

# GALATIANS

## 6:1-18 | STUDY GUIDE

### God Cannot Be Mocked

**GALATIANS 6:1**, "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted." (NIV)

- Gently
  - Up until this point, Paul's tone is harsh and abrupt
    - Shift as his message closes
- "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2, NIV)
  - In verse 1, the word "caught" is sometimes translated "overtaken"
  - The idea is that a brother or sister has fallen down—not deliberately chosen to walk away
- This is the opposite approach the Legalist takes
  - Rather than condemning or pointing out failure, someone stronger and able to resist temptation should help guide that brother or sister through
- Humility
  - Paul continues emphasizing humility and putting others first
  - Stop comparing: "But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor." (ESV)

**GALATIANS 6:7**, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap." (ESV)

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- God is Just
  - Those who do wrong often seem to avoid punishment, but God cannot be mocked
- To sow & reap
  - Significant in Old Testament
  - Threshing floor:
  - King Ahab and King Jehoshaphat received the prophets' disastrous counsel: 1 Kings 22, 2 Chronicles 18
    - Hosea announced Israel's judgement: Hosea 9

**GALATIANS 6:8**, "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." (ESV)

- To sow = to plant
  - To reap = to harvest
  - The Fruit of the Spirit can only form when we live by the Spirit and not by works of the flesh

**GALATIANS 6:9**, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." (ESV)

- Is Paul potentially talking to himself?
  - He has expressed tremendous discouragement, even questioning whether his efforts in Galatia were in vain
  - It's entirely possible these words are a challenge to him

**GALATIANS 6:11**: "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand." (ESV)

- It was common practice to have a scribe write the letters.

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- In the first chapter of his letter to the Thessalonians, we discussed the special tools and papyrus that were required for such a task
  - Clearly Paul is not as skilled as his scribe!
- “It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.” (6:12)
  - Paul reminds the Galatians that an additional ulterior motive may be behind the legalist’s teachings: exemption from Roman sacrifice

**GALATIANS 6:15**, “For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.” (ESV)

- Paul once again alludes to this new age we’re in—the promise fulfilled
- There was nothing wrong with a Gentile being circumcised
  - The key is that they should never be “compelled” or “forced” (verse 12) because that is not what makes a “new creation”

**GALATIANS 6:17**, “From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.” (ESV)

- “Marks” = slave branding
- Paul will continue to refer to himself as a slave

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:** James D.G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians*, Walter Elwell, *Encountering the New Testament*, N.T. Wright, *The New Testament In its World*, Craig S. Keener, *Galatians: A Commentary*, *Archaeological Study Bible*