

Title: Practical Instruction for Believers
Text: Galatians 6: 4, 12, 13
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Yesterday, two verses of scripture leaped off the page before me in Galatians 6. I want to begin with those today and then move to one other passage if we have time in Romans 14.

Title: Practical Instruction for Believers

Divisions: 1) Each believer is to mind our own heart, our own business; 2) Trust the Lord to make our brethren stand

Paul is dealing with the spirit of legalism—that carnal heart which makes men attempt to coerce others into religious works. Notice the contrast in these two verses in Galatian 6.

Galatians 6: 4: But let every man PROVE his own work...

Prove, to test, to try, to examine—let every man examine his own heart to know why I am doing what I am doing.

Galatians 6: 4: Let every man prove his OWN work...

Only I can prove my work and only you can test your work.

Galatians 6: 4: Let every man prove his own WORK...

Work includes our profession of faith, called our vocation, our calling. And work also includes whatever it is believers are engaged in.

Galatians 6: 4: Let every man prove his own work and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

Our rejoicing is not in our works or in our flesh. Verse three declares “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.” (Galatians 6:3) But in the heart—the inner man—God has made we shall rejoice in Christ for what he has done for us, for the heart he has given us, by his grace. As opposed to rejoicing in other men—in what we have constrained them to do or in what they have constrained us to do. The contrast is in verses 12 and 13.

Galatians 6: 12: As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13: For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

They are not minding their own hearts, their own business, but they desire a show in the flesh so they constrain you. And whatever is done because another man constrains you do it is law, of the flesh, it is works and not faith.

I. EACH BELIEVER IS TO MIND HIS OWN HEART—EXAMINE HIMSELF—AND MIND HIS OWN BUSINESS BEFORE GOD—Galatians 6: 4: Let every man prove his own work...

- Instead of comparing ourselves with others
- Instead of minding the others business
- Instead of desiring a fair show in the flesh
- Instead of attempting to constrain others to do
- LET EACH BELIEVER PROVE OUR OWN WORK.

How do I prove my work?

MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE

First, I determine if my OWN calling and election is sure—how so? I have to look out of myself to God, particularly, to God’s word. If my calling and election is contrary to the scriptures then it is not true. If it is according to how God says the he calls and elects, it is sure.

God says in his word that he calls his children from eternity. God says in Revelation that God wrote all the “names” of his elect in the Lamb’s book of life from the foundation of the world.

Philippians 4: 3: And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

Revelation 13: 8: And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Revelation 17: 8: The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

Revelation 21: 27: And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

My dad and mom named me Richard Clayton Curtis. But if God called me from eternity then God wrote my name in his book before the foundation of the world. That means God gave me my name before my parents named me.

Believer, do you realize that though our parents named us, probably thinking they just picked our names at random or based on another family member or so on, they gave us our name because, though they did not know it, our name was the name God called us when he wrote our name in his book in eternity.

My calling and election began with God in eternity. It was by his own sovereign grace that he elected me unto salvation in Christ. This is the calling and election of grace according to truth. My calling and election was not based on any merit in me, but solely of God’s choice.

Romans 9:11: (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)

Ephesians 2:9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Is that where you rest? My heart rejoices in the calling and election of God.

Secondly, God says in his word that the Spirit quickens his children to spiritual life, calling us by his grace. I had to be born again of the Spirit of God. That is what the book says about our calling.

John 3: 3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

John 6: 63: It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

2 Thessalonians 2: 14: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

God's spiritual regeneration of his elect is by the Holy Spirit, not by men. His calling is by his will, not our will.

Romans 9: 16: So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

John 1: 13: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Romans 2: 29: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

My fleshly will had to be subdued. I had to be given a new nature, a new will, by the Spirit of God in the day of his power. This calling is by his gospel—not by something I imagined to be truth—but by his truth—his gospel.

