

## **Burden-Bearing - Part 2**

Galatians 6:2-5

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### TRANSCRIPT:

Galatians 6:1-5 reads, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load."

Let us pray. Our Lord, is there not a cause where Your people are hungry, who desire to be revived, as we have just sung? So send Your Spirit now, we ask. Strengthen our failing hearts, for we believe in the Holy Spirit. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

In Galatians chapter 6, verses 1 to 10, Paul is explaining to the Galatians what life looks like in the Spirit, practically. That is, life in the Spirit is not just the fruit of the Spirit being worked in our lives, but it expresses itself in burden-bearing, in restoring one another in love, in sharing, and in doing good. So that they might understand that the Christian life is a life that is not just something that happens merely internally, but what God does inwardly flows externally. So that you can know a tree, as Jesus says, by its fruit.

And we looked at last week, burden-bearing, the first part of verse 2, and we discovered and saw that burden-bearing is something that every Christian is called to do. That we, as God's people, are to display this love for one another in fulfillment of the law of Christ by coming alongside one another in our burdens, in our troubles, in our hardships, and bearing the weight of another. We saw that this is what Jesus did, and not only in His life but also in His death as He bore our sins in His own body upon the cross.

But today, I'd like us to consider the rest of verse 2 down to verses 3 to 5, particularly, and focus on the hindrances and the cure to burden-bearing. So, there were hindrances to burden-bearing, or one main one revealed in

this text, and the subsequent cure for that hindrance, so that we might be better equipped in bearing the burdens of others and living life in the Spirit effectively.

Now, what is something that we need to understand and notice first is what the Bible says in verse 2. It says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." And then verse 3 starts like this: "For if anyone thinks..." For if anyone thinks what? He shows here is that life in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit is one thing in that you bear burdens and the burdens of others, but your thinking will affect your walking, is essentially what he's trying to draw out here.

In verse 3, he says, "For if anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." So, he's saying, walking in the Spirit, life in the Spirit, looks like coming alongside people, bearing their burdens, but be careful how you think because the way in which you think will affect the way in which you walk and the way in which you behave, the way in which you see burdens of others, and dare to embrace those burdens and to assist them. And so, there's a relationship of themes here that we cannot miss as we move forward.

That walking in the Spirit and burden-bearing is what we need to do by reason of our activity, but just because we are doing the action, it doesn't mean that we are safe. We must be mindful of how we think because if you think wrongly, you will eventually give up burden-bearing, and then you'll fail to walk in the Spirit. And Paul wants the people here at Galatia to understand that, and I hope that we will understand that, just as the proverb says, it says to us, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for out of it are the springs of life."

What issues out of your life comes from your heart, which the Bible speaks of as our minds, which relates to the very sphere in which we think. And the hindrance that is in this passage of Scripture to burden-bearing, the one main hindrance that Paul wants us to be mindful of, is the hindrance of high-mindedness. Proverbs 3 says, "For if anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself."

There is a hindrance to burden-bearing, and it is the hindrance of high-mindedness, pride, and it is built upon an all too common worldly ideology that is resident in too many of the people of God's hearts even today. We all struggle with this to some extent. Pride is like one of those sermons, like if you think you've overcome pride, you're proud, you know that kind of thing. If you think you've mastered prayer, well, you're not really; you need to pray more. It's one of those sermons, right?

But grasp this because this is a constant fight and battle that we must reckon with and deal with and be mindful of our thinking. It's an all too common worldly ideology that's resident in Christian minds. The world says opposite to what the passage says here; the world says we are somebody. Paul says we are nobody. And the idea of the mind being a high-minded thing is a worldly ideology really wrapped up in this concept of self-worth, confidence in my abilities, the idea that I am needed.

People today feel that they derive their self, their value, by their self-worth. So what you think of yourself is really who you are, and the idea is that you develop your self-worth by positive thoughts of yourself. What that leads to is competitiveness, where you're always comparing yourself with others. What it also leads to is a narcissistic mind and behavior and pride. It leads to a certain kind of blindness that you then see life as you're the center of it and forget about others.

The worst of it is that it leads to false estimations of your strength and of your weaknesses, and that you live your life in a feedback loop bubble where it's like an echo chamber. The only information that you want to receive is that which helps build your self-worth. So criticism becomes the enemy, not the friend of your improvement, because criticism makes you feel less good about yourself.

This is a worldly ideology resident in the hearts of many Christians but is out there most prevalent in the world that seeks to help us feel like we are somebody. But Paul says, "If anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." In fact, this is a mark of the children of the last days, those that think themselves to be something. The Bible says that men shall be lovers of themselves, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents. That's because they think they're something, and that their parents have nothing to give them because they have it all worked out.

Ungrateful, unholy, heartless, swollen with conceit. And the result of such high-mindedness is that there is blindness. Blindness to the burdens of others. You see, it works against this selflessness of which the Bible calls us to, to lay down our lives for one another. It works against the law of Christ because it exalts us up and enthrones us above Christ and causes us to think that we are somebody and in need of nothing.

And this high-mindedness that is a hindrance to burden-bearing produces in people an attitude that they become too big for the problems of others. You see, the idea is, look, each to themselves. You have your problems; I have my problems; it's just too messy to come down here and try and help you. You just work it out yourself, and I'll work out my own things myself. High-mindedness. Too big to stoop down to help one who is hurting.

