

## “Others, Not Self”

### Christian Liberty

Galatians 6:6-10

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**Bruce:** Good morning, men!

**Men:** Good morning!

**Bruce:** I think we need one of those good shots of the Holy Spirit to energize us.

**Men:** Amen!

**Bruce:** I was praying today driving up the road, saying, “Lord, give me some passion, because I’m about ready to fall asleep.” (*Laughter*) So Don, do you want to take us into the presence of the Lord, of the Spirit, that He can open our minds and have Him teach us this morning? (*Music*)

Gracious Lord, when I consider all the things that I am not, I’m glad that you are all the things that I am not. Father, we just pray that You would open our eyes once again, that we might see Jesus more clearly for Your sake. Amen and Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Let’s turn in your Bibles, please, to the book of Galatians chapter six. We’ll be looking at verses 6-10 of Paul’s epistle to the church at Galatia. We’ll be reading from the English Standard Version. Galatians 6, beginning at verse 6 and going to verse 10.

*“One who is taught the word must share all things with the one who teaches. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that will also he reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have every opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”* This is the word of the Lord.

**Men:** Amen. Thanks be to God.

**Bruce:** Amen and Amen. In this final chapter of the book of Galatians, Paul begins to present us with two more contrasts which is in a whole series of contrasts between the life of freedom in Christ, a life of liberty, versus life under the law. You’ve got to remember that he’s contrasting the spiritual life of a believer who walks by the Spirit in the spirit of liberty versus those who are still under the bondage of the law.

In the first five chapters he reminds us that life in Christ is a life of liberty, not bondage. We’ll see that in chapter five, verses 1-15. And he also tells us that it is to be lived by the Spirit, not by the flesh. We observe that in chapter five, verses 16-26.

And so now, in verses 1-10, he develops the theme of other people, not ourselves. It’s not about us, it’s about other people. And so Paul writes these final instructions to the church of Galatia, reminding them of three laws. I would call these things three laws.

The first one would be this. It’s *the law of sharing and giving*. That’s verses 1-5. And the name of this law, as we see in chapter 6 verses 1-2, is *the law of Christ*. It’s referred to as the law of Christ.

We find the nature of this law in verses 3-5. And that is that spiritual believers are to receive a fallen member into fellowship. So the first law is this. It’s about sharing and

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caring. We're to share with one another and to care for one another. And that includes that if there's a member who has fallen out of fellowship, we are to restore the person. We don't punish them; we restore them. We do what is necessary to restore them back into the fellowship.

The second law would be this: *the law of receiving and giving*. You'll see that in chapter 6 verse 6. First of all, we have the law of sharing and caring in verses 1-5. Secondly we have the law of receiving and giving in chapter 6 verse 6, and thirdly *the law of sowing and reaping* in chapter 6, verses 7-10.

Now three weeks ago Bishop Rodgers gave us a very good insight and instruction on the law of Christ in verses 1-5. He reminded us that the ministry of the law of Christ basically deals with restoration, which is verse 1, sharing the load which is verse 2, and self-awareness which is verse 3.

And so today we want to go back and take a look at *the law of receiving and giving* in chapter 6 verse 6. Notice what he says in chapter 6 verse 6. *“One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches.”*

It is the duty of all the believers, the privilege of all Christian people, to financially support the teachers who give them the spiritual insights from the Scripture and the ministry of the Word. Paul says the same thing in 1 Corinthians chapter 9 verse 14. *“In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.”*

So what Paul is saying is that as those people would take care of you spiritually, we in the body of Christ need to take care of them financially and materially. It's the idea of sharing and caring. It's receiving and giving.

And the believer who listens to the Word should share material blessings with those who teach the Word. This is the lesson of chapter 6, verses 6-8.

Now oftentimes we apply these verses, especially verse 8, those verses as to reaping what we sow in terms of sin. And certainly that's true. But we also need to understand this. The basic lesson here is that of giving and sharing. This means the principle that is stated in Romans chapter 15 verse 27.

**Transcriber's Note:** Romans 15:27, NKJV. *“It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things.”*

**Bruce:** Where we receive spiritual blessings, we have the privilege and obligation of sharing material blessings. That's why we support people in ministry, because we realize that God has brought them to the kingdom of God, given them to the church for a specific assignment, and that is to preach and teach the Word. And as a result of that, the rest of us have the responsibility to keep that person materially supplied so that they can have a lifestyle that will prevent them from being hindered in the preaching and teaching of the Word. We have that responsibility. That's why we share in ministry with each other.

