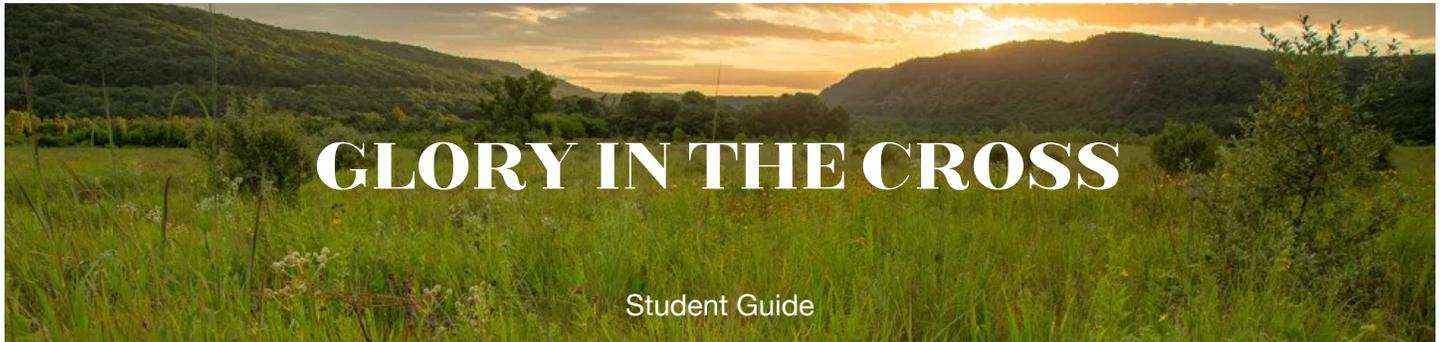


# Galatians 6



## GLORY IN THE CROSS

Student Guide

### Daily Bible Reading

Day 1	Galatians 6: 1-10
Day 2	Galatians 6: 11-18
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*The “marks of the Lord Jesus” are what the Apostle Paul believed to be the result as one glories in the cross of Jesus Christ (v. 17). Contrary to the Judaizers who gloried in the law, resulting in no persecution (vv.12-13), Paul concluded believers who walked in the Spirit would not only be persecuted, but also would bear the marks of doing so.*

### 1. The Ministry of the Church (vv. 1-10)

One of the most neglected ministries of the church is discipline — *Biblically and lovingly reconciling wayward church members*. For Paul, there are two significant factors involved in the church’s ministry of reconciliation.

The first factor in reconciliation is recognizing the *spiritual possibility of the Christians’s ruin*. It is not a hypothetical issue which Paul addresses. Some people, who have given themselves to Christ and were active in the body-life of the church, are now living wayward lives. Some, who have genuinely trusted Christ for salvation, have detoured from Christ’s way. An old term hardly used today to describe believers who have stumbled and fallen is “backslider.” Paul’s description is more precise — “overtaken in a fault.” How is this possible since the Holy Spirit indwells every genuine believer? First, it is possible any believer may be “overtaken”, because all are prone to *human weakness*. Recall, Paul says, “if a man” be overtaken in fault. Just because one becomes a believer does not mean all weaknesses vanish. In addition, it is possible that any believer may be “overtaken” because all are prone to *human waywardness*. The term “overtaken” carries the idea of taking someone by surprise. Given this sense, Paul is referring to a Christian falling victim to an overpowering, sudden temptation. Whether it is the devil’s active work, or the Christian’s passive neglect of soul-duties like prayer, Bible study, worship, and witnessing that remains the culprit, the consequence is the same — *spiritual waywardness*.

The second factor in reconciliation is recognizing the *special responsibility of the church’s role*. Paul emphatically states, “you which are spiritual, restore. . .” The church’s ministry includes restoring wayward brothers and sisters to God’s family. Understand, however: it is a mistake to tacitly assume one is what Paul refers to as “spiritual.” Indeed, in order to qualify for the “spiritual”, one must meet the qualification necessary: *crucifying the flesh and walking in the Spirit (5:24-25)*.

According to the Apostle, our burdens are to be *shared* (vv. 2-3). All around us are pockets of pain. If someone does not take the initiative, our brother or sister may very well drown in the sea of suffering into which they have fallen. Moreover, our burdens are to be *shouldered* (vv. 4-5). Paul is recognizing some burdens must be shared, and some burdens exist for which no one may be held responsible but us.

Paul’s harvest language could not be more appropriate in explaining Kingdom laws of successful ministry, including the ministry of reconciliation (vv. 7-10).

The Apostle is clear: *we reap what we sow*. And this law prevails whether we are discussing farming or ministry. Far too often this simple principle is ignored. Paul is clear about another basic law of harvest: *we reap more than we sow*. For example, he says if we sow to the flesh, we will reap “corruption” (v.8), a spreading, so to speak, of the seed of flesh. On the other hand, if we sow to the Spirit, we reap “eternal life.” Paul reveals a final law of harvest: *we reap later than we sow* (v. 9). The results inevitably come, “in due season.” No farmer expects instant results from sowing seeds. However, every farmer expects results “in due season”, else he plants in vain.

## 2. The Message of the Cross (vv. 11-18)

The Galatian believers had a ministry to accomplish. The ministry was poised squarely upon the message of the Gospel, concerning which they were in danger of corrupting. It stands without surprise that Paul ends his communication to the churches with one last focus on the message of the cross.

First, Paul explains the *meaning of the cross* (vv. 12-14). The cross is not just a slab of wood; instead the cross is cosmic in meaning; that is, the cross is a message of salvation to anyone who will believe (vv. 12-13).

Contrarily, the Judaizers preached another way entirely to be saved: *the way of circumcision*. More generally speaking, *the way of human works*. Not only does the message of the cross mean *salvation* to the one who trusts in Christ, it also means *separation* to the one who trusts in Christ (v.14; cp. 2:20).

Second, Paul explains the *miracle* of the cross (vv. 15-16). The Gospel works miracles in the lives of all who believe in Christ (v. 15a). He further speaks about God’s grace “calling” him, referring to his conversion to Christ and commission as Apostle (vv. 15b-16). In addition, Paul reminds the Galatians of the miracle of a *new lifestyle* (v. 16). No longer would his vocation as tent-maker be his trade. Instead, he now was called to serve Christ with every fiber of his existence.

Third, Paul explains the *marks* of the cross (vv. 17-18). The message of the cross is forever connected to the marks of the cross. Contrary to the Judaizers’ experience, Paul insists that he bears in his body “the marks of the Lord Jesus” (v. 17). For Paul, the marks of the Lord Jesus — marks of the cross — were two-fold. On the one hand, one marked by Christ’s cross *surrendered* to Jesus. Paul’s physical scars were but symbols of the marks on Paul’s soul. He died that Christ could live in Him. And, while we may not have physical scars on our bodies which offer visibility to the marks on our soul, if surrender to Christ is not branded on a person’s heart, that person has never received or understood the message of the Gospel.

## Wrap Up

*Galatians is a challenging book. One message is clear: no person may depend upon anything in life to secure a right relationship with God other than faith in Jesus Christ. Every person should think deeply and seriously about this question, “Do I fully and completely trust Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior?”*