The high-mindedness keeps us from fulfilling the law of Christ because high-mindedness thinks that we are without our own problems. And therefore, it works against the law of Christ because we don't want to receive help from anybody either. So not only are we too big for the problems of others by high-mindedness because we think ourselves to be somebody, but also that we think that we are without our own problems.

You know the kind of mentality that says something like this, "Why can't everyone's life just be like mine? So easy." Yeah, okay. Blind, right? Blind to your own problems, blind to the corruptions of your own hearts, blind to your own depravity, blind to your own need for help. The problem is everyone's life is just like yours and mine. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

And so the high-minded think that they are without their own problems and therefore others should be without problems, so why should we help them? But also, they develop a comparative mindset. And this sort of says in this text here in verse number four, it says, "But let each one examine his own work, then he will have rejoicing in himself alone," and these words here, "and not in another." The implication is the person that is high-minded, who thinks himself to be somebody, rejoices and boasts in comparing to others.

The high-minded boasts in his neighbor, in a sense that they've fallen; I haven't. And Paul says that's empty boasting. That's just proud boasting. That's not a true rejoicing in the true state of things. That's just you comparing yourselves amongst one another, which is not wise. That is not what biblical rejoicing ought to look like. That's the kind of boasting that measures itself by the standards and shortcomings of others, and it's a false boasting, and it's built on sand. It's not a real estimation of yourself.

All this can be demonstrated in the parable that Jesus tells of the Pharisee and the publican that went into the temple to pray. And the Pharisee goes in there, and he says this, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all that I get." Well, he thought he was somebody, right? He thought he was righteous. And there he stands in the temple, thus praying with himself, blind to the burdens of others. You see, when he looks at the other man, he doesn't see a man burdened down whom he should stoop down to help. He says, "God, I thank you that I'm not like this man." Completely blind to this tax collector's burden that's weighing down on him. Filled with self-conceit, the Pharisee is blinded. But he also thinks that he's without his problems either, doesn't he? No indication that this man needs any kind of help.

He stands in the temple before the thrice holy God and he prays with such confidence. So as to show that hey, there are people like tax collectors with problems, but God, hey God, aren't You thankful for me? Is really what he's trying to say when he says, "I thank You, God, that I'm not like these guys." He's recommending himself to God. God, You should be proud of me right now. High-minded, doesn't see the burdens of others, thinks he's without problems. And you can see it right there.

All this is built upon the sand of a comparative mindset because he goes in there not comparing himself with the holy God before whom he stands, but before this tax collector. And says, "Hey, I'm good." And Paul says that's high-mindedness. And it works against the call to fulfill the law of Christ by burden-bearing. Paul says this is sinful psychology of the human heart. This is the way that the heart thinks. This is the way that the mind processes. This is the way that it operates. It regards itself to be somebody. It considers itself to be somebody.

And that attitude, if unchecked within the hearts of believers, feeds pride and feeds self-righteousness and feeds and works against the law of Christ, works against love toward our neighbor, and the selflessness of which we are called to in this passage. And Paul then explains to us the cure for such high-mindedness. Firstly, by wanting them to acknowledge the deception of high-mindedness. "If anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives his own self." It's deceptive because you think yourself to be something, but God says you're nothing. In fact, it's the opposite of what God says, right? And Paul says this is all deception. This is all corruption. This is all backwards and on its head.

And Paul basically says we need to constantly align ourselves with God's word. "If any man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives his own self." What he's basically trying to say is that we are nothing of ourselves. Meaning that our intrinsic value is not found in our self-worth, but our value is a derived value given to us by the God who made us so that what we are worth is what God says of us, not what we say of ourselves.

Because if anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives his own self. High-mindedness builds its thoughts of itself, as I said, upon others and comparing, upon the value of someone's own self-worth, and does not see their value as a value derived from God.

You see, the way that the Bible explains the human is as a valuable creature of God, but all of its value, all of our value, is dependent and derived from God. Our fundamental identity is derived from God. You know the

words all too well. The Lord God said, "Let us make man in our own image." What makes you greater than the rest of the creation, the animals, the trees, all the rest of the things, is because God said something. He said, "Let us make man in our image." Of this, He did not say of the animals, of this He did not say of the trees, of this He did not say of the universe, but He said this of you and of us. He said, "Let us make man in our own image."

So man then, in his fundamental identity, becomes an image-bearer of God. You see, great value, the image-bearer of God, what a great thought, but it's derived. Derived because of what God says of us, dependent upon God. It's because of God. So we are nothing of ourselves; we are image-bearers of God because God has made us in His image.

But more than this, also our capabilities and capacities are derived from God. This is why Paul can say when anyone thinks of himself as something, he's nothing. Not just in your fundamental identity that you are who you are because God says you're made in My image. But more than this, even your powers, your mental capacities, your hands, your feet, your eyes, and their continual working and the things that they are empowered to do are all derived from God.

This is how God addresses the people there in Acts chapter number 17. He says, "The God who made the world and everything in it, being the Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself," listen to this, "gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him. Yet He is actually not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being, as even as some of your own poets have said, for we are indeed His offspring."

