



JANUARY 19, 2024 FRIDAY - DAY 12

PRAY THAT WE WOULD BEAR ONE ANOTHER'S BURDENS

GALATIANS 6:2

The passage begins with a man trapped in sin and our need to restore him gently. On the heels of this comes the instruction to "bear one another's burden." We all sin and thus need to bear another's burden that come as a result of our sins, even as another bears our burdens. "To bear" means to help or aid another along the way. It refers to the act of carrying a soldier's pack.

WILLINGNESS TO SHARE

Our society and upbringing make it difficult for most of us to let someone else bear our burdens. Do any of these sound familiar?

- "Only the strong survive"
- "Keep a stiff upper lip"
- "Tough it out"
- "When the going gets tough, the tough get going"
- "Big boys don't cry."

At first look, there appears to be a contradiction in the passage. In verse two we are given the command to "bear one another's burden," but in verse five we are told that "each one shall bear his own burden." It is important to note that there are two different Greek words for "burden."

In verse five the word is for a normal weight, simply that which can be carried. One need not concern the body with normal, trivial concerns one can carry alone. But in verse two the word for "burden" is that

of heavy, crushing, crippling weights. These are too much for any one of us and must be shared to be survived. Some examples of such heavy burdens are

- The burden of loneliness, perhaps the single most debilitating malady of our age. It is crushing the single in his apartment, the teenager who feels misunderstood, the married person whose relationship with his spouse has calcified, the senior citizen who has been passed by in life. Their problems would be bearable if only they did not have to bear them alone.
- The burden of guilt that all of us have experienced. Sins leave scars and wounds that just don't seem to heal. Afraid what others might think, we bear the guilt alone, and it is the devil who loves a secret. Only the people of God have been given the power to relieve tortured souls from the guilt of the past.
- The burden of rejection, experienced by all in some form or another. Parents who were cold and undemonstrative; a critical coach; a girlfriend who dropped you; a spouse who walked out; A boss who promoted someone else.

Only the unconditional acceptance of God as fleshed out in the body of Christ can help us bear these crushing burdens.



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LOVING TO BEAR

It is in bearing one another's burdens that we "fulfill the law of Christ." What law is that? In Galatians 5:14 we are told the answer: "For all the law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'". When we genuinely love another, we cannot help bearing one another's burdens. It is difficult to admit that we have burdens because we fear ridicule. In a cartoon strip, Charlie Brown says, "If I tell you something, Lucy, will you promise not to laugh?" Lucy responds, "I promise." Charlie Brown continues, "This is very personal, and I don't want you to laugh." Again Lucy replies, "You have my solemn promise." Then Charlie Brown confesses, "Sometimes I lie awake at night listening for a voice that will cry, 'we like you, Charlie Brown.'" "Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!" replies Lucy.

In *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am*, John Powell says that we are afraid because people might think less of us, might make fun of us and our concerns, might use what they know against us.

Ken Medema painted a picture of the church in song as the place for tears to be cried, spirit wings to fly, questions to be asked and our hearts' cries to be heard. When someone shares a burden with us, We are on holy ground and carry a sacred trust. The bottom line is this we cannot bear one another's burdens if we cannot trust our burdens to each other. The story is so well known that it has become legendary.

Boys Town is a home for orphaned boys near Omaha, Nebraska. During the Depression, two young boys, newly orphaned with nowhere else to go, rode the rails, walked, and hitchhiked their way to the orphanage.

Together they braved the elements and the dangers of life on the open road. All they had was each other. As they walked the last several miles, the snow began to fall, and the younger brother began to weaken, so much so that he just could not take another step. So the older boy picked up his younger brother and brought him on his back to the door of the orphanage and knocked. When the priest answered, he asked, "Is there any room for kids like us?" "Sure, son," replied the priest. "Come on in. Let me take him now. He must be heavy." "Aw, he ain't heavy, mister. He's my brother." Pray that we would bear one another's burden.

**Bear one another's burdens,
And so fulfill the law of Christ.
Gal. 6:2**

PRAYING FOR ONE ANOTHER

1. Pray that God would help you become more transparent with those in the body.
2. Pray that God would enable you to see beyond the Sunday morning facades and become aware of people's need in order to help with their loads.
3. Pray that God would lift the loads of loneliness, guilt, and rejection.
4. Pray that God would send people to your church with a heart and gifts for burden bearing ministries such as consoling, support groups, and benevolence.

**To bear with each other takes
A deliberate act of the will.
It doesn't happen naturally**