

Title: Paul's Application of Justification in the Life of the Believer:
Grace Living is Grace Giving

Text: Galatians 6:6-10

Theme: A fruit of the Spirit is giving that sows temporal seed for an eternal harvest.

Introduction: Our righteous standing before God is found solely in Christ alone through faith alone by grace alone. There is nothing we can now do to alter our righteous standing before the Father. Our acceptance before Him is merited by grace and is maintained by grace. God did not turn the maintaining of it over to us.

Consider an overview of Paul's thoughts from chapter 5 and following.

5:2-12 The insidious nature of theological error.

5:13-15 The justified love one another.

5:16-26 The justified bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

6:1-5 The justified carry one another's burdens.

6:6-10 The justified continue in gracious giving.

Before we go any further I wish to make a qualifying statement. You have already been blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3). You are already complete in Christ (Col. 2:10). You have been imputed with the actual and real righteousness of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24; 4:8). Nothing you do or don't do is going to change God's opinion of you or dealings with you.

It is against this backdrop that we wish to note this passage as it relates to grace giving. What this means is that whether you give a little, a lot or nothing at all is not going to change God's opinion of you or dealings with you. You do not give to gain favor or merit blessing.

Ultimately you give . . .

Because you want to see the message preached here go from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world. By the way there is a progression to giving. We must have a strong local church base for global impact. We are involved in a process whereby "every uttermost will become a Jerusalem."

Because you can give. God has prospered you so you can give. Believe me when I say we are far wealthier than any of us could ever imagine.

Because you value the giver of the gift more than the gift given.

If you give because you think God must really be happy with you or because you think that by giving it will satisfy His wrath against you or because by giving He will now bless your life, you are sadly misinformed. God loves you and is for you and will never condemn you. I believe that is motive enough to give Him all that I have and am.

It is easy to see the connection between verses 1-5 and that of verse 6. Seeking to meet the needs of others is part of the burden bearing process. “This is only a further exposition of what is involved in the ‘whole law for the Christian, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ That ‘whole law’ was quoted in 5:14; and the remaining verses have been devoted to explaining its consequences and its meaning to the Galatians.” (Ramsay, *Galatians*, 456-457).

In our passage before us Paul lays out four providential (i.e., natural versus supernatural/miraculous) principles characterizing grace giving.

THE BIG PICTURE:

In considering the book of Galatians we can note a three-fold division.

- Chapters 1-2 = Personal/Biographical/ Authorization/Vindication
- Chapters 3-4 = Doctrinal/Biblical/Presentation/Exposition
- Chapters 5-6 = Practical/Behavioral/ Application

Its Eternal Value:

There is a dynamic relationship between those who teach the Word and those who are taught the Word. This relationship cannot be severed or neglected without significant peril.

The Problem:

Our problem with this passage is we remove the initial thought of verse 6 from that of verses 7 and 8 and in so doing we generalize verses 7 and 8 and do not make the application to the primary idea in verse 6.

“Like the previous one, it has many wider applications, even though its central pint is the quite specific one of financing the ministry and life of the church.” (N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, 78).

The Storyline:

The community of faith is to take care of those who bring them the Word of God. This principle is such that to neglect it is to do so at one’s eternal peril.

Questions:

1. What two parties are mentioned in 6:6?
2. What is the responsibility of each toward the other?
3. What are verses 7 and 8 referring to?
4. Notice the grammatical structure of verse 8. What is the opposite of “corruption?” What is the opposite of “flesh?”

5. What is the “doing good” referring to in verse 9?
6. What is verse 9 calling us to?
7. Think of the relationship of verses 6-10 to that of verses 1-5. Explain how the two work together.
8. What is verse 10 calling us to?

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know the pattern of God for the sustaining of Kingdom work.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to participate by giving for the advancement of His Kingdom through His church.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of participating by stewarding our gifting to Christ through His church.

Outline:

- I. The principle of reciprocation ([‘giving back’]v. 6)

Those who are taught the Word should share their substance with those who teach the Word.

