

October, 2005

# Pause Ponder Profit

## *A Good Life?*

by Shane Williams

A couple of years ago I attended a funeral of a distant relative of mine. I didn't know this person very well at all. During the course of the funeral the preacher made some interesting statements. He compared this man's life to that of the apostle Paul. He talked about how hard of a life he had. He was such a good person and lived a good life.

It has always been interesting to me how people view the life of others. The preacher talked much about how good this person was but not much was said about spiritual things, other than talking about all the things that Paul had to endure.

The term "good" is very subjective. You can apply being good to all sorts of things. What really makes for a good life, however, is not how well you play sports or how well you carry a tune. In a nutshell, a good life consists of one who obeyed the teachings of Jesus. In the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, the only soil that produced the kind of results that were acceptable was the "good" soil. This is the man who *"heard the word*

*and understood it; who indeed bears fruit,"* (vs. 23). To be considered 'good' we have to obey the word. This is why the gospel is called the "good news". The gospel tells us what we must do to take advantage of the sacrifice of Christ. What wonderful news it is that Christ came down on this earth and paid the price for our sins with His own life! Peter said, *"he himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."* (1 Peter 2:24).

This is what they were teaching in the first century. Acts 8:12, *"But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike."* The outcome of the good news being preached was obedience. This resulted in baptism.

Let us understand that we will not make it to heaven based upon what the world calls "good". The only way we will be right in the sight of God is by obeying Him on His terms. We have to make sure that we are the result of the seed being planted in the "good" soil. We do this by having the right attitude and heart in obeying the "good" news.

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An Examination Of Gal. 6:1-10

*"For each one shall bear his own load" (Gal. 6:5).* Is it individual action or congregational action? It is individual action. Is physical or financial support under consideration? No, it is a spiritual matter. Paul is simply saying that, another's failures do not excuse a man from doing what God expects him to do. Every Christian must measure his conduct by the proper standard — God's word and without regard to what failures might be in his brother's life. Every individual must give an account of himself to God (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 4:10).

*"Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches" (Gal. 6:6).* Do you see congregational action in this verse? No, you see that the pronouns speak of individual action. Is this verse teaching us about physical or financial relief. No. Nor is it, as many suppose, teaching that the taught ought to monetarily support the teacher. Paul is simply saying that the taught should jointly participate in all the truths — "in all good things" (cf. Rom. 10:15; Heb. 9:11, 10:1) taught by the teacher. You see, it is a spiritual matter under consideration. In Wuest's Word Studies, the verse is translated: *"Moreover, let the one who is being taught the Word constantly be holding fellowship with the one who is teaching in all good things."* Wuest has expressed it correctly. So we see that rather than fellowship of money from the taught to the teacher, it is fellowship of the taught and the teacher in practicing those things which are taught. In essence Paul was not trying to teach the Galatians a lesson on supporting the preacher; rather he was trying to teach them a lesson in living the gospel which he preached. Paul was urging them to not have fellowship in the teaching of the gospel perverters among them, but to have fellowship in the teaching of the truth.

*"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" (Gal. 6:7-8).* Is this individual action or congregational action? Again, it is individual action. Is there some kind of financial assistance mentioned in these verses? No, it is a spiritual matter. I suppose if one sees monetary support of the teacher in the preceding verse, he must see money in these verses. But how is that possible? These verses without a doubt are tied with the thoughts expressed by Paul in Gal. 4:21-5:26. These verses (Gal. 6:7-8) also continue the thought of fellowship in the teaching of the gospel from the previous verse. Here Paul simply warns the Galatians not to think that it is a matter of no consequence whether their fellowship be with him and those who preach the word of truth, or with the Judaizing teachers who would bring them under bondage to the law (cf. Gal. 6:12-13). So these verses are instructing the Christian to be spiritually minded rather than carnally minded.

*"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6:9).* Was Paul saying, "let us" congregations "not grow weary"? No, because Paul was not a congregation. It is individual action being urged not congregational action. And no monetary relief is mentioned. So again, it is a spiritual matter. This verse is connected with the two previous verses. Sowing to the Spirit is "doing good" and it is hard work, long continuous work, and, although the harvest is everlasting life, we may, while we are waiting for it, grow discouraged. But we who are sowing to the Spirit need to be patient because the harvest is assured. God will not be mocked.

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## An Examination Of Gal. 6:1-10

by James A. Brown

*"Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches." Gal. 6:6 (NKJV)*

Not long ago during Bible class, I was asked to comment on Gal. 6:6. And like all preachers or Bible class teachers at one time or another in their teaching career, I explained it the way it is normally explained in the commentaries. I was wrong.

Most commentaries, at least the sixteen that I looked at, explain Gal. 6:6 and its context through Gal. 6:10 as referring to the individual's and/or congregation's financial support of a gospel preacher and the helping of the poor, especially of the household of faith.

I deny that physical relief or help, whether to the gospel preacher, the poor or to any of the household of faith, is even under consideration. And I deny that congregational action is being spoken of. I believe, throughout the context, that it is the individual's activity, in regard to spiritual matters, that Paul has in mind. Let's make a quick examination of each verse considering the context.

*"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1).* Look at the pronouns and ask yourself the question. Is Paul calling for individual action or congregational action? He is demanding individual action. Now, is Paul calling upon the individual Christian to financially support someone? No. He is commanding the Christian to help his brother in Christ who has sinned. This is a spiritual matter.

*"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).* Does the phrase "one another" express individual action or congregational action? The phrase conveys the idea of individual action. Does "burdens" refer to the physical or financial needs of the poor? No, this is a spiritual matter. The word "burdens" alludes to the sorrow, shame, and regret of the one overtaken in sin back in verse one. So Paul is saying help your brother be triumphant over sin and its effects on him.

*"For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (Gal. 6:3).* Again look at the pronouns, is this individual action or congregational action? It is individual action. Is physical or financial assistance mentioned? No, this is a spiritual matter. Paul is speaking of one who might have an improper estimation of himself. This one sees himself as superior to the one overtaken in sin. With such a conceited and condescending attitude, he is not likely to help his brother who is staggering under the weight of his sin.

*"But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:4).* Giving thought to the pronouns again, which would you say is under consideration individual action or congregational action? Again, it is individual action. Is physical relief or support being spoken of? No, again, it is a spiritual matter. Paul is saying, rather than bragging of your self-importance and feeling superior to the one stumbling underneath the weight of sin, examine your own work, i.e., your whole way of feeling and acting. Scrutinize your feelings and actions and see if they meet the approval of God. By doing this, one will find out whether or not he actually has grounds for boasting.

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An Examination Of Gal. 6:1-10

"Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). Again, was Paul saying, "as we" congregations "have opportunity"? No, because once again Paul was not a congregation. By the use of the plural pronoun "we" Paul was simply including himself with those to whom he was writing. In essence he was saying, as "we" individually "have opportunity." And like every verse we have considered, there is no physical or financial help, aid, or support mentioned. As the entire passage, this verse also is speaking of spiritual matters. To "do good" is the same as the "doing good" of verse nine and the same as "he who sows to the Spirit" of verse eight. The "doing good" or sowing to the Spirit bears the fruit of the Spirit mentioned back in Gal. 5:22-23. What greater good can be brought to the life of any man, saint or sinner?

What have we learned? Well, after a quick examination we have learned that each verse is individual in application and that each verse speaks of spiritual matters. There is simply nothing in the passage about congregational action or the monetary support of anyone.

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*The silver-haired head is a crown of glory.*

*If it is found in the way of righteousness.*

Proverbs 16:31



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