

INTRODUCTION: A few weeks ago, Tim Cowles preached a sermon looking at Ananias's discipleship of Paul in his early Christian life. Discipleship is time consuming and hard work but should be a key part of the Christian life. This study explores the accountability element of discipleship and the fact that we all need to mentor and be mentored.

Galatians 6:1-10 (NIV)

Doing Good to All

6 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 fulfil 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. ⁶ Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

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

LAUNCH

Can you remember a time when someone challenged you about your behaviour in a way that was helpful and a time when you were challenged in a less helpful way? What was the difference?

DISCOVERY

As you read this passage what are the key character traits that Paul is seeking to draw out in the Galatian believers?

UNDERSTANDING

The word *caught* (verse 1) means 'entrapped' or 'ensnared' as opposed to 'caught in the act of'. How does this change our understanding of how we read the verse?

The key emphasis of Paul in verse 1 is the word *gently*.

What is implied in this word in terms of the sort of behaviour that is required?

Why might the Galatians have been tempted to do things in a non gentle fashion from your understanding of why Paul needed to write to them in the first place?

In what ways can we become 'tempted' as we seek to restore those caught in sin?

Verse 3 is tremendously challenging. In what sort of ways can we be tempted to think that we are something that we are not especially in the area of church life?

What are some of the ways we 'test' our own actions in order to ensure that we are not getting above ourselves?

Usually we see pride as a bad thing but in this passage Paul talks about taking pride in ourselves in a good way. What's the difference between good pride and bad pride?

What are the huge risks of comparing ourselves to others (verse 4)?

Have you ever done this, and what are the consequences?

We should carry our own loads but carry each other's burdens. What's the difference between a load and a burden? What's the danger of taking on someone's load or failing to carry a burden?

What are some of the key ways we carry the burdens of others in the church?

How can you develop and grow in this area?

What's your personal challenge in terms of not sowing to please the flesh in verse 8 at the present time? In what ways are you being encouraged to sow to please the Spirit?

In what ways can we grow tired of doing good?

What are some of the practical and spiritual ways in which we can avoid this from happening?

APPLICATION

Gently challenging and restoring someone caught in sin.

Helping someone have a humble and realistic view of their gifting.

Helping carry an emotional, spiritual or practical burden but not removing the responsibility of carrying the load that God has entrusted.

All are key elements of discipleship that we need. Who is discipling you and who are you discipling?

If the answer is no one what do you plan to do about it?