Years ago we were doing work in the inner city of Pittsburgh with a group of fundraisers. And we were listening to why it is that people go into the inner city and work and do the things that they do. And I brought up the point that we need to fund those Christian organizations because they have two things going for them—perseverance and

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patience. They don't go in for the joy of coming out and writing a book. They have the patience and the perseverance of hanging in there because they have a calling to go and minister. And that's why we support people in ministry.

And so the very first principle that Paul is making to the church at Galatia is that those who are involved in spiritual ministry of preaching the Word need to be supported and supplied so they can continue to do that for the glory of the kingdom of God. And so we have this great responsibility, but also the privilege, of taking care of those who preach the Word. That's the basic understanding of those verses 6-8. We who receive spiritual blessings have the privilege and the obligation to share our material blessings.

The next law is this: *the law of sowing and reaping* in verses 7-10.

Now first of all I want to talk about the reward. And then I want to talk about the reminder he has.

Now notice verses 7-8. *Those who sow only sinful desires will reap everlasting death.* Now sowing in the flesh, as the phrase is used, means living in the flesh. It means taking your time and your money, making those decisions using your time and your money on things that will not last. It means to let the old nature have its way.

And so when Paul uses this phrase “*sowing to the flesh,*” he really means this: letting the old nature have its way and making your decisions based upon the priorities of being involved in this world. And he says that those who reap that are going to reap what they sow. They're going to reap everlasting death.

Now Paul teaches us this: that all reaping is in accordance with this immutable, unchangeable law that we reap what we sow. He reminds us that we can't outwit God by reaping a harvest different from the seed that is sown. The seed that is sown is what you're going to reap and what you're going to harvest, and you can't outwit God. God is not going to be mocked. He's going to realize your intention and your motive just as well as anything else. He's not going to be mocked. And you can only reap what you sow. If you sow a bad seed you're going to reap a bad seed. If you sow a good seed you're going to reap a good seed.

So if you sow to the flesh, living a life of fleshly gratification, you're going to reap corruption. And that can be defined by three things—*disease, decay and death.*

Now that's the negative side of what we reap. Now there's a positive side. We need to understand this in those same verses. *Those who sow what is good will reap everlasting life.* That's verses 8-10.

Now there's your contrast. Those who sow to the flesh will reap eternal death. Those who sow according to the Spirit will reap eternal life. There's your contrast. Remember that the contrast in the book of Galatians is a life of liberty versus a life under the law. He now introduces another contrast, and that is *eternal damnation versus eternal life.* And those who sow according to the flesh will reap what they sow, and that will be corruption—*disease, death and decay.* But those who sow according to the Spirit will reap eternal life. Now that's the contrast that he introduces here in this section of the Scripture.

Sowing to the Spirit means spending time and money on those things that are eternal. The contrast is sowing to things in the flesh and spending time and money on things that have no lasting value. In sowing to the Spirit you spend your money and your time on

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those things that do have eternal value. Just as we talked about, sowing to the flesh means letting the old nature have its way. Sowing to the Spirit means allowing the Holy Spirit to have His way.

So the issue is this. Who’s way will you have? Is the old nature going to rear its head up and take its own way? If you’re going to sow to the flesh, that’s what will happen. If you sow to the Spirit, what will happen is that you’ll let the Holy Spirit have His way in your life and in the decisions that you make.

Now obedience to the flesh reaps disease, decay and death, while obedience to the Spirit reaps wholeness and life. That’s the contrast that he introduces in these verses.

Now both reapings are very, very sure and very practical. But the crop of disease, decay and death is produced more rapidly than the crop of wholeness and life. In other words, it’s much easier to reap a harvest of disease, decay and death than it is to reap a harvest of wholeness and life, because with wholeness and life God is the One who controls the issue. And sometimes it’s more difficult to be patient and persevere because of the difficulties we have in seeing the harvest as we are involved in sowing to the Spirit and letting the Holy Spirit have His own way. It certainly takes faith and patience to sow to the Spirit and to let the Holy Spirit have His way.

But God promises the harvest in due season. Where we have a difficult time in our human nature is understanding *due season*. We want it to occur now. That may not happen. That’s why the saints of God have persevered, because of their patience. Because Christ preserves them, they persevere and are patient. And we have to be very, very patient and fight our human nature, because our desire is to see the harvest right away. But we’re told in Scripture that the harvest will come in due season, as God sovereignly orchestrates that.