The word “taught” is **katecheo**. It is transliterated into our English language as Catechize. It has the strong overtones of mentoring an individual. Both of the “taught” and “teaches” are present participles. This communicates that a relationship has been established between the two. There is a bond, a pattern that is being emphasized. It is not a one-touch event but a long embrace. “This instruction was formal and precise.” (Gromacki, *Galatians*, 183). Ephesians 4:11-13 tells us that God gave to the church teachers for the purpose of instructing His people. This is the catechizing process being alluded to in our passage.

The second word “to share” is our common word **koinoneo**. This is often translated by the word “fellowship.” Fellowship speaks of identification, intimacy, union and camaraderie.

When a teacher teaches he is sharing a large part of himself with those he teaches. He is exposed and vulnerable. He leaves himself open to being misunderstood, challenged and misrepresented, but such is the nature of teaching. The teacher does this because teaching is the impartation of life. But the relationship is not one sided. The student is also sharing their life with him. The exchange is impossible to avoid. Listen to Romans 15:27 and 1 Corinthians 9:11 and 14.

Romans 15:27 Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.

1 Corinthians 9:11 If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? 14 So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

The second statement Paul gives us concerning grace living being expressed through grace giving is found in verses 7 and 8. Paul encourages such acts of kindness for the harvest will come.

II. The principle of retribution ([‘reaping’]vv. 7, 8)

“The picture of ‘sowing’ and ‘harvesting’ – a development in Paul’s mind, perhaps, from the fruit trees at the end of chapter 5 – seems to be tied also to the giving of money. Then, of course, ‘sowing to the flesh’ can mean, in terms of 5:19-21, behaving according to the ‘works of the flesh’. Here, as at each level, Christians always need the stern warning of verse 7.” (N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, 78, 79).

Although the quote is lengthy, I believe N.T. Wright provides the correct understanding of this thought in its context.

“If church members ‘sow’ to the spirit, by giving solid practical support to the church’s ministry, especially in teaching and preaching, they themselves will in due course bring in a harvest. If, however, they ‘sow to the flesh’, spending their resources on the numerous pleasures of ordinary life, then all they will have to show for it will be the corruption and decay to which everything in the world is ultimately subject. Fine houses fall down. Splendid clothes wear out. The ministry of the word builds up people and communities, and the life they then have will gloriously outlast death itself.” (N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, 76, 77).

Unless Paul is giving us a series of statements, I would have to allow this verse to be controlled by its context.

A. A tragic blindness (“be not deceived”)

Paul begins with a very sharp statement, “Be not deceived.” It is a present active imperative. There is an element of urgency within the phrase strongly suggesting some were already deceived. “Deceived” is **planao**. It means to wander or to go astray. This exact phrase is used several times in the New Testament (1 Cor. 6:9; 15:33; Gal. 6:7; James 1:16).

Do not be deceived about the eternal destiny of those who practice sin

1Co 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,

Do not be deceived about the corrupting influence of bad company

1 Corinthians 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

Do not be deceived about God's absolute sovereignty over all things

James 1:16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

And now here he says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." "To mock" means "To turn up the nose." "It is the open gesture of contempt for one who is an easy dupe." (*Cambridge Galatians*, 133). When we fail to assist the ongoing ministry to the body of Christ through the gifts He gave us, we are treating the giver with contempt.

B. A timeless truth ("you reap what you sow")

Every choice we make has an inevitable and unavoidable consequence. So do not be deceived. **The seed you sow will be the harvest you reap.** Listen carefully to a sobering reminder. **You can choose your seed, but you can never choose the size of the harvest.** "They who sow tares cannot reap wheat." (JFB) "Once we have finished sowing, we cannot change the harvest." (Wiersbe, *Galatians*, 146)

Perhaps you are saying to yourself, "I'm forgiven and God no longer deals with me according to my sin, so what do I have to fear relationally with regard to my sin?" I believe this is a good question. Let me give you some "food for thought."

You are correct in that as a believer God will never deal with you according to your sin. And His opinion of you will never change. Yet this does not mean there is not a consequence for your sin. I understand divine chastening to fall under four areas.

First, there is the inherent demerit to all sin, which is death (Rom. 6:23). "The soul that sins will die" (Eze. 18:4, 20).