What's Paul saying here? He's saying it's in God that you live and move and have your being. Are you alive? It's because of God. Do you breathe? It's because of God. Do you see? It's because of God. Do you have hands that work? It's because of God. And therefore, all the value that comes forth from you that serves the world and that basically the world around you looks at and says, "Wow, look at the wisdom of this man." That is a wisdom derived from God.

So God can say to the king Nebuchadnezzar, who looked at his kingdoms and said, "Look at all the things that I have made with my own hands." And God says, "You eat grass like an ox because those hands and that mind is from Me. For in Him you live and move and have your being." You are God's

offspring. You are God's creation. And the creation is not only made by God but is sustained by God and empowered by God. And the Bible says here in this text that He needs nothing from us, but everything in the world has its power and has its energy and has its life from Him.

Do you get the picture here? God is outside of His creation and not in need of His creation. He creates His creation out of pure love and out of the glory of His own name. And He empowers His creation, and He feeds His creation, and He gives life to His creation, all so that I can serve back to the glory of His name. And He says, "I don't need anything. If I was hungry, as we read in the Bible reading, I wouldn't even ask you. I own the cattle of a thousand hills. The hills are mine." Everything is mine, God says. And Paul's saying, don't be deceived. If anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives his own self. Because everything that we have in our fundamental identity and in all our capacities and our powers are all derived from God.

This is how Paul deals with the high-mindedness of the Corinthian church. In 1 Corinthians 4:7, he says it like this, "What do you have that you did not receive?" That is probably one of the most powerful questions in the scripture. Think on it. What do you have that you did not receive? If you then received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? Do you see what he's saying here? We are not in the position of creating. We're not in a position, in the sense that everything should... We are recipients, is what he's saying. Everything that we have is received. And he's basically saying, if you're boasting, how can you boast, actually, is what he's saying. How can you boast if you recognize that everything you have is received?

So the cure to high-mindedness is first acknowledging that there is this major deception in this idea of "I am valuable in myself, apart from God," and to recognize that everything we have is derived from God so that we don't boast but rather recognize that we are what we are by God's grace. Now that would help with burden-bearing, don't you think so? Don't you think that would help with loving your neighbor as yourself? This is the hindrance, is high-mindedness, and Paul says be careful how you think. So think God's thoughts after Him and align and recalibrate your thinking according to the word of God that we are nothing of ourselves and never forget that. Ever, ever, never forget that.

And then Paul gives a second cure for high-mindedness in verse number four. Not only should we think God's thoughts after Him regarding who we are, but secondly, he says here, "But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." Paul says conduct a continual honest examination of your work. "But let every man examine his own work." Wow, that's challenging.

All right, imagine for a moment with me this scene. Imagine you had an employee, maybe some of you do. Anyway, let's just keep it hypothetical for now. That's horrible, lazy, not delivering on time, the quality of his work is shonky, you always have to fix it. He spends more time fixing it, it seems, than what it takes him to do it. And so you sit him down for a performance review, and you ask him this question, "How do you think you're going, mate?" He replies, "Look, I think I'm doing great. Really, it's great. I love the job. I'm enjoying it. I feel confident. Actually, I believe I'm getting better at it, and I'm doing actually better than the other guys, I believe. And I actually think that I'm a great contributor to the success of this business."

Now, the post-modernist would say, "Well, if that's how you feel, then yes, that's how it is. You know, performance is quite relative, you know, and we probably really need to begin to examine what is regarded as good work ethic. Maybe we've just got it all wrong." For the honest, true blue Aussie mate, "You're dreaming. The proof's in the pie. And from where I'm sitting, it's undercooked. Look, how about we run an acid test and have a fair dinkum look at your work, eh?" Now, the translation of that is, "Let each man examine his own work." He's basically saying, "Look, it doesn't matter what you say about what you think you are, let's have a look at what you're producing, and then we'll have a look at how you're performing."

You get it, just in case you're not used to the Aussie slang. That's what Paul says. He says, "Sit down and constantly look at your work, and then make a judgment of who you really are." And that will cure your high-mindedness. Why? Why is it important to examine your own work? Well, it keeps you from the self-deception of high-mindedness. Because there's something in the human heart that likes to think that your desires are where you are. Look, your desires hopefully are where you're going, but they are not a true estimation of where you are. Your work and your fruit is where you actually are. And in the human heart, we deceive ourselves by thinking if this is what I'm dreaming of, that's where I am.

But that is not what the biblical model is and example is of a true estimation of one's work. The idea of you thinking you're something when you're nothing is built on that same idea, isn't it? It's a false estimation of one's own self. And what Paul is saying is the proof is in the pudding. Just look at your work and make a continual examination of it, and it will keep you from thinking of yourself to be something when you are nothing. It will keep you from this self-deception. Your work demonstrates the true state of affairs. It keeps you humble, it keeps you real, and that's the kind of self-examination that will produce a genuine rejoicing. This is what he's saying. "And then you will rejoice in yourself and not in another." You actually have some produce that you can say, "God works in me both to will and to do of



His good pleasure," and therefore there has been this good fruit that has come from my life because I have derived strength from God, and God has worked in me and through me, and I can look at this thing and say, "Wow, praise God." This is true rejoicing. Not, "I'm better than so and so." Not because he cuts corners and I don't. Not because I'm this and that and the other. But because I am depending upon God, God is working in me, and the fruit of my labors is effectual through grace, so that I can rejoice genuinely in the grace of God in my life and not in another. That's the kind of examination that leads to genuine rejoicing and it breaks down this idea of false comparison between others and a false estimation of our own selves.