It takes time to grow a spiritual harvest. And we must be faithful sowers of all of our activities and let God have the results. Remember this. God is not only the cause and the source. But He’s also the consequence of any ministry we have. He’s the cause, He’s the source. And He’s the consequence of the result of anything that we’re involved in. That requires patience on our part.

The difficulty is that it is so much faster to get a result when you sow according to the flesh than it is when you sow according to the Spirit, because God is in control of that. And He’s the One who brings about harvest in due season.

Now notice verse 8. There’s a contrast here of two terms: the term *corruption* versus the term *everlasting life*. Your Bible might translate it different ways. The contrast is between corruption and life, everlasting or eternal life.

Now we’ve got to understand those things, men, in two ways. We’ve got to understand them in a double sense, a *quantitative* sense and a *qualitative* sense. There’s a quantitative sense where we need to compare corruption versus eternal life, and there’s a qualitative sense where we need to compare corruption with eternal life.

Quantitatively, the two are alike. Both last on and on and on and go on for eternity. Corruption, for example, far from just amounting to pure annihilation, indicates everlasting destruction. Quantitatively, they’re the same. A life of corruption is going to go on and on and on and on. Eternal life is going to go on and on and on and on.

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Quantitatively, they’re the same. The end results are different, but quantitatively they’re the same.

Take a look at 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 9. Paul writes this. *“They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction.”* And these are those who sow according to the flesh, corruption. *“They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might.”* And that’s the end result.

Quantitatively it goes on. Corruption goes on. It doesn’t stop. It goes on. So quantitatively the two are the same.

Eternal life goes on and on. Eternal life occurring frequently in the Scriptures, especially in John, like John 3:16, is equal in duration.

**Transcriber’s Note: John 3:16, ESV. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”**

Bruce: Quantitatively, the time of corruption and the time of eternal life is the same. The duration is the same. Take a look at Matthew 25:46. *“And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*

Notice. Punishment is what? Eternal. Life is what? Eternal. Quantitatively, they’re the same. They go on and on and on. Yes, Don?

**Don:** Bruce, there are people who espouse the doctrine of annihilationism.

**Bruce:** Yes, they do.

**Don:** And it’s interesting to me that they say that they don’t like the idea of eternal punishment, but they don’t seem to mind the idea of eternal life. Well, both are used here in 2 Thessalonians and with Jesus. Both are eternal. So you’re right. Quantitatively, they’re both eternal.

**Bruce:** That’s the contrast that he is now introducing to the church at Galatia. The big contrast is liberty versus law. But there’s another one here that is very, very misunderstood. We don’t delve into this very deeply. And that is this. Corruption is eternal. Punishment is eternal. It’s eternal damnation. Eternal life goes on and on. It’s everlasting. In quantitative terms they’re the same thing. We need to understand that.

Notice what Matthew 25:46 says. *“And these will go away into eternal punishment.”* There’s an adjective—eternal. The punishment is described as going on and on. What kind of punishment is it? It’s eternal.

Now notice. But the righteous go into eternal life. And both of them are eternal. If you choose the life of sowing to the flesh, it’s eternal corruption. If you sow a life according to the Spirit, it’s eternal life. Both are eternal. Quantitatively, they’re the same.

Now that’s a huge contrast that we don’t talk much about. But you see, that’s the underlining score. It’s the difference between liberty and law. There is also one between eternal corruption and eternal life. Those two are similar. We need to understand this in the context of liberty versus law. That’s the major theme. But in the context of liberty versus law there’s this sub-theme, eternal damnation versus eternal life, depending on what you sow. You reap what you sow, men.

And you can’t change the fruit by the seed. If you sow according to the flesh, you can’t reap a harvest that’s going to be of the Spirit, and vice versa. Quantitatively they’re the same.

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Qualitatively,—and this refers both to the soul and to the body of the person,—these two things, the contrast between corruption and eternal life, forms a very striking contrast. Now quantitatively they’re the same. Both are eternal—eternal punishment and eternal life.

Now when you start talking *qualitatively*, the quality of these harvests, it’s quite a contrast. Notice Daniel chapter 12 verse 2. Those who have sown to the flesh “*will awaken into shame and everlasting contempt.*” Daniel 12:2 says this. “*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*”

Notice. Quantitatively, the adjective is what?