Second, a non-repentant / non-confessing so-called brother is to be disciplined out of the local church fellowship (1 Cor. 5).

Third, often the government functions as the rod of God in chastening the evil doer (Rom. 13:1-4).

Finally, being persecuted for the faith is viewed as divine chastening (Heb. 12 and 1 Pt. 4:17). There is a horrible consequence to all sin and we would be foolish to think otherwise. Yet let us not think, as people of grace, that God is out to get us or that He is "chastening" us after the manner of Acts 5 (Ananias and Sapphira); Acts 12:23 (Herod) or 1 Corinthians 11:23 (The Lord's Table).

C. A timely reminder

1. If you sow to the flesh, you shall reap condemnation.
2. If you sow to the Spirit, you shall reap eternal life.

Notice how the statement is in contrasting parallelism. If you sow to the Holy Spirit, you will reap eternal life. If you sow to the flesh, you will reap eternal condemnation. If we make the corruption physical hardship, then we must make the eternal life physical happiness. Whichever way we go with it the two stand in contrasting parallelism.

This same principle is being stated in Romans 8:13.

Romans 8:13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

You will get in return what you sow in investment. This is an eternal truth. God has established natural laws that govern the outworking of His universe. Nothing can change this. It is equally true for the saved as well as the unsaved. “If a man breaks it he may be forgiven, but, nonetheless, he breaks it at his peril.” (Barclay, *Galatians*, 55).

He who sows to his flesh is described in 5:19-21 and it is this individual who “will not inherit the kingdom of God.” It is because of this that I see the corruption to be more than physical decay and moral rottenness. “If a man makes his own flesh the recipient of his efforts, the flesh will yield him a harvest of corruption.” (*Cambridge Galatians*, 133)

The issue is not the “seed” but the “soil.” If you plant your seed in the soil of the flesh, you will reap the inevitable outcome. However, the opposite is equally true.

He who sows by means of the Holy Spirit and bears the fruit of the Spirit is the one who will be inheriting eternal life. What does it mean, “sows to the Spirit?” The big idea is that of offering all that you are and have to Him to be used as He sees fit and wills. **Sowing to the Spirit simply says that the giver of my gifts is greater than the gifts He gives.** Sowing to the Spirit simply says that God may do what He wants with what is His and what He does with it is always right.

Often we limit our giving to financial support, but our giving far exceeds the boundaries placed upon it by mere money. Our time is an offering, our abilities are an offering, our lives are offerings. Where we sow is as significant as what we sow.

Warren Wiersbe wisely notes, “We must remember that what we do with material things is an evidence of how we value spiritual things. ‘For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also’ (Matt. 6:21).” (Wiersbe, *Galatians*, 145)

Jim Elliot – “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”

This is why Paul said, “You first gave of yourselves.”

2 Corinthians 8:1 Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, 2 that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. 3 For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord, 4 begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, 5 and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God.

I believe the Lord’s Prayer is appropriate when it states, “Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored. May your kingdom come soon. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:9, 10).” As you and I live our lives, whose glory are we after, His or ours? Whose kingdom do we wish to see established, His or ours? Whose will do we really want done, His or ours? When we seek self we sow to the flesh and the outcome is devilish. When we sow to the Spirit the outcome is divine.

However, in light of the larger theme of Galatians, let us consider the broader implications of his statement.

“The contrast of ‘sowing to the flesh’ and ‘sowing to the Spirit’ obviously ties in with the wider themes of the letter. ‘Sowing to the flesh,’ in terms of the rest of Galatians, can refer to the very thing the Galatians – or some of them – were keen to do, namely, getting circumcised. Go that route, declares Paul, and you are on the road to ruin. The only harvest worth having is the one that comes from sowing to the spirit.” (N.T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone*, 79).

This brings us to our third point.

III. The principle of continuation ([‘resolution’]v. 9)

At times we will grow weary in the battle. Our knees will buckle, our hands will be bloodied and our sight will fail, but do not lose heart. In time, we will reap, if we do not quit.

Sometimes the return on our investment will never reveal itself in our lifetime, but do not quit. **We cannot change the past, but we can change the future by giving to the present.**

The text strongly makes a conditional statement out of the reaping process. If we do not grow weary, then and only then will we reap. What are we to make of this? Throughout the NT there is a call to persevere and not to faint. Please note the following passages.

