

STEPS IN THE CHRISTIAN WALK  
Gal. 6:1-10

Intro: In chapter 5 Paul describes the Christian life as a walk. We all walk through life a step at a time. When we first began to walk, every step was important. Every step was something of a problem. Nothing is more exciting in family life than when that baby begins to take his first steps.

As I mentioned last week, the key word for the Christian in the NT is this word, WALK.

The question we walk to talk about this morning is this: HOW IS A CHRISTIAN SUPPOSED TO LIVE? HOW IS HE SUPPOSED TO WALK?

If you try to find the answer to this question from other Christians alone, you will either become mistaken or confused. Other Christians should be able to help you, but you must first learn the source of every Christian's information about the life he should live.

Where do we find the information we want? Just one place--in the Bible! It is alright to read books, and to hear messages, but you must know the Bible, the Word of God, if you are to be in a position to judge what the books say and what people tell you.

Paul says that the Christian life is a life lived in dependence upon the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit always leads us according to the Word of God.

I am quite sure that Paul did not intend his letter to the Galatians to be primarily a letter about Christian living. He has not given that much space to it.

I am also sure that he did not expect to tell everything in this epistle that the Galatian believers needed to know about the Christian life. He had taught them before, but we much recognize that other details are given in other books of the Bible. No one book gives it all.

So it is interesting to see where he starts.

He starts with the situation in Galatia. The legalists had made them critical of each other. They were biting and devouring each other (5:15). Even Paul was being treated like an enemy (4:16). It would have been most unfortunate to have received the Lord Jesus Christ about this time in any one of the churches of Galatia. You would not have had a chance because you would suddenly have discovered that everyone was

Do Not  
INTEND  
To DEAL  
WITH ALL  
10 YEARS

scrutinizing everything that you did, just waiting for you to commit some fault.

What is the proper way to react toward the faults of other Christians?

### I. First of all, WE MUST REALIZE WHAT "A FAULT" IS.

There are many words in the NT used to describe sin. One of the most rewarding studies is to take all of these words, learn what they mean, and then compare them with each other.

Here we have the word, "fault." What does Paul have in mind?

He is not talking about a deliberate case of wilful sin. He is talking about someone who has slipped into sin, someone who has fallen into a trap. It may be a gross sin, but Paul is thinking about how it all got started.

To make matters worse, he is describing a person who has been "overtaken," detect, caught doing the very thing. John 8:4 gives us a perfect illustration of what it means to be "overtaken."

If you haven't been guilty of the particular sin this person is involved in, you might say, "Let's throw him out of the church." BUT WHAT DOES THE WORD OF GOD SAY THAT WE SHOULD DO?

### II. THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVE IN SUCH CASES IS TO "RESTORE."

Strangely enough this is the verb which is used in Matt. 4:21 to describe what James and John were doing when the Lord Jesus called them to follow Him. Listen to these words:

"And going on from thence, he (Jesus) saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them."

To restore is to mend.

In Fanny Crosby's hymn, Rescue The Perishing, she describes this mending in the following words:

"Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,  
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;  
Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness;  
Chords that were broken will vibrate once more."

Paul says, "If a man . . . , which could mean believer or

unbeliever. YOU ARE LIABLE TO RUN ACROSS SOMEONE TODAY WHO NEEDS MENDING, WHO NEEDS TO BE RESTORED. How will you react toward their sin?

All around us are people who need help. The primary desire of a Christian who knows his Bible will be that of getting the person back on his feet. It may mean leading him to Christ as Saviour; it may mean showing him how he as a Christian can be forgiven and delivered from his sin.

But there is a third word I want you to notice, and every Christian needs to note this carefully.

III. THE KIND OF A CHRISTIAN WHO CAN HELP "RESTORE" OTHERS:  
"Brethren . . . ye which are spiritual."

I know that Paul did not want this to become a term of controversy. He does not want us to go around saying, "I am spiritual; you are not."

I am not going to claim to be a spiritual Christian, nor am I going to claim that I am filled with the Holy Spirit. BUT I WILL DO THIS: I will, by the grace of God, seek to depend upon the Holy Spirit and let him lead me in a life of obedience to the Word of God. The epistle to the Galatians teaches me that a spiritual Christian is one who walks in dependence upon the Spirit. When I do this He is going to be producing love in my heart (among other things), and this will become evident in my attitude toward others who have fallen into sin.

How important it is for us to learn ~~this~~ in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ! It is only as we walk in the Spirit (which means to live in obedience to this Word of God) that we will be able to help others.

It is obvious from this passage that a spiritual Christian is not one who claims to be spiritual, but one who shows that he is spiritual by the attitudes and desires he has. You can lead others no farther than you have gone yourself.

IV. THE ATTITUDE OF THE RESTORER TOWARD HIMSELF. Or, to put it another way, How should a Christian consider himself?

IS IT NOT AMAZING THAT, AFTER RAISING THE QUESTION ABOUT A PERSON WHO IS CAUGHT IN THE VERY ACT OF SIN, PAUL LEAVES THE SINNER AND TALKS ONLY ABOUT THE PERSON WHO IS TRYING TO HELP THE SINNER?

Do you see what Paul is telling us about the Christian walk? He is saying that even though we have the Holy Spirit and

even though we have the Word of God, the big question in God's ministry to men who need Him is often the failure of the very people He would like to use.

What are the essentials of the Christian life? There are at least four here.

A. "The spirit of meekness."

This is not a natural disposition; it is a part of the fruit of the Spirit. It is not outward; it is inward. It is not primarily toward men, but toward God. It is submission to the dealings of God and the recognition that one is, as Archbishop Trenchard has said, "a sinner among sinners."

The only right attitude for a Christian dealing with someone else in sin is, "There go I but for the grace of God!"

B. "Considering thyself."

If the first is true, when we see others in sin, does it come as a solemn warning that we can experience the same thing?

You may suddenly find yourself in a situation where your strength as a Christian is being put to an extreme test. Are you scrutinizing yourself (the meaning of the word) to make sure that your life is being lived in obedience to the Word? ARE YOU AS TOUGH ON YOURSELF AS YOU ARE ON EVERYONE ELSE?

C. What do you think of yourself?

The Gk of v. 3 is very picturesque. It literally means that if you are of the opinion that you are anything, being all of the time nothing, then your mind has been led astray; you are out of touch with reality.

Pride has always been the curse of the human heart, but it is especially the curse of the Christian life. How easy it is for us to get out of touch with the facts and think that we are something and somebody!

WE ARE NOTHING. WE ARE A LOT OF NOBODY'S--just sinners saved by grace. Never lose sight of this!

D. How do you evaluate your own life? Do you do it by comparing yourself with others? Do you remember the prayer of the Pharisee in Luke 18:11, 12? "The Phari-

see stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican."

The Lord wants us to glory (lit. for "rejoicing") in our walk, but not because we place ourselves in a good light by comparing ourselves with someone else.

Cf. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 10:12.

Concl: Is it any wonder that Paul writes in Gal. 6:14, "But God forbid . . ."

These are the marks of a spiritual Christian. How do you qualify--by your attitude toward others in sin, but most of all by your attitude toward yourself?

The world has never been in greater need. How can that need be met? Paul has answered it here. It is by believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who are by the grace of God walking day by day in dependence upon the Holy Spirit which means in obedience to God's Word.