
Stop It!

Galatians 6:1-5

Introduction Have you ever wanted to grab someone by the collar and just shake them? Have you ever been so frustrated with people that the only thing you can think to say to them is STOP IT! Have you ever wanted to throw your hands in the air and walk away from someone who just seemed to be acting dumb and innocent so they wouldn't have to change their ways? Have you ever said under your breath, "This just isn't worth it. My time is too valuable for this kind of foolishness"?

Don't be afraid to admit it. We have all been there at least once. But Paul has something to say about these kinds of situations. He tells us how we should be working with those who are caught in sin. Please turn your copy of God's Word to Galatians chapter 6 verse 1. Let's ask God to help us as we consider this text.

<PRAY>

The Person Needing Help – a Brother Caught in Any Sin (v. 1a)

At first glance at this phrase, it would appear that a believer has been hiding their sin and someone happens to catch them in the act. Although that does happen many times, this is not the sense of this phrase. It is a case where the person has been overtaken by some sin. They have been run over while fleeing. This is someone who has lost the battle with sin even before they knew it was a battle. It may have come by their own foolish choices or because they have given in to the desires of their flesh. But this person has been put under the load of sin by his weakness. This description of this person plays a prominent role in the interpretation of the following verses.

The People Who Should Help – You Who Are Spiritual (v. 1b)

The text says that anyone who is spiritual has an obligation to help those who are caught in a transgression. Paul has defined spiritual people in Chapter 5. Spiritual people are those who have the Spirit living within them, and they are being led and walking by the Spirit. They are alive to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And they are habitually living in a way that shows that they are not gratifying the desires of the flesh. They are exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit, not the desires of the flesh. They are characterized by crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires. In a sense, every Christian should be giving and receiving help with other brothers and sisters. Their lives should be characterized as striving to be spiritual.

The Goal of Their Help – Restore Him (v. 1b)

This word is used of mending nets or setting broken bones and to bring them to their former condition of usefulness. What is being done here is to work with that person to mend areas of his life that are making him susceptible to sin. This requires Godly insight into the Word and wise application of the Word to the particulars of the person's needs.

The Delivery of the Help – In a Spirit of Gentleness (v. 1b)

These spiritual ones are exhorted to restore in a spirit of gentleness. There must be a reason why Paul would put that in here. And, of course, there is a good reason. We are so prone to be anything but gentle when we are trying to instruct and correct someone who is caught and blinded by sin. We can't understand why they are so dumb. Can't they see what they are doing is wrong? Can't they understand how clear the Scriptures are about what they are doing and what they should be doing?

Toward the end of the counseling course, I hand out evaluation forms soliciting feedback in order to make the class better. This year's class made it very clear that they didn't like watching the videos of actual counseling sessions. They thought they were boring and not that helpful. Well, tonight I have the last of the video observation tapes. This video will show what I mean when I say that there is great difficulty in being gentle. Let's watch this last video. (Start the STOP IT video)

Isn't that just the way we would like to be able to talk to our kids? Isn't that the way we would like to talk to the boss when he is acting like such a jerk? Isn't that the way we would like to talk to our spouse when they are trying to get what they want and not trying to help me get what I want? We want to just say, STOP IT! HOW DUMB CAN YOU BE!

The Temptation in Helping – You Also May Be Tempted (v. 1c)

This next phrase used to confuse me. I couldn't understand how I could be tempted to sin like the person I was helping was sinning if I wasn't tempted by that sin. For example, it's very difficult for me to understand how I could be tempted to get drunk when I can't stand the smell of beer, much less get it down my throat. That cannot be the temptation that Paul is talking about here.

And it isn't. Paul is carrying on from his previous phrase about gentleness. The temptation about which he is warning us is the temptation to be harsh, prideful, and self-important. The instruction is to restore in gentleness. This rules out an attitude of impatience. It rules out an attitude of being frustrated and angry at slow progress. It demands an attitude of humility. Gentleness comes from a heart that is humbled by being well aware of the sinfulness of his own heart and his own desires. Christians who restore others tremble over their own sinfulness. They also realize that at some point in time they may be on the receiving end of the restoration process. This helps in getting the proper attitude for restoring as you consider how you would like to be treated if you were on the receiving end.

The Reason for the Help – Fulfilling the Law of Christ (v. 2)

The picture here is of someone who is trapped under a heavy rock. We help bear their burden by lifting the rock in order for them to crawl out. We help them shoulder the burden that is causing them to be ineffective in their ministry to the body of Christ. The reason that the Holy Spirit is growing fruit in believers is for the benefit of the whole body. This fruit is not something that is hidden. We don't have a fruit tree hidden away so no one can see or enjoy it. The fruit tree is out in the open for all to see and enjoy. The body of Christ benefits from this fruit.

Overcoming Your Temptation – Testing Your Own Heart (v. 3-4)

How do we keep from getting a heart that is proud, harsh, and self-important? We recognize two things: we are not above those we work with, and we must make an accurate self-assessment of my spiritual condition.

We are not above those with whom we work to restore. It is only by the grace of God that we are not on the receiving end of a restoration ministry. We test our hearts to see how wicked they could be, and how merciful God has been in either giving me victory over this sin or keeping me from this sin.

And we must humbly make an accurate self-assessment of our own sins and the sins of our hearts that no one else knows about. We are tempted to think that because we are not struggling with the sin of this one that we are helping, then we must be OK Christians. We can delude ourselves about our true spiritual condition. We can glory, but not in the fact that we are so much better than someone else because we're not struggling with this particular sin. We can glory, but not in the fact that we have compared ourselves with someone else and found that we are better. But we can glory that we have seen the grace that God has granted to us so that we can bring glory to Him by obeying what He says in this passage.

The Measure of Success – Bearing His Own Load (v. 5)

The goal of this restoration process is to have that person restored into carrying the burden of his own ministry to the body of Christ. The idea of restoration making useful again. We will know that we have succeeded, by God's enabling grace, when the brother caught in the transgression, is restored to his ministry in the church. He is able to bear the burden of his ministry without being caught in a sin. He will be able to determine that he is now a spiritual one who can undertake the ministry of restoration with someone else who has been mowed down by sin. They are able to be useful because they are no longer living by the desires of the flesh. They have changed their hearts and are walking by the Spirit.

Conclusion The most important lesson that I want you take away from here tonight is this concept of gentleness. We who are spiritual must be involved in the business of walking by the Spirit and allowing Him to grow the fruit that only He can produce.

Are there times when we need to tell someone to STOP IT? Yes, but we must remember that God has called us to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit as we restore someone caught in sin. Don't be harsh. Don't be impatient. Don't be frustrated. Don't think more highly of yourselves than you should. And above all, make sure that you have as your goal restoring someone, not making yourself feel better that you are not where they are.

If you are being harsh, prideful, impatient, frustrated – then just STOP IT!!!



Title

Text

Gregory D.Cook • The Chapel Pulpit • <date> Sunday Morning

Requests for tapes or questions about this message may be directed to the church office at (937) 885-2143 or e-mail. Gregory D.Cook uses the *English Standard Version* in his preaching and teaching.

Heading

Personal Reflection and Application

- How does my understanding of this text affect my worship and my walk?
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