

Introduction

In [Exodus 17](#), Israel fought a battle against the Amalekites. Moses stood on a hill above the battle, holding his staff. Whenever Moses raised the staff, Israel prevailed. Whenever he lowered the staff, Amalek prevailed. After a while, Moses grew tired from raising the staff. Aaron, his brother, and Hur brought a stone for Moses to sit on, then stood on each side of him holding up his hands. Israel defeated Amalek that day.

That event well illustrates life in the church. Unlike Israel versus Amalek, our battle is spiritual. We face temptation daily. Because of our sinful nature, we frequently give in to temptation. Yet, we love God and desire to be devoted to Him. So, our battle between temptation and devotion to God is never-ending. Far too often, we face that battle alone.

Walking together in the Spirit

[Galatians 5:16-26](#) instructs us to walk in the Spirit rather than giving in to the desires of the flesh. [Galatians 6](#) continues that command, but reminds us that we do not walk in the Spirit alone. The church is a family of believers who have committed to one another in a covenant relationship. Every believer should walk in the Spirit, but the church also walks **together** in the Spirit.

I encourage you to examine yourself today to see if there are areas of your church life that you are not walking in the Spirit with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

Burdens

The church walks together in the Spirit by bearing one another's burdens.

Burden of sin

When someone in the church sins, we should restore him to Christ in gentleness. [Galatians 6:1](#) “1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.”

There are a couple of wrong ways the modern church approaches sin in the church. First, most churches **ignore sin** and choose to celebrate their tolerance. God rebuked the Corinthian church for that mindset ([1 Cor 5](#)). *How many churches allow members to live in open rebellion against God, including neglecting to meet with the church ([Heb 10:25](#))?* [Gal 6:1](#) says that churches should address unrepentant sin.

Second, many churches seek to **tear down** those who are found in sin. Churches often remove someone from the church without opportunity to repent. More often, churches slander the

person so much that remaining in the church would be nearly impossible. [Gal 6:1](#) says that our goal is to **restore** the sinner; that is, we should strive to bring them back into fellowship with God and with the church. Also, we should restore them in gentleness (humility, meekness). If we follow Jesus's instructions on confronting sin within the church (talking with them one-to-one), most of the time, no one should know of the sin except for the person who goes to them first ([Matt 18:15-17](#)).

Notice that [Gal 6:1](#) says "you who are **spiritual** should restore him." That is, you who are filled with the Holy Spirit should restore him. Those who **walk in the Spirit** restore sinners into fellowship with God and fellowship with the church. Refusing to address sin is **not** walking in the Spirit. Slandering the sinner is **not** walking in the Spirit.

This verse comes with a warning. [Galatians 6:1](#) "... Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted." It is **far easier** to restore someone in gentleness when you remember that someone in the church will one day confront your sin. Jesus warned that if we are unwilling to forgive our brother, then we should not expect God's forgiveness ([Matt 6:14-15](#); [18:23-35](#)).

Bear in love

Verses 2-5 express a similar idea. **You are responsible for yourself and others in the church.** These verses look at accountability from two perspectives. These are not two options; both are required of the church.

First, we should **bear one another's burdens in love**. [Galatians 6:2](#) "2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

In the context of those who are found in sin, I think the point here is that as a church member, I am accountable for sins in the church. If someone in the church is under the burden of sin, then **I also** bear the burden of their sin. Furthermore, if I do not **help restore them**, then I will share in their guilt ([Ezek 33:1-9](#)).

Notice that this fulfills "the law of Christ." In light of [Gal 5:14](#), this probably refers to the command to "love your neighbor as yourself." If I love my neighbor as myself, I cannot be silent about their sin. If I love my neighbor as myself, I will restore them **in gentleness**, just as I would hope to be restored. If I love my neighbor as myself, I will bear their burdens.

This of course applies to burdens other than sin. If we love the church, we will bear the burden of those who lose family members. If we love the church, we will bear the burden of those who lose a job. We should bear one another's burdens in love.

Bear your own load

Second, we should **bear our own burden (load)**. [Galatians 6:3-5](#) "3 For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one test his own work, and

then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. 5 For each will have to bear his own load.”

As [Gal 6:1-2](#) states, I must help my brother when he falls into sin. However, [Gal 6:3-5](#) warns that **I also** will face judgment for my sin. [Gal 6:3](#) warns us of the danger of not examining yourself. This goes back to Jesus’s teaching in [Luke 6](#) that we are unable to deal with the speck in our brother’s eye without dealing with the log in our own eye. This is the danger of criticizing our brother. We deceive ourselves by thinking that he is guilty, but I am innocent ([Rom 14:10-12](#)). None of us are innocent.