**Participant:** Everlasting.

**Bruce:** Everlasting. Everlasting contempt, everlasting life. Let me read that again, 12:2 of Daniel. “*And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.*”

Mark 9:48 says it this way. “*Their worm will not die, neither will the fire be quenched.*” “*Where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.*” That corruption is what?

**Participant:** Everlasting. Eternal.

**Bruce:** Eternal. That corruption is eternal. That contempt is what? It’s eternal. Do you understand the significance of that?

Look at that in the contrast of liberty and law. We see the contrast between corruption and eternal life. There’s a sub-theme running through this that we need to understand and spend some time on.

Notice that the Scripture also says this about those who sow according to the flesh. Not only will their worm not die and the fire is never quenched, but their dwelling place will be outside the banquet hall, meaning the table of Christ. It will be outside the banquet hall. They will not be permitted in. Matthew chapter 8, verses 11-12; Matthew 22:13; Matthew 25:10-13.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Matthew 8:11-12, NKJV. “*But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*”

Matthew 22:13. “*Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’*”

Matthew 25:10-13. “*And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.*

“*Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’*”

“*But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.*”

**Bruce:** Their dwelling place will be outside the banquet hall. They will not participate in the great feast of the joy of the Lamb because their corruption is eternal, their damnation is eternal, their punishment is eternal. They will be outside the banquet hall.

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On the other hand, for those who sow according to the Spirit, by contrast Daniel 12:3 says this. *“They will then shine as the brightness of the firmament and the stars forever and ever.”* They will shine bright as the stars forever and ever, those who sow according to the Spirit. Notice that Daniel chapter 12 verse 2 and 3 gives the contrast between corruption versus eternal life. It’s a vivid description of the difference between eternal punishment and eternal life. Daniel 12:2 and 3.

We’re also told this: that by contrast those who sow according to the Spirit will bear the image of the heavenly. It’s quite a contrast from eternal corruption. That would be 1 Corinthians 15:49.

**Transcriber’s Note:** 1 Corinthians 15:49, NKJV. *“And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”*

**Bruce:** And physically we will be conformed to the body of Christ’s glory. Philippians 3:21.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Philippians 3:20-21, NKJV. *“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”*

**Bruce:** There is quite a contrast between those who sow to the flesh and those who sow according to the Spirit.

We’re also told this. Those who sow according to the Spirit will be like Christ. They will see Him even as He is. 1 John 3:2.

**Transcriber’s Note:** 1 John 3:2-3, ESV. *Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared. But we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.”*

**Bruce:** What a great thought! Scripture says this, that we are being transformed into His likeness That’s a process. But one day, men, that process is going to be an instantaneous result, just like that. What’s going to happen is that we are going to be like Him! The process of being transformed into His likeness goes on during our lifetime. But when God takes us home to glory, that moment will become an instantaneous event, occurring right away. What was once a process now becomes an actual event. We are being transformed to be like Him. Now we’re going to be like Him, an instantaneous result when the Lord takes us home.

Notice this. During our lifetime in this process we’re with Him. But when He takes us home, we’re going to be what? Like Him.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Do you see the difference? We’re with Him. But we’re going to be like Him! Men, do you realize that? That’s what gives us our hope! That’s what gives us the confident expectation that this process of sowing according to the Spirit is going to reap the good harvest, because we know this: that while I’m being transformed into His likeness during my lifetime, there’s going to be a time and an event in my life where it’s going to be an instantaneous result. I’ll no longer be in the process of being transformed. I’m going to be like Him!

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Now what that means we really don't know. The Scripture doesn't give us great detail. All we know is this: that I'm going to be like Christ. We're with Him now, but we're going to be like Him soon.

Therein lies your hope. Hope is not wishful thinking, men. Hope is the confident expectation that it will occur.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** It's the confident expectation that it will occur. I'm going to be like Christ one day!

Now that being true, don't you think we ought to act like Him now?

**Participant:** Amen. Yes.

**Bruce:** If I'm going to be like Him in eternity, don't you think that I should start acting like Him now? That's why Paul is saying, "Don't stop doing good." Don't cease doing good things. Don't give up. Continue doing good things. Think of other people. Because you're going to be like Christ, be like Him right now. Act like Him right now. Do those good things. And don't give up.