Now, by what standard should you conduct an examination of your own work? Well, the context tells us, doesn't it? By the law of Christ. "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ," and so take the law of Christ. Take the standard of God. Take the holiness of God. Take the love of Christ Jesus demonstrated in His life, demonstrated in His death, and hold that up as a rule to all your labors. As a measuring rod. Let it measure your action. Let it measure your motives. Let it measure your behaviors. Let it test your work. Let it be as it were the microscope that you examine your work under. Let it be the law of Christ. Let it be the holiness of God and the love of God in Christ. And the law of Christ is not a quantitative rule; it's a qualitative rule, which means the law of Christ tells us about the quality of your work. Is my work done in love? Is it done in love for God? Is it done in love for my neighbor? Is it done because I'm wanting to get reward and pats on the back?

You know what Jesus tells the Pharisees? They have their reward. Why? Because when they're about to put money in the offering box, they blow the trumpet, as it were, on the street corners, and He says they'll be seen of men, and because they want to be seen of men, they have their reward. What's their reward? The praise of man. Not the praise of God. But when you work for the glory of God, motivated by the love of God in Christ Jesus, and demonstrate and fulfill the law of Christ by walking in the spirit, you produce works that are worthy of praise because of God's powerful working within you. And at least a genuine rejoicing.

So therefore, take the measuring rod of the law of Christ and test your work. Because the amount of work is not what it's about. Anyone can accumulate wood, hay, and stubble. And in fact, a lot are going to do that on the judgment day. You know the thing about wood, hay, and stubble? Is that if you put them in a pile over this corner, it will pile up really high very quickly. But if I was to say to you, put gold, silver, and precious stones on this side of the room, well, it may not be a super high pile that can be seen of men, as it were. But you know the substance of the precious stones that are there are worth more than the stack of wood, hay, and stubble over

there. And God says, you know what's going to happen? There's going to come a day where the fire of God's judgment will test all your works. And you're better off making a self-examination of your work now under the law of Christ and having God run that law and the fire of His law through all your works and see what remains.

Aim for true rejoicing, be done with false deception, realize that the law of Christ and burden-bearing and living out the Christian life, that is true ministry. That is what it looks like to glorify God and honor God and live for the kingdom and for His name, to bear one another's burdens and fulfill the law of Christ. And see to it that we do it in a way that we're motivated by love and not by self-glory because that day will declare it.

And this is what he gets to in verse number five. Look what he says here, "For each one shall bear his own load." It could be translated, "For each one will bear his own load." What Paul is simply saying by this statement is that every single person will bear his own load. The statement is future, the statement is inevitable because it will happen, and the statement is personal because everyone will bear his own load. I want you to get this and understand this. What is the meaning of this? What is Paul referring to here? What is both future, inevitable, and personal that every one of us will bear one day? It says it in Romans 14, "Each one of us will give an account of himself to God."

The word "load" here is a different word to the word "burden" in verse number two. It's a lighter type of burden of which we are all responsible to carry. You have to understand this. So we are to bear one another's burdens, but also he's saying you need to carry your own burdens. So what is he saying? Is he contradicting himself here? Well, he's not contradicting himself. He's trying to help us to understand as we fulfill the law of Christ in bearing one another's burdens, that word "burden" is the heavy burdens which people need assistance to bear.

But what Paul is saying here in verse number five is that there is a kind of burden and there is a kind of load that no one else can bear for you but yourself. And that is the burden of personal responsibility that we will all give an account of ourselves to God. And it has been translated by some translator like this, "Every man will shoulder his own pack." And Paul's point is this, that there is a burden that each one of us must bear at the judgment day of God. And it speaks to us about the importance of personal responsibility and taking a personal responsibility for all our actions, for all our behaviors, despite our situations.

You say, "But I'm so burdened down and heavy laden, surely I am not responsible." Paul says, "No, you shoulder your own pack. You carry your

own bag." You have to understand this. So we are to bear one another's burdens, but also he's saying you need to carry your own burdens. So what is he saying? Is he contradicting himself here? Well, he's not contradicting himself. He's trying to help us to understand as we fulfill the law of Christ in bearing one another's burdens, that word "burden" is the heavy burdens which people need assistance to bear.

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You say, "But I'm so burdened down and heavy laden, surely I am not responsible." Paul says, "No, you shoulder your own pack. You carry your own bag." You have to understand this. So we are to bear one another's burdens, but also he's saying you need to carry your own burdens. So what is he saying? Is he contradicting himself here? Well, he's not contradicting himself. Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load.

Let us pray. Our Lord, is there not a cause where Your people are hungry, who desire to be revived, as we have just sung? So send Your Spirit now, we ask. Strengthen our failing hearts, for we believe in the Holy Spirit. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

In Galatians chapter number 6, verses 1 to 10, Paul is explaining to the Galatians what life looks like in the Spirit, practically. That is, life in the Spirit is not just the fruit of the Spirit being worked in our lives, but it expresses itself in burden-bearing, it expresses itself in restoring one another in love, it expresses itself in sharing, as we're going to look at, and also in doing good. So that they might understand that the Christian life is a life that is not just something that happens merely internally, but what God does inwardly flows externally. So that you can know a tree, as Jesus says, by its fruit.

