

# Connect360: Carry On

December 12, 2023

- *Lesson 12 in the Connect360 unit “A Cry for Freedom: Grace That Is Still Amazing” focuses on Galatians 6:1-10.*

Paul reminded the Galatians that God prefers restoration over cancellation. He encouraged Christians to “restore ... gently” our friends who are “caught in” sin (6:1).

Sin “catches” all of us at some point, doesn’t it? Many of us walk with God faithfully, only to find ourselves stumbling into sin and becoming trapped in its snare. We know how easy it is to make one wrong decision that leads to a horrific public consequence or a secret addiction. No one is immune from sin’s trap. It can capture any of us easily.

That is why Paul says we should be “gentle” in our restoration (6:1). We should lead with empathy rather than judgment as we help our Christian friends out of sin. Even Jesus empathizes with us in our weakness (Hebrews 4:15). Surely, we, too, can empathize with those who’ve been “caught” in sin, since we ourselves are also sinners.

Paul invites us to “restore” (6:1) the brother or sister caught in sin. Sin isolates us from both God and Christian community. Thus, we should restore them both to God and Christian community.

But the second sentence in verse one is an apt warning. We cannot properly restore a Christian brother or sister by affirming, making light of, or participating in their sin. The way to gently restore a Christian back to God and community is to “carry each other’s burdens” (6:2). That is the big command in these verses. This has tremendous implications for how we “do church” every week.

First of all, in order to carry each other's burdens, we have to be honest about our burdens. If you're not willing to share your sins, struggles, needs, doubts and fears, how will someone carry them for you? This takes tremendous humility and honesty.

Unfortunately, American churches often promote dishonesty. There is an expectation of decorum that requires smiles and lighthearted discussion, and resists "real" or "deep" conversations about how we are doing. What would it look like for us to find a small group of friends in which we can be fully transparent and honest about our battles? If we aren't willing to tell others where we need help, we won't get help.

Second, in order to carry each other's burdens, we have to foster judgment-free communities of faith. We cannot balk in shock or anger when someone confesses sin. We can't exclude people based on their struggles. Rather than ostracize those caught in sin, we are called to help them out of their sin.

Churches should be the safest place to seek recovery from porn or substance addiction. Christians should be the most restorative group of people in the world. We cannot judge people for being fallible; it isn't our place to condemn sinners. But we can offer the hope of new life in Christ and create healthy avenues for believers to leave sin behind and embrace the freedom of Jesus.

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