Do not faint

Luke 18:1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

2 Corinthians 4:1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

2 Corinthians 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Ephesians 3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory.

2 Thessalonians 3:13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

The need to endure

Matthew 24:13 But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

Hebrews 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,

The word used in verse nine for “grow weary” is a compound word, **ekluo**. It is used six times in the New Testament. It is used of Israel wandering like weary sheep (Matt. 9:36). It is used of the following multitudes who were growing weary (Matt. 15:32). And it is used of those who were bearing up under persecution (Heb. 12:3, 5). It is a weariness that reaches to the bone. It fatigues the mind and soul. Paul is exhorting the Galatian believer not to give up hope. Do not despair to the point of losing faith. Some of you have walked down that hallway. You have seen the door that leads to hopeless despair. You have even perhaps placed your hand on the doorknob, but God . . . in that moment God whispered in your ear, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” In that moment of blackness you heard Him say, “I am your light.” When your knees just about buckled under the load you heard Him say in a soft voice, “My dear child, the

best is yet to come!” And in that moment hope was reborn. Despair began to vanish and you were steeled for the journey ahead.

Illustration: (Jarrod Schmidt) “How would you play the game if you knew you already won?”

Is it possible for the grace of God to fail? No. Yet we are called upon to persevere. Does this make our perseverance tentative and insecure? If it depends on my ability to perform it does, but my ability to persevere is a fruit of the Spirit. Thus I can have confidence that I will not grow weary and I will most assuredly reap in due time.

We find our fourth providential principle in verse 10.

IV. The principle of opportunity (v. 10)

The opportunity of verse 10 and the season of verse 9 are the same Greek words. I believe 1 Timothy 6:17-19 captures the idea that is present in Galatians 6:6-10.

1 Timothy 6:17 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 18 **Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,** 19 storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

It is a travesty against the body of Christ to see God’s people defeated when someone could have assisted them in the carrying of their burden whether that burden is financial, emotional, physical, or spiritual. He raises an interesting question when he says, “Let us do good to all people.” What is the “good” that can be done?

Notice how Paul has emphasized a certain truth throughout Galatians.

Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, **but faith working through love.**

Galatians 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, **but through love serve one another.**

Galatians 5:14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, **"YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."**

Galatians 5:22 **But the fruit of the Spirit is love,** joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

In Galatians 6:2 we are told that by bearing one another’s burdens we are fulfilling the

law of Christ. The law of Christ is the law of unconditional love. In Galatians 6:10 when it says, “Let us go good to all people,” the “good” being referred to is the “good” of loving them unconditionally. Such a love . . .

- Such a love stops biting and devouring one another (5:15).
- Such a love makes no provision for the flesh (5:19-21).
- Such a love reveals the fruit of the Holy Spirit (5:22-23).
- Such a love bear’s one another’s burdens (6:1-5).
- Such a love gives generously and sacrificially to the ongoing work of Christ (6:6-10).

This is the good we do toward all men, especially those who are of this household of faith (6:10). To whom are we to do this good? We are to love unconditionally all people, but especially those within our fellowship. I have met a host of people who come to us for help outside of our fellowship. I have fed them and put gas in their cars and never once have they ever come back to our fellowship on a Sunday morning. I do not wish to become cynical nor do I wish to turn a deaf ear to the plight of the outcast, but I equally understand that my primary obligation is to the members of our family. We are to be here for each other in our times of need.

Shepherding the Sheep: (What’s the NEXT STEP?)

1. Grace living gives as it has been given
2. Grace living sows its gifts in the soil of eternity. Grace living sees the futility of the present passing age. All of us are planting seed. The issue is not the seed planted, but the soil into which the seed is sown.
3. Grace living invests by faith in the returns of the future.
4. Grace living ministers from the overflow to the fellow members within the body of Christ.
5. Grace living is Christ-Exalting, Word-Centered, Global-Impacting and Grace-Based.
6. May God continue to use His Word in the exaltation of His Son and in the expansion of His Work.