Qualitatively, for the one who sows according to the Spirit, here are some other benefits of understanding that we will reap. Remember, we're going to reap what we sow. And the seed that you plant is one of two seeds. The seed of sowing to the flesh is corruption. The seed of sowing to the Spirit is eternal life. And here are some of the consequences of the harvest that we're going to reap by sowing to the Spirit.

Living and sowing to the Spirit consists of such things as *enjoying the peace of God which passes all understanding*. That's part of the fruit. That's part of the seed that we bear. Philippians 4:7.

**Transcriber's Note:** Philippians 4:7, NKJV. "*And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*"

**Bruce:** Also there is the knowledge that in the sight of God's holy majesty the believer is viewed as righteous. God views you as righteous. Romans 5:1 and Romans 8:15.

**Transcriber's Note:** Romans 5:1, ESV. *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Romans 8:15, NKJV. "*For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.'*"

**Bruce:** Sowing according to the Spirit, we have fellowship with God in Christ. John chapter 17 verse 3.

**Transcriber's Note:** John 17:3, ESV. "*And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*"

**Bruce:** You have fellowship with God in Christ. You're in Christ when you sow according to the Spirit. 1 Peter 1:8 says this. "*Rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*" That's part of sowing to the Spirit. "*And being transformed to the image of the Lord from glory to glory.*" 2 Corinthians 3:18. We're being transformed into His likeness. But one day, men, that likeness is going to be just like Him. We shall see Him as He is and we will be like Him.

And last, but not least, *striving to be a spiritual blessing to others to the glory of God*. 1 Thessalonians 3:8.



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**Transcriber’s Note:** 1 Thessalonians 3:8, NKJV. *“For now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord.”*

**Bruce:** Striving to be a blessing to other people for the glory of God. That’s one of the things as we sow to the Spirit, we strive to be a blessing to other people in the household of God.

So qualitatively, men, we need to understand these two words, these two contrasts—eternal life, eternal corruption. Quantitatively they’re the same. They go on and on and on. They are both eternal. Qualitatively there’s a difference. One leads to disease, decay and death. The other leads to wholeness and to life.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Both are eternal. Then he gives us a reminder based upon that. You see, the wonderful thing about Scripture, men, is that it’s so logical. He has just given us such a wonderful insight here in the difference between eternal corruption and eternal life.

Then he says this. What are you going to do about it? He says this. What am I going to do about what I’ve just learned?

Now that’s where we come to verses 9 and 10. That’s the reminder. He reminds us of the truth he just gave us doctrinally about the quantitative comparison of sowing to the flesh and sowing to the Spirit. He now says, “What are you going to do about it?” And so the reminder is in verses 9 and 10. I call your attention to these verses.

Now the word *and* is kind of like a transitional word. It’s a bridge to what he just said.

Now let me just run through verse 8. *“The one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And”*—here’s your bridge again—*“let us not grow weary in doing good.”*

What am I going to do about what I’ve just learned? Don’t stop doing good. *“For in due season we shall reap, if we do not give up.”*

We shall reap if we do not give up. So the reminder is that you should *“do good to all men.”* That means bearing the burdens of all the men. That’s what Bishop Rodgers taught us three weeks ago. It’s the ministry of caring and sharing. We need to be doing good *“to all men, and especially to those of the household of faith,”* those who are of the family of God, every time we have opportunity to do that.

Now the idea of reaping and sowing in verses 7 and 8 carries on here into these verses. The emphasis now is on perseverance—perseverance in well-doing that is required of us as family members in the family of God, if we’re going to reap the blessings of eternal life.

Notice how he says this. Well-doing or doing good literally means this: doing that which is beautiful. It’s a very broad concept. It’s very comprehensive, such as walking in the Spirit or being led by the Spirit.

Go to 2 Thessalonians 3:13. *“As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.”* I now understand the doctrine of eternal damnation. I now understand the doctrine of eternal life. My response is what? To not grow weary in doing good! Do those things that are beautiful to the body of Christ, that reflect your understanding of the difference between eternal corruption and eternal life! I understand that! And God has given me the grace to understand eternal life. Now I’m going to realize that my responsibility is to be

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active in doing good because I understand the difference between eternal corruption and eternal life. I see the connection there. And my response is “Don’t give up. Persevere! Hang in there! Don’t give up! Don’t stop doing good!” Yes, sir?