You will **not** be judged innocent by God by this church’s faithfulness. Although you may **bear** the burden of my sin, you cannot **take away** the guilt of my sin. Verse 5 reflects what is taught in [Romans 14:12](#) “12 So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.” We bear each other’s burdens in love, but we are also responsible for our own sins.

The church walks together in the Spirit by bearing one another’s burdens.

Sowing

The church walks together in the Spirit by serving one another in the Spirit.

Sow in the Spirit

This passage uses a farming illustration to describe the work of ministry. **The work of ministry should be done in the Spirit, not flesh.** [Galatians 6:6-8](#) “6 Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. 7 Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. 8 For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

This contrasts with what we **do** in the flesh with what we **do** in the Spirit. This is an important contrast within the church. There is quite a movement in the modern church to overemphasize the physical. Churches are building larger buildings, focusing on getting people to come to services rather than sharing the gospel, importing structures and functions from the corporate world into the church. As a whole, churches are more concerned with what can be **seen**.

We will reap what we sow. If the church focuses on earthly things, then we will reap temporary rewards. That is the meaning of “corruption” in verse 8 - things that will pass away. But if the church emphasizes spiritual things, we will reap eternal results (eternal life - verse 8).

As a church member, my goal is not primarily to bring people to church. My goal is to bring people to Christ, **then** to encourage them to unite with the church for discipleship. My goal is not to build the estate of the church. My goal is to build up God’s people in love and truth and

to increase God's kingdom through the gospel. Far too often, churches reap in the flesh while clothing it in language of the Spirit.

Discouragement

Verses 9-10 continue the sowing and reaping metaphor, but add two important details. First, **do not be discouraged**. [Galatians 6:9](#) “9 And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

It is far easier to sow earthly things than to sow spiritual things. If I work toward earthly goals, then I will receive earthly rewards **now**. If I work toward spiritual goals, then I will receive spiritual rewards **whenever God chooses**. In fact, those who sow in the Spirit, may not receive their reward until after their resurrection.

I am reminded here of Jesus's interaction with the crowd in [John 6](#). They were interested in physical things. Rather than cater to the crowd, Jesus pushed them to a decision - faith in Him or walk away. They walked away. In one day, He went from a crowd of thousands and multiple disciples to only twelve followers. Sowing in the Spirit requires faith, not sight. Therefore, [Gal 6:9](#) encourages us to “now grow weary” and “do not give up.” Do not be discouraged.

Do good

Second, **sow spiritual things (do good) among all people, especially the church**. [Galatians 6:10](#) “10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

We should “do good to everyone.” In this context, doing good likely refers to sowing in the Spirit (i.e., sowing spiritual things). *How much of your conversation outside of church services is spiritual? How many people do you meet who never hear you speak of spiritual matters?* **Notice** that verse 10 says “as we have opportunity.” Every person I meet is an **opportunity** to sow in the Spirit.

Verse 10 emphasizes our spiritual work among the church. “Let us do good ... especially to those who are of the household of faith” ([Gal 6:10](#)). We have an obligation, not only to those outside of the church, but **especially** to those within the church.

Surely Scripture would not need to encourage believers to do good to those in the church. If it were easy to do good to those in the church, Scripture would not have so many warnings against division and so many exhortations toward unity. You can easily tell a church that is walking in the Spirit by the unity or division in that church. “There is one body and one Spirit ...” ([Eph 4:4](#)). Our unity reflects the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

How does the church walk together in the Spirit? In our struggle to resist temptation and devote ourselves to God, we do not fight alone. Like Aaron and Hur helping Moses, the church walks in the Spirit **together**, not alone.

We walk together in the Spirit by bearing one another's burdens. If someone sins, I must bear the burden of his sin and help him repent and be restored to Christ in gentleness. He bears the burden of his sin, but so do I.

We walk together by serving one another in the Spirit. If I work for physical goals, then I will reap temporary rewards. If we as a church work for physical goals, then we will reap temporary rewards. If I work for spiritual goals, then I will reap eternal rewards. If we as a church work for spiritual goals, then we will reap eternal rewards. As we watch others receive immediate physical rewards, we must not grow discouraged of serving together in the Spirit.

Closing Scripture: [Colossians 3:12-14](#) “12 Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”