

July 25, 2021

## Restoring The Erring

*“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,”* Gal. 6:1.

The six-chapter book of Galatians contains a great wealth of inspired truth — truth which was revealed to benefit everyone who is serious about going to heaven. Chapters one and two are largely **personal** in nature — personal in that the apostle Paul herein defended his apostolic authority. Chapters three and four are primarily **doctrinal** in nature. In these chapters Paul had much to say about God’s promise to Abraham before the Law of Moses. He then mentioned the giving of the Law, the purpose of the Law, and the abolition of the Law. Chapters five and six are intensely **practical** in nature. Herein the saints at Galatia were warned against abusing their liberty in Christ. They were further instructed concerning the character qualities which are obligatory upon all Christians, and they were also informed regarding their responsibilities toward other people — *“especially unto those who are of the household of faith,”* Gal. 6:10.

Our text, Galatians 6:1, belongs to the practical section of Galatians. In this verse, and its context, the author instructed Christians concerning fellow Christians who are *“overtaken in a fault.”* In this article we are taking a closer look at this verse and shall then make certain observations regarding the restorative efforts of Christians today.

### The People Addressed

Paul identified the original recipients of these instructions as *“brethren,”* a word denoting relationship. The letter itself was penned *“to the churches of Galatia,”* Gal. 1:2. Collectively he wrote to *“the churches of Galatia.”* Individually, the members of these churches were Paul’s *“brethren”* in the Lod — individuals who, being *“brethren,”* had certain responsibilities to one another. More specifically, the *“spiritual”* were the particular *“brethren”* charged with the work of restoring the ones *“overtaken in a fault”* Contextually, the *“spiritual”* were those who avoided *“the works of the flesh”* (Gal. 5:19-21), while manifesting *“the fruit of the Spirit”* (Gal. 5:22,23) — people who had *“crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts,”* and were striving to *“walk in the Spirit,”* Gal. 5:24-25.

### The People Needing Help

Those *“overtaken in a fault.”* *“Overtaken,”* from the Greek PROLAMBANO, according to Weust, “refers to the Christian being overtaken by sin before He is even aware that he has done wrong.” It is a case of sin being committed, but it is not willful, presumptuous, pre-meditated sin. The person is caught off guard. Perhaps it is a case of sudden temptation, and the individual inadvertently becomes a victim of sin. However,

though there was no prior determination to commit sin, the one “*overtaken in a fault*” must be restored in order to be acceptable before God.

### **The Duty Enjoined**

“*Restore such an one,*” Gal. 6:1. “*Restore*” is from the Greek KATARTIZO, Weust, in his **Word Studies of the Greek New Testament**, described the various occurrences of this word in the Bible, saying “It is used of reconciling factions, of setting bones, of putting a dislocated limb into place, of mending nets, of manning a fleet, or supplying an army with provisions.” In Gal. 6:1 Paul used this word metaphorically to describe the process whereby a spiritually dislocated limb in the Lord’s body is set back into its rightful place of fellowship with God, and the right relationship with the saints.

### **The Manner In Which This Work is to be Done**

“...ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” This work of restoration is not to be done in a high-handed, condescending, lordly, overbearing manner. “*Meekness*” is not weakness, but neither is it harsh, unforgiving, and unkind. Earlier in Gal. 5:13, the apostle admonished his brethren, saying, “*but by love serve one another.*” The work of restoration is a prime example whereby one, “*by love,*” is serving another. Yes, the restorer is actually serving the one “*overtaken in a fault;*” he is serving in the sense that he is ministering to that person, striving to meet his needs — even though his righteous efforts might be resented and rejected by the person being served. It is not difficult for the “*spiritual*” to manifest “*the spirit of meekness,*” so long as they consider themselves lest they “*also be tempted.*” When the “*spiritual*” recall how often they, too, have erred, how they, too, have been the grateful recipients of mercy, and how hard they must fight temptation, then “*the spirit of meekness*” reflects the attitude which comes natural. In view of the propensity for sin which characterizes everyone of us, then none of us have just cause for pride and egotism.

### **Observations:**

Every congregation of any size is periodically, and adversely, affected by those members who are “*overtaken in a fault.*” Basically, these are good, sincere people, but before they realized what was happening they were caught up in sin. It could be a young person being overcome by lust. Or a capable brother being overcome by pride. Or it could be a case of an unbridled tongue. Or an unconscious condonance of religious error which, in time, takes one further and further from the truth. It is a fact — not one of us is immune to being “*overtaken in a fault!*”

If fishermen don’t mend their nets they will lose the fish they catch. As Christians, we must be “*fishers of men*” (Matt. 4:19). As a congregation of Christians, we must mend our nets. We cannot allow fellow Christians to be “*overtaken*” by sin, the ways of the world, attitudinal problems, negligence, by doctrinal error, etc., without doing all within our power to “*restore*” them.

**In Conclusion**, we suggest that it is appropriate that each one of us ask ourselves three

questions: (1) Do **I** have the spiritual maturity to recognize when a brother is “*overtaken in a fault*,” and (2) Do **I** have enough love for those who are thus “*overtaken*” to seek their complete restoration, and (3) Could it be that **my** spiritual condition is that of a Christian who has been “*overtaken in a fault*,” and therefore in need of being restored? —B. Witherington

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**True:** “No man has the right to do wrong.”