

May 17, 2020 “Serve” Bible Studies for Life

What makes you build a relationship with others?

- you like the person
- have the same interests
- fun to be around
- they have something to offer that helps you

What does it mean to serve one another?

- God says he who serves is the one who will be great in God's kingdom
- serving others in love and humility makes a great Christian
- Jesus expects us to follow in His example
- what we do should be pleasing and perfect in God's sight

We need to seek to serve others rather than to be served

- serve in humility – we should not think too highly of ourselves
- don't be self-centered – learn to be sensitive to other's needs
- have the attitude of Christ – have the mind-set of Christ

Have you ever found it hard to serve others? Why?

- criticism
- they don't appreciate it
- it doesn't meet other people's ideas
- it's a particular task you dislike
- you are quite busy with your own responsibilities
- it costs valuable time
- you really don't know how to do what is required of you
- the person you are serving is picky and hard to please

Today's Point: God calls us to seize the opportunity to serve.

Galatians 5:13-15 You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14 For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

The Galatian believers thought one had to be circumcised to be fully Christian. Paul set out to remind them they had been saved by grace and were called to be free. God calls us to have faith in Christ and only God has the right to define the Christian life. He frees us from the Old Testament law and legalism. We are not to misuse our freedom nor indulge in things of the flesh; sinful nature, not living according to God's teachings.

What are believers set free to do?

- serve one another
- free to express grace
- do good things for people, even when they don't deserve it
- bless people with kind deeds

What is the connection between freedom in Christ and the command to serve?

- we are freed from the penalty of sin ... we serve when we worship or lead in worship and praise of what God did for us
- we are freed from the power of sin
- we don't need to be bogged down by some sinful habit
- we are enabled to serve the Lord ... He empowers us with Spiritual Gifts

What did Paul mean that the whole law is fulfilled by "loving your neighbor as yourself?"

Mark 12:30-31 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

We are to fulfill the intent of the law, by loving one another through the power of the Spirit.

- when you put others first, you won't be looking to break the law
- all of the commandments relating to interpersonal relationships are taken care of by treating others as you wish to be treated

How do you think relationships can be strengthened through acts of service?

- people are encouraged
- the ministry of the body of Christ (the Church) to fellow members, builds and strengthens the church
- we live and act as God intended
- we demonstrate the Fruit of the Spirit ... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control

How might the command to "serve one another in love" affect the attitudes and actions of Christians seeking to resolve conflict situations?

- your motive is restoration
- you don't go into it with the idea of proving that your side is right
- you're trying to resolve differences
- you're trying to restore relationships

Paul warned the Galatian believers that if you bite and devour one another, watch out, or you will be consumed by one another. Consuming one another in spiteful discord leads to the destruction of the fellowship of the church and loss of effective witness to the world.

What does a loving service look like?

Galatians 6:1-5 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. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. ⁴ Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, ⁵ for each one should carry their own load.

Believers are to help one another. Paul addressed the Galatians as brothers and sisters meaning they had a spiritual kinship. He said believers are to restore those who are overtaken by a wrongdoing.

How are believers to help others who are caught in the act of sinning?

- restore the person – set something right again, the situation is temporary,
- do it with a gentle spirit -Don't be judgmental, don't need to pronounce punishment, express concern and desire for restoration
- counsel them, speak calmly, express your concern and love
- pray for them, with them

What are examples of burdens we have today?

- temptation to sin
- physical illnesses
- mental disorders
- financial issues
- unemployment
- family crises
- spiritual oppression

What does it mean to “carry one another’s burdens?” Burdens refers to loads too heavy to bear alone.

- Christ took upon Himself the burden of our sin, took our punishment
- we can bear the burden of another’s failure and help them deal with the consequences of their sin
- Christ acted because He loved each one of us
- we should act in love ... not in haughty pride
- not only did Christ take the death we deserved, He gives us a new life, a new start
- we can help someone with a sin burden get a fresh start
- we must be willing to forgive repeatedly

What does this passage have to say about the temptation to feel superior to the erring brother or sister in Christ?

- don't consider yourself superior or better than others
- you need to be very careful of your own actions, your own attitudes
- don't try to elevate yourself to look good
- you've got your own problems as a load to carry

Paul said that the spirit-filled believer must take responsibility for others, but also take responsibility for themselves. Each person is to examine themselves. The flesh makes it hard for us to assess ourselves. We are to take the beam of wood out of our own eye before attempting to take the splinter out of someone else's.

Verse 5 seems to be a contradiction of verse 2. Paul called on believers to take responsibility for themselves before God. The individual believer is answerable to God as to how he or she lives their life in relation to the gift of salvation he or she has been given.

Carrying one's burdens and each person carrying his own load has to have a balance. We all need help from one another. It is still up to the individual to make their choices and suffer the consequences of their bad choices.

We need to help our brothers and sisters with their struggles, but don't feel superior over them. Sometime we all have our own struggles to deal with. We need to seize the opportunities to help others.

⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Paul reminded his audience that we reap what we sow. Those who sow in the flesh will reap destruction (eternal damnation) and those who sow in the Spirit will reap eternal life. We only have two options. We either turn to God, placing our faith in Christ for the forgiveness of our sins or we reject God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ and remain in our sins.

Paul urged the Galatian believers not to tire of doing good. Do not lose heart or become discouraged. Some Christians may serve for a long period of time and not see any results of their work. They become discouraged. They may want to quit, but Paul says to continue to look for opportunities to serve, and we will reap a harvest at the appropriate time.

Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Paul uses the word "therefore" to let the reader know that he is going to make an application based on what he has just said. Paul wanted the Galatians to seize every opportunity they had to serve.

What opportunity did Paul urge the believers to seize?

- do good to all people
- it is especially important to minister to one another as believers
- serve each other in love
- reach out to the lost

How can you help meet the needs of others?

- give of your time, finances, talents
- support the food pantry
- offer to pick up groceries, medicines
- make a friendly visit or phone call
- we can show the love of Jesus with giving of our resources (time, energy, finances)

How can we structure our lives to be ready to serve others?

- keep time in our schedules so we can help when an opportunity arises
- don't waste time
- don't try to cram too many things into our days
- set a portion of your budget to give specifically to the benevolent ministry of your church
- pray for opportunities to serve and help others

Is God leading you to serve?

Application

Family.

- Be intentional about blessing your family members this week.
- Make an extra effort to serve the people you love.

Church.

- Search for a specific way you can minister to your brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Participate in a mission ministry.

Community.

- Think through your gifts and resources.
- Then find a need in your neighborhood or community that corresponds with those gifts and resources.
- Find a way to help.