**Participant:** The culture has become increasingly deteriorated and they are not patient. They do not persevere.

**Bruce:** Absolutely.

**Participant:** In fact, they’re utterly dependent on instant gratification. So people lack and don’t even grasp the concept of not growing weary. They need it right now, and they need a solution right now. And even the church expresses those kinds of moments. And all of the churnings of their difficulties is that they lack the capacity to sow over time and wait for the harvest.

**Bruce:** Amen to that. We reap the harvest in due time. That’s why it’s easier to sow to the flesh and get a quick response, and think that it’s a good response, than it is to sow to the Spirit and in perseverance to be patient for God to reap it when He wants to. Excellent point. Yes, sir?

**Participant:** Here’s a dumb question. What happens if we do grow weary? I mean, what is that saying?

**Bruce:** Well, that says something about you.

**Participant:** Okay.

**Bruce:** Ted, go ahead.

**Ted:** Once again, many years ago and forty pounds lighter, I used to run marathons. And in the process of twenty-six miles, you’re going to grow weary. And you’re going to want to give up on the seventh mile or the thirteenth mile.

**Bruce:** Yes. That’s right.

**Ted:** But if you just begin the race, you’re committed to the race, and you just keep running. I mean, I hit the wall at one race. And I just stopped and I kept walking until I could run again.

**Bruce:** Now notice what Paul says. I run the race with perseverance. He basically says, “I just want to be standing at the end of the day.”

**Ted:** Yes.

**Bruce:** It doesn’t mean you’ve got to win. It just says that my goal is to be standing at the end of the race. When you get weary you just hang in there. You don’t give up. You might need to walk instead of running. But the goal is not to win everything. The goal is to be standing at the end of the day and to enjoy your eternal life.

So we don’t give up. We don’t get weary because we understand this. I understand the connection between eternal damnation and eternal life. That’s the thing that dictates that I don’t give up, because I understand the difference between the two. Brian?

**Brian:** I was just going to add on to what Ted was saying. Sometimes you just need to be intentional, because you’re not going to want to persevere. You’re not going to want to do it. You know, if you look at Christ, He was praying and His blood was pouring out because He didn’t want to go to the cross, and he still obeyed out of gratitude and submission. So I think that in those times that’s when we really count on this band of

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brothers, to reach out to them and say, “I don’t want to. I need somebody to come alongside me.

**Bruce:** Amen.

**Brian:** We need to bear one another’s burdens. So I think we need to be real and to be intentional about it.

**Bruce:** Look at verse 2 of Galatians 6. *“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”* That’s what Bishop Rodgers taught us three weeks ago. Sometimes we have to bear one another’s burdens. You come alongside somebody who is discouraged. You come alongside somebody who wants to give up. You come alongside and say, “Don’t do that. I want to bear that burden with you.”

And what do we do when we do that, when we bear one another’s burdens as Bishop Rodgers taught us? You fulfill what? The law of—

**Participant:** Christ.

**Bruce:** Christ! You fulfill the law of Christ. That’s why the first law is the law of sharing and caring. That’s the first law that Paul reminds us of here in the book of Galatians. It’s the law of sharing and caring. You bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.

**Participant:** Bruce?

**Bruce:** Yes, sir?

**Participant:** What you’re talking about right there is so important—bearing each other’s burdens. Verse 1 talks about restoring somebody who is in sin. And yet oftentimes like brother Kirk said, we get weary. And when we get weary, we do sometimes fall back into sin, and that happens to us.

**Bruce:** Sure. Absolutely.

**Participant:** And it’s so important to be in close relationship with some other brothers so that when that happens, somebody can pick you up and dust you off and walk with you, like you’re talking about.

**Bruce:** Amen. We need to understand this, men. When the apostle Paul says this, *“Let us not grow weary in well-doing,”* he’s pointing his finger at a well-known weakness of human nature.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** It’s a well-known feature of human nature. Look at chapter 5 verse 7. Ted’s example. *“You were running well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?”* Who hindered you? See, it’s a basic tendency of our human nature, a weakness of our human nature, because well-doing requires continued effort, constant toil. And human nature being fond of ease lacking staying power, is easily discouraged because we want sudden results. That’s a function of our human nature.

Now this is especially true when results are not always apparent at once. You get discouraged. And those who should help us refuse to cooperate and no reward ever seems to come our way. We get discouraged. We give up. That may be the time when you want to give up. When you want to give up, it’s the time when you shouldn’t give up.

