the scene. What are you to do?

The Task is found in verses one and two. You are to *restore him* and help him *Carry his burden*. The word restore means to *set in joint*, like a doctor sets a fracture or slips a joint back into its socket. We are not told to stand there and say, "How could you be so stupid?", or "Get out of it your self." We are to help him get out of the trap and we are to tend to his wounds. This may take on many forms and will often involve confronting them about their error, praying for them to overcome it, provide ongoing encouragement and accountability. This means we must be willing to get involved in the situation, which explains why this task is so seldom done. We don't want the trouble. But where would you and I be if Jesus had taken this attitude toward us in our sin?

The Qualification. Not everyone is suited to the task of restoring the fallen. This is why verse one adds the qualifying phrase, *You who are spiritual*. This means, only those who are living under the influence and control of God's Spirit are in a position to help others. In particular, we should be characterized by the fruit of the Spirit found back in Gal 5:22-23 where Paul wrote, *the fruit of Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness & self-control*. The people most eager to correct others are often least qualified. We must do this to help the fallen, and not out of anger or to give ourselves a sense of moral superiority over those we are helping.

The Warning is also found in verse one. *Watch yourself, or you also may be tempted*. Make sure you know how to swim before going in to rescue someone about to drown. A lot of people have gone in after a brother in sin only to end up joining them at the bottom of the pool. Above all, we need to watch our attitude as we help the fallen. Arrogance and pride are always ready to creep into our hearts as we stoop to help "those foolish saps who were led astray."

The Motive is in verse two, *In this way you will fulfill the law of Christ*. The expression, *law of Christ* is the commandment to love each other as Christ loves us. We find this in John 13:34,35 *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*. Christ is a burden lifter. It is important that we be like Him in this regard and not be like those to whom Jesus said, *woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them*. I have seen countless situations where people, already laboring under the burden of sin, have had religious friends come to them and the only thing they have to offer is another weight, another burden, another rock to put in the backpack. This can't be

right. May we follow the example of Jesus and be His hands and feet and back. May we lift and carry the burdens of the weak and fallen and so fulfill the law of Christ.