And we looked at last week, burden-bearing, the first part of verse number 2, and we discovered and saw that burden-bearing is something that every Christian is called to do. That we, as God's people, are to display this love for one another in fulfillment of the law of Christ by coming alongside one another in our burdens, in our troubles, in our hardships, and bearing the weight of another. We saw that this is what Jesus did, and not only in His life but also in His death, as He bore our sins in His own body upon the cross.

But today, I'd like us to consider the rest of verse 2 down to verses 3 to 5, particularly, and focus on the hindrances and the cure to burden-bearing. So, there were hindrances to burden-bearing, or one main one revealed in this text, and the subsequent cure for that hindrance, so that we might be better equipped in bearing the burdens of others and living life in the Spirit effectively.

Now, what is something that we need to understand and notice first is what the Bible says in verse number 2. It says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." And then verse 3 starts like this: "For if anyone thinks..." For if anyone thinks, what? He shows here is that life in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit is one thing in that you bear burdens and the burdens of others, but your thinking will affect your walking, is essentially what he's trying to draw out here.

In verse number 3, he says, "For if anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." So, he's saying, walking in the Spirit, life in the Spirit, looks like coming alongside people, bearing their burdens, but be careful how you think because the way in which you think will affect the way in which you walk and the way in which you behave, the way in which you see burdens of others, and dare to embrace those burdens and to assist them. And so, there's a relationship of themes here that we cannot miss as we move forward.

That walking in the Spirit and burden-bearing is what we need to do by reason of our activity, but just because we are doing the action, it doesn't mean that we are safe. We must be mindful of how we think because if you think wrongly, you will eventually give up burden-bearing, and then you'll fail to walk in the Spirit. And Paul wants the people here at Galatia to understand that, and I hope that we will understand that, just as the proverb says, it says to us, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for out of it are the springs of life."

What issues out of your life comes from your heart, which the Bible speaks of as our minds, which relates to the very sphere in which we think. And the hindrance that is in this passage of Scripture to burden-bearing, the

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There is a hindrance to burden-bearing, and it is the hindrance of high-mindedness, pride, and it is built upon an all too common worldly ideology that is resident in too many of the people of God's hearts, even today. We all struggle with this to some extent. Pride is like one of those sermons, like, if you think you've overcome pride, you're proud, you know that kind of thing. If you think you've mastered prayer, well, you're not really; you need to pray more. It's one of those sermons, right?

But grasp this because this is a constant fight and battle that we must reckon with and deal with and be mindful of our thinking. It's an all too common worldly ideology that's resident in Christian minds. The world says, opposite to what the passage says here, the world says we are somebody. Paul says we are nobody. And the idea of the mind being a high-minded thing is a worldly ideology, really wrapped up in this concept of self-worth, confidence in my abilities, the idea that I am needed.

People today feel that they derive their self, their value, by their self-worth. So what you think of yourself is really who you are, and the idea is that you develop your self-worth by positive thoughts of yourself. What that leads to is competitiveness, where you're always comparing yourself with others. What it also leads to is a narcissistic mind and behavior and pride. It leads to a certain kind of blindness that you then see life as you're the center of it and forget about others. The worst of it is that it leads to false estimations of your strength and of your weaknesses, and that you live your life in a feedback loop bubble, where it's like an echo chamber. The only information that you want to receive is that which helps build your self-worth. So criticism becomes the enemy, not the friend of your improvement, because criticism makes you feel less good about yourself.

This is a worldly ideology resident in the hearts of many Christians but is out there most prevalent in the world that seeks to help us feel like we are somebody. But Paul says, "If anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives himself." In fact, this is a mark of the children of the last days, those that think themselves to be something. The Bible says that men shall be lovers of themselves, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents. That's because they think they're something, and that their parents have nothing to give them because they have it all worked out.

Ungrateful, unholy, heartless, swollen with conceit. And the result of such high-mindedness is that there is blindness. Blindness to the burdens of others. You see, it works against this selflessness of which the Bible calls

us to, to lay down our lives for one another. It works against the law of Christ because it exalts us up and enthrones us above Christ and causes us to think that we are somebody and in need of nothing.

And this high-mindedness that is a hindrance to burden-bearing produces in people an attitude that they become too big for the problems of others. You see, the idea is, "Look, each to themselves. You have your problems; I have my problems. It's just too messy to come down here and try and help you. You just work it out yourself, and I'll work out my own things myself." High-mindedness. Too big to stoop down to help one who is hurting.

The high-mindedness keeps us from fulfilling the law of Christ because high-mindedness thinks that we are without our own problems. And therefore, it works against the law of Christ because we don't want to receive help from anybody either. So not only are we too big for the problems of others by high-mindedness because we think ourselves to be somebody, but also that we think that we are without our own problems. You know the kind of mentality that says something like this, "Why can't everyone's life just be like mine? So easy." Yeah, okay. Blind, right? Blind to your own problems, blind to the corruptions of your own hearts, blind to your own depravity, blind to your own need for help.

The problem is everyone's life is just like yours and mine. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And so the high-minded think that they are without their own problems and therefore others should be without problems, so why should we help them? But also, they develop a comparative mindset. And this sort of says in this text here in verse number four, it says, "But let each one examine his own work, then he will have rejoicing in himself alone," and this words here, "and not in another." The implication is the person that is high-minded, who thinks himself to be somebody, rejoices and boasts in comparing to others.