Remember this also. In those periods when we do struggle, a setback is an opportunity for a comeback.

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**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** A setback is an opportunity for a comeback. The real test of our Christian maturity, men, is not whether we fail or succeed. We’re all going to fail somewhere along the line, many times over and over. We’re all going to fail. The real issue is this. How quickly do I get up once I have failed? That’s the definition of our maturity. How quickly do I get up when I do fail, because a setback in your life is really an opportunity for a comeback in your life by the grace of God, sowing to the Spirit.

So Paul reminds us of the fact that we will reap in due season. He tells us that. That is at the moment of time that is exactly right, God will sovereignly make it happen. It’s not determined by us, but it’s determined in God’s sovereign eternal plan.

So it is then the reward of grace not merit, and it will be conferred. We shall receive it if we do not lose heart and we don’t give up.

Look at Hebrews chapter 12 verse 3. Now here’s an example. *“Consider Him who endured.”* Now who do we consider? *“Consider Him”*—Christ—*“who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.”*

Now notice. Who are you to think about when you get fainthearted?

**Participant:** Christ.

**Bruce:** You think about Christ. Do not think about the circumstances or the situations you’re going through. It’s not “woe is me! Look at the difficulty I’m going through! Look at my circumstances! You don’t understand my situation!” He says, “No. Consider Him.”

**Participant:** Who endured.

**Bruce:** Who endured, so that you don’t get fainthearted. We think about Christ and His endurance, and that motivates us through the work of the Holy Spirit not to give up and grow weary in doing good and become fainthearted.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** You don’t think about yourselves, men. You think about what Christ accomplished for us so we don’t become fainthearted.

Notice the two phrases, “do not grow weary,” and “do not give up” in verse 9. It’s followed by the very positive command. *“Let us do good.”* Perseverance in good works is the product of grace. It’s what Paul is constantly urging. Perseverance in good works is a product of grace. God preserves His people by means of their perseverance. The power to persevere is from Him, but the responsibility is ours. The power to persevere comes from Him. It’s my responsibility to apply it. We don’t sit back and let God do it. We persevere. He gives you the grace and the willingness to be willing to do it. But you and I have the responsibility to apply it.

And all of us men have been placed on this earth for a specific purpose. The best way to prepare for Christ’s second coming is to use the full opportunity, every opportunity we’ve been given for service to Him, and continue to do good, because if we’re going to be like Christ we should act like Him now. Yes, please?

**Participant:** What we sometimes don’t realize is that when we bear somebody’s burdens, we tend to think about this. Well, I’m strong. I’ll help somebody who is weak. The best time to bear somebody else’s burdens is when we are weak.

**Bruce:** Amen to that.

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**Participant:** And that will lift you up.

**Bruce:** Amen.

**Participant:** Often that’s something that we just forget.

**Bruce:** That’s an excellent point. Yes, Don?

**Don:** Bruce, going back to verse six, when you were talking about *“let him who is taught the Word share everything with him who teaches.”* And you were talking about that financially. Is that limited to just that? I’ve always read that in terms of encouraging your pastor.

**Bruce:** Oh, yes.

**Don:** If you hear a sermon or a teaching from a pastor or a teacher, encourage him. Let him know how you benefited from it. I think that’s very important, too.

**Bruce:** Absolutely it is. It’s not limited financially. Materialistically we need to share all the things that we can. And that would include encouraging the pastor along the way. Pray for them. That’s very, very critical. We need to give back to them what they give to us. They’ve been there as a gift from Christ to the church. And we need to be very, very sensitive to them. That’s why you approach a pastor with great delicacy and respect and dignity because of the fact that he is a gift to the church. And so it’s not limited to financial support at all. Encourage him. Support him any way you can. It’s very, very important that we uplift the men who have been called to preach.

Now notice. It says that we’re to do good to all men, regardless of race, nationality, class, religion, sex or anything else. As our Lord’s active love leaped over boundaries, so should ours. Let me give you some examples of our Lord’s reaching and leaping over boundaries.

Luke chapter 9, verses 54-55; Luke 10:25-37.

**Transcriber’s Note:** Luke 9:54-55, NKJV. *“And when His disciples James and John saw this,”* (that they were not welcomed by the Samaritans), *“they said, ‘Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?’ But He turned and rebuked them, and said, ‘You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men’s lives but to save them.’ And they went to another village.”*

Luke 10:25-37. The parable of the good Samaritan.

**Bruce:** In other words, while we have a responsibility to do good to all men, to do things that are beautiful to all people, there is a specific group of people to whom we should be very sensitive, and that is whom?

**Men:** The church.

**Bruce:** The body of Christ, the church. It’s just like a parent who has a responsibility to be a good neighbor. But they have a higher responsibility to be good parents to their children. You and I have a responsibility to be a good neighbor. We also have a higher responsibility to give to those who are members of the family of God.

And why is that? Because we have the same heavenly Father.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** I have the same heavenly Father that you men do. That means that I’m going to try to do good to all the people that I can. But I’m going to try to do something very

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special for you because my heart is in tune with you. There’s a special affinity that I have with you guys because we’re part of the family of God.

So yes, while we do good to all people, we need to be very sensitive to the fact that first of all our primary responsibility is to the church.

Now this term is full of comfort, and a help to those of little faith. All believers constitute one family, the Father’s family. A couple of verses will help us to understand this. We have a responsibility to do good to all people, but especially to those of the household of faith.

Ephesians 2:19. *“So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”*

Men, do we really take seriously the fact that we are members of the household of God? How seriously does that ever impact the way that we conduct ourselves?

On “Grace Gems” yesterday, Charles Spurgeon made a very interesting statement. He said, *“When you go to a doctor’s office, and he wants to check out how healthy you are, what is the first thing he says? ‘Let me see your tongue.’”*

Now the point is this. *“If your faith does not sweeten the tongue, it’s no faith at all.”* *“Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”*

We are members of the household of God. How do we speak to one another as members of the household of God? I’m just appalled sometimes to hear people using such gross, foul language as members of the family of God.

**Participant:** Would you give an example of that? I was dead serious.

**Bruce:** Well, I could use the f word. S.o.b., phrases like that. We just flippantly throw that around. We just flippantly say that when we talk about our situation. And I’m saying that to a member of the family of God? That’s about as disrespectful as you can get. We have the same heavenly Father. We practice things in the world and then you take it to the family of God! Yes, please?

**Participant:** We carry our own dysfunction from our earthly families clearly into the church.

**Bruce:** Absolutely.

**Participant:** And we rarely have the courage to police that because of the pruning, and the fact that it comes from somebody else who is flesh and blood like we are. We hate it.

**Bruce:** Right. That’s exactly right. Bishop Rodgers?

**Bishop Rodgers:** I was just thinking that this will bear on how you speak to your wife and kids.

**Bruce:** Absolutely.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Just as a parent has the responsibility to be a good neighbor, we have a high responsibility as to how we treat our children and how we treat our wives. It starts with the household of faith, men. It starts inside your own walls. That’s where it all begins.

Another example for those of us in the household of God is this. 1 Timothy 3:15. *“If I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and buttress of the truth.”*

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**Participant:** What’s that reference?

**Bruce:** That’s 1 Timothy 3:15. *“If I delay”* in coming to see you, *“you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God.”* Now here’s the reason. *“Which is the church of the living God, the pillar and buttress of the truth.”*

And I would also encourage you at some time to go and read Psalm 133.

**Transcriber’s Note: Psalm 133, ESV.**

*“Behold, how good and pleasant it is  
When brothers dwell in unity.  
It is like the precious oil on the head,  
Running down on the beard,  
On the beard of Aaron,  
Running down on the collar of his robes.  
It is like the dew of Hermon  
Which falls on the mountains of Zion.  
For there the LORD has commanded the blessing,  
Life forevermore!”*

**Bruce:** It’s a wonderful description of the family of God. The term *household of God* means all those who are living by sowing to the Spirit. We must do good to all people. But there should be a special interest in the well-being of God’s family, starting with our own family.

So putting all of this together, men, there is one question I want to ask you. Do you realize that everybody has an eternal life? Which one is yours?

Let’s pray. Father, thank You for giving us a contrast between eternal punishment and eternal corruption and eternal life and life everlasting. Both are eternal and different in their quality. Father, I just pray that you would deal with each of us personally. Help us to answer the question. Which eternal life do I have, the eternal life of sowing according to the flesh, which will lead to disease, decay and death? Or do I have eternal life from sowing and reaping according to the Spirit, which produces wholeness and life? Both are eternal. Which one do I have? May we honestly answer ourselves clearly before the Lord at His throne of grace. And all God’s children said, *“Amen.” (Applause)*