The high-minded boasts in his neighbor, in a sense that they've fallen; I haven't. And Paul says that's empty boasting. That's just proud boasting. That's not a true rejoicing in the true state of things. That's just you comparing yourselves amongst one another, which is not wise. That is not what biblical rejoicing ought to look like. That's the kind of boasting that measures itself by the standards and shortcomings of others, and it's a false boasting, and it's built on sand. It's not a real estimation of yourself.

All this can be demonstrated in the parable that Jesus tells of the Pharisee and the publican that went into the temple to pray. And the Pharisee goes in there, and he says this, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice in a week; I give tithes of all that I get." Well, he thought he was

somebody, right? He thought he was righteous. And there he stands in the temple, thus praying with himself, blind to the burdens of others. You see, when he looks at the other man, he doesn't see a man burdened down whom he should stoop down to help. He says, "God, I thank you that I'm not like this man." Completely blind to this tax collector's burden that's weighing down on him. Filled with self-conceit, the Pharisee is blinded. But he also thinks that he's without his problems either, does he? No indication that this man needs any kind of help. He stands in the temple before the thrice holy God and he prays with such confidence. So as to show that, hey, there are people like tax collectors with problems, but God, hey God, aren't You thankful for me? Is really what he's trying to say when he says, "I thank You, God, that I'm not like these guys." He's recommending himself to God. God, You should be proud of me right now. High-mindedness doesn't see the burdens of others, thinks he's without problems. And you can see it right there.

All this is built upon the sand of a comparative mindset because he goes in there not comparing himself with the holy God before whom he stands, but before this tax collector. And says, "Hey, I'm good." And Paul says that's high-mindedness. And it works against the call to fulfill the law of Christ by burden-bearing. Paul says this is sinful psychology of the human heart. This is the way that the heart thinks. This is the way that the mind processes. This is the way that it operates. It regards itself to be somebody. It considers itself to be somebody. And that attitude, if unchecked within the hearts of believers, feeds pride and feeds self-righteousness and feeds and works against the law of Christ, works against love toward our neighbor, and the selflessness of which we are called to in this passage.

And Paul then explains to us the cure for such high-mindedness. Firstly, by wanting them to acknowledge the deception of high-mindedness. "If anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives his own self." It's deceptive because you think yourself to be something, but God says you're nothing. In fact, it's the opposite of what God says, right? And Paul says this is all deception. This is all corruption. This is all backwards and on its head. And Paul basically says we need to constantly align ourselves with God's word. "If any man thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives his own self." What he's basically trying to say is that we are nothing of ourselves.

Listen to what Paul's argument is here. Are we actually nothing? No. I'm looking at something today. And the Bible teaches us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. The Bible teaches us that we're made in God's image. The Bible teaches us many things about the human creation that puts it as the pinnacle of God's creation, above all of the created order. So what is Paul saying here? "If anybody thinks himself to be something when he is

nothing, he deceives his own self." What Paul is helping them understand is this: We are actually nothing of ourselves, meaning that our intrinsic value is not found in our self-worth, but our value is a derived value given to us by the God who made us, so that what we are worth is what God says of us, not what we say of ourselves.

Because if anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives his own self. High-mindedness builds its thoughts of itself, as I said, upon others and comparing, upon the value of someone's own self-worth, and does not see their value as a value derived from God.

You see, the way that the Bible explains the human is as a valuable creature of God, but all of its value, all of our value, is dependent and derived from God. Our fundamental identity is derived from God. You know the words all too well. The Lord God said, "Let us make man in our own image." What makes you greater than the rest of the creation, the animals, the trees, all the rest of the things, is because God said something. He said, "Let us make man in our image." Of this, He did not say of the animals, of this He did not say of the trees, of this He did not say of the universe, but He said this of you and of us. He said, "Let us make man in our own image." So man then, in his fundamental identity, becomes an image-bearer of God. Great value, the image-bearer of God, what a great thought, but it's derived. Derived because of what God says of us, dependent upon God. It's because of God.

So we are nothing of ourselves; we are image-bearers of God because God has made us in His image. But more than this, also our capabilities and capacities are derived from God. This is why Paul can say when anyone thinks of himself as something, he's nothing. Not just in your fundamental identity that you are who you are because God says you're made in My image, but more than this, even your powers, your mental capacities, your hands, your feet, your eyes, and their continual working, and the things that they are empowered to do, are all derived from God.

This is how God addresses the people there in Acts chapter number 17. He says, "The God who made the world and everything in it, being the Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself," listen to this, "gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward Him and find Him. Yet He is actually not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and have our being, as even as some of your own poets have said, for we are indeed His offspring."



What's Paul saying here? He's saying it's in God that you live and move and have your being. Are you alive? It's because of God. Do you breathe? It's because of God. Do you see? It's because of God. Do you have hands that work? It's because of God. And therefore, all the value that comes forth from you that serves the world and that basically the world around you looks at and says, "Wow, look at the wisdom of this man," that is a wisdom derived from God.

So God can say to the king Nebuchadnezzar, who looked at his kingdoms and said, "Look at all the things that I have made with my own hands," and God says, "You eat grass like an ox because those hands and that mind is from Me. For in Him you live and move and have your being. You are God's offspring. You are God's creation." And the creation is not only made by God but is sustained by God and empowered by God. And the Bible says here in this text that He needs nothing from us, but everything in the world has its power and has its energy and has its life from Him.

Do you get the picture here? God is outside of His creation and not in need of His creation. He creates His creation out of pure love and out of the glory of His own name. And He empowers His creation, and He feeds His creation, and He gives life to His creation, all so that I can serve back to the glory of His name. And He says, "I don't need anything. If I was hungry, as we read in the Bible reading, I wouldn't even ask you. I own the cattle of a thousand hills. The hills are Mine." Everything is Mine, God says. And Paul's saying, don't be deceived. "If anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceives his own self." Because everything that we have in our fundamental identity and in all our capacities and our powers are all derived from God.

This is how Paul deals with the high-mindedness of the Corinthian church. In 1 Corinthians 4:7, he says it like this, "What do you have that you did not receive?" That is probably one of the most powerful questions in the Scripture. Think on it. "What do you have that you did not receive? If you then received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" Do you see what he's saying here? We are not in the position of creating. We're not in a position, in the sense that everything should... We are recipients, is what he's saying. Everything that we have is received. And he's basically saying, if you're boasting, how can you boast, actually, is what he's saying. How can you boast if you recognize that everything you have is received?

So the cure to high-mindedness is first acknowledging that there is this major deception in this idea of "I am valuable in myself, apart from God," and to recognize that everything we have is derived from God, so that we don't boast but rather recognize that we are what we are by God's grace.

Now that would help with burden-bearing, don't you think so? Don't you think that would help with loving your neighbor as yourself? This is the hindrance, is high-mindedness, and Paul says, be careful how you think. So think God's thoughts after Him and align and recalibrate your thinking according to the word of God, that we are nothing of ourselves, and never forget that. Ever, ever, never forget that.

And then Paul gives a second cure for high-mindedness in verse number four. Not only should we think God's thoughts after Him regarding who we are, but secondly, he says here, "But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." Paul says, conduct a continual, honest examination of your work. "But let every man examine his own work." Wow, that's challenging.

All right, imagine for a moment with me this scene. Imagine you had an employee, maybe some of you do. Anyway, let's just keep it hypothetical for now. That's horrible, lazy, not delivering on time, the quality of his work is shonky, you always have to fix it. He spends more time fixing it, it seems, than what it takes him to do it. And so you sit him down for a performance review, and you ask him this question, "How do you think you're going, mate?" He replies, "Look, I think I'm doing great. Really, it's great. I love the job. I'm enjoying it. I feel confident. Actually, I believe I'm getting better at it, and I'm doing actually better than the other guys, I believe. And I actually think that I'm a great contributor to the success of this business."

Now, the post-modernist would say, "Well, if that's how you feel, then yes, that's how it is. You know, performance is quite relative, you know, and we probably really need to begin to examine what is regarded as good work ethic. Maybe we've just got it all wrong." For the honest, true blue Aussie, "Mate, you're dreaming. The proof's in the pie. And from where I'm sitting, it's undercooked. Look, how about we run an acid test and have a fair dinkum look at your work, eh?" Now, the translation of that is, "Let each man examine his own work." He's basically saying, "Look, it doesn't matter what you say about what you think you are, let's have a look at what you're producing, and then we'll have a look at how you're performing."

You get it, just in case you're not used to the Aussie slang. That's what Paul says. He says, "Sit down and constantly look at your work, and then make a judgment of who you really are." And that will cure your high-mindedness. Why? Why is it important to examine your own work? Well, it keeps you from the self-deception of high-mindedness. Because there's something in the human heart that likes to think that your desires are where you are. Look, your desires hopefully are where you're going, but they are not a true estimation of where you are. Your work and your fruit is where you actually are. And in the human heart, we deceive ourselves by

thinking, "If this is what I'm dreaming of, that's where I am." But that is not what the biblical model is and example is of a true estimation of one's work.

The idea of you thinking you're something when you're nothing is built on that same idea, isn't it? It's a false estimation of one's own self. And what Paul is saying is, "The proof is in the pudding. Just look at your work and make a continual examination of it, and it will keep you from thinking of yourself to be something when you are nothing. It will keep you from this self-deception." Your work demonstrates the true state of affairs. It keeps you humble, it keeps you real, and that's the kind of self-examination that will produce a genuine rejoicing. This is what he's saying. "And then you will rejoice in yourself and not in another." You actually have some produce that you can say, "God works in me both to will and to do of His good pleasure," and therefore, there has been this good fruit that has come from my life because I have derived strength from God, and God has worked in me and through me, and I can look at this thing and say, "Wow, praise God." This is true rejoicing. Not, "I'm better than so-and-so." Not because he cuts corners and I don't. Not because I'm this and that and the other. But because I am depending upon God, God is working in me, and the fruit of my labors is effectual through grace, so that I can rejoice genuinely in the grace of God in my life and not in another. That's the kind of examination that leads to genuine rejoicing and it breaks down this idea of false comparison between others and a false estimation of our own selves.

Now, by what standard should you conduct an examination of your own work? Well, the context tells us, doesn't it? By the law of Christ. "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ," and so take the law of Christ. Take the standard of God. Take the holiness of God. Take the love of Christ Jesus demonstrated in His life, demonstrated in His death, and hold that up as a rule to all your labors. As a measuring rod. Let it measure your action. Let it measure your motives. Let it measure your behaviors. Let it test your work. Let it be as it were the microscope that you examine your work under. Let it be the law of Christ. Let it be the holiness of God and the love of God in Christ. And the law of Christ is not a quantitative rule; it's a qualitative rule, which means the law of Christ tells us about the quality of your work. Is my work done in love? Is it done in love for God? Is it done in love for my neighbor? Is it done because I'm wanting to get reward and pats on the back?

You know what Jesus tells the Pharisees? They have their reward. Why? Because when they're about to put money in the offering box, they blow the trumpet, as it were, on the street corners, and He says, "They'll be seen of men," and because they want to be seen of men, they have their reward. What's their reward? The praise of man. Not the praise of God. But when you work for the glory of God, motivated by the love of God in Christ Jesus,

and demonstrate and fulfill the law of Christ by walking in the Spirit, you produce works that are worthy of praise because of God's powerful working within you. And at least a genuine rejoicing.

So therefore, take the measuring rod of the law of Christ and test your work. Because the amount of work is not what it's about. Anyone can accumulate wood, hay, and stubble. And in fact, a lot are going to do that on the judgment day. You know the thing about wood, hay, and stubble? Is that if you put them in a pile over this corner, it will pile up really high, very quickly. But if I was to say to you, put gold, silver, and precious stones on this side of the room, well, it may not be a super high pile that can be seen of men, as it were. But you know the substance of the precious stones that are there are worth more than the stack of wood, hay, and stubble over there. And God says, "You know what's going to happen? There's going to come a day where the fire of God's judgment will test all your works." And you're better off making a self-examination of your work now, under the law of Christ, and having God run that law and the fire of His law through all your works and see what remains.

Aim for true rejoicing, be done with false deception, realize that the law of Christ and burden-bearing and living out the Christian life, that is true ministry. That is what it looks like to glorify God and honor God and live for the kingdom and for His name, to bear one another's burdens and fulfill the law of Christ. And see to it that we do it in a way that we're motivated by love and not by self-glory, because that day will declare it.

And this is what he gets to in verse number five. Look what he says here, "For each one shall bear his own load." It could be translated, "For each one will bear his own load." What Paul is simply saying by this statement is that every single person will bear his own load. The statement is future, the statement is inevitable because it will happen, and the statement is personal because everyone will bear his own load. I want you to get this and understand this. What is the meaning of this? What is Paul referring to here? What is both future, inevitable, and personal that every one of us will bear one day? It says it in Romans 14, "Each one of us will give an account of himself to God."

The word "load" here is a different word to the word "burden" in verse number two. It's a lighter type of burden, of which we are all responsible to carry. You have to understand this. So we are to bear one another's burdens, but also he's saying you need to carry your own burdens. So what is he saying? Is he contradicting himself here? Well, he's not contradicting himself. He's trying to help us to understand, as we fulfill the law of Christ in bearing one another's burdens, that word "burden" is the heavy burdens which people need assistance to bear. But what Paul is saying here in verse

number five is that there is a kind of burden and there is a kind of load that no one else can bear for you but yourself. And that is the burden of personal responsibility that we will all give an account of ourselves to God.

It has been translated by some translator like this, "Every man will shoulder his own pack." And Paul's point is this, that there is a burden that each one of us must bear at the judgment day of God. And it speaks to us about the importance of personal responsibility and taking a personal responsibility for all our actions, for all our behaviors, despite our situations. You say, "But I'm so burdened down and heavy laden, surely I am not responsible." Paul says, "No, you shoulder your own pack. You carry your own bag." You have to understand this.

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tions. You say, "But I'm so burdened down and heavy laden, surely I am not responsible." Paul says, "No, you shoulder your own pack. You carry your own bag." You have to understand this.

So we Beloved, let us now turn our hearts to the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, we come before You with a deep sense of our own need to shoulder our own pack, to bear our own load, as we stand accountable before You. We recognize that while we are called to bear one another's burdens, there is a personal responsibility that each of us must carry, a responsibility that leads us to repentance, to faith, and to a life lived for Your glory.

Lord, help us to examine our own work, to see it through the lens of Your holy law, the law of Christ, which calls us to love and to good works. May we not be deceived by high-mindedness, but rather, may we humbly acknowledge that all we have and all we are is derived from You. May our value be found not in our own self-worth, but in the worth You have bestowed upon us as Your creation, made in Your image, and redeemed by Your grace.

Grant us, O God, the grace to live lives that bear the fruit of the Spirit, lives that demonstrate the inward work of Your Spirit in outward expressions of love, gentleness, and burden-bearing. May we not boast in ourselves, but may our rejoicing be in You alone, the source of all goodness and strength.

And as we consider the day when we shall each give an account of ourselves to You, let us live with an eternal perspective, seeking to please You in all things. May we be empowered to fulfill the law of Christ, loving our neighbors as ourselves, and doing so with a clear understanding of our own need for Your mercy and help.

We ask all this in the precious name of Jesus, our Savior and Lord, who bore our sins upon the cross, and who calls us to take up our cross and follow Him. Amen.