Does it make the heart within you to rejoice that you did nothing but what God worked in you by his grace? He drew me, I made no decision for Christ. God made Christ irresistible to me. God took away all options, all choices, when he made himself all in my heart.

I have rejoicing in my own heart toward God because God did this for me. God gave me this rejoicing, not another. I do not get this rejoicing by comparing myself with another. Do you have this rejoicing in yourself, not in others, because God has given you a heart to bow to him?

Thirdly, when God revealed Christ in me it was revealed in me that Christ fulfilled all righteousness for me and is my righteousness. Christ is all my salvation. Christ is the fulfillment of the law for me.

Romans 10: 4: For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Romans 8: 3: For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

God has made Christ unto me, my **wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.**

1 Corinthians 1: 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

I have all fullness in Christ in whom I am complete.

Colossians 2: 9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: 11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 15 *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

I am accepted of God in the Beloved and am made holy in Christ Jesus—into whom I have been called.

Ephesians 1: 3: Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ: 4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: 5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

I have rejoicing in my heart—not toward myself—but toward God—**let him that glorieth glory in God.** But I do not have this rejoicing in other men or because of others constraints upon me but by the constraint of Christ's love for me shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5: 14 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: 15 *And that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. 16 ¶ Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more. 17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 18 *And all things are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;

Fourthly, faith works by love, not by the constraint of men toward us or our constraint of others. When we are truly doing something for God it is when we do it with a sweetheart love for our Redeemer—because of his love for us, because God has shed abroad his love in our heart. While self-righteous men were going about constraining men to pray in their vain show, the apostle Paul was truly asking God to do as God will in shedding God's love in the heart of his children.

Ephesians 3: 14: For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; 17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; 19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

And what amazing love the love of God truly is! God the Father sent his only begotten Son to be made sin for his elect—for me—a rotten sinner. He gave his only begotten Son to bear the shame of the cross for me. Christ came and did all that I could never do. And God did this for me when as yet I was an enemy to God. But now, because of his great love wherewith he love me, I am child of God. God put this rejoicing for him in my heart—I am what I am by the grace of God.

Application: Here are a few good works.

Baptism is the first public act of obedience to God. Some of you have expressed an interest to me in believer's baptism. Examine yourself. Find out why you desire to be baptized? Is it because there is because you have been given faith to believe that Christ is God the Son, your Lord, your Savior, your All? Is it because you lived in Christ when he fulfilled the law as your representative? Were you immersed in the judgment of God when he was crucified? Are you now are risen in Christ at the right hand of the Father?

Other men cannot give you this rejoicing—only God can—GET ALONE WITH GOD. I know we like to compare what is in our hearts with other believers but you can't measure what God has done for you by others—SEEK GOD'S WORD IN THE MATTER! Only when he gives it will you have rejoicing in your heart for Christ, and that not because some other man constraining you.

Observing the Lord's Table is another ordinance given of God. Find out what it means—discerning the Lord's body—HIS body broken for ME—HIS blood shed blood for ME! Do nothing because a man constrains you and stay not away from his table because men constrain you. Only God can give this rejoicing in the heart—let a man prove his own work—let a man examine himself and so let him eat.

Giving to support this work and our brethren and this gospel around the world is a good work. Everything we did this week having our guest preacher cost money. Each believer wants to bear his part of that burden. But God says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) We do not give because we are constrained by law or by men, but because of faith which works by love. Faith which worketh by love is the rule of the believer's life—the Holy Commandment given us of Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Good works include every other thing that requires activity on our part—from praying, to temperance, to turning from fornication and outward sin, even reading the scriptures. Believers are not under the law we are under grace. But drunkenness is still drunkenness and sin is still sin. We abhor it. It requires activity on our part to turn from it and that only by his grace. But whatever work it is let it be because God has given us his Spirit, which is not a spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit to cry, Abba, Father. Our acceptance is by Christ's work alone. It is by his Spirit, that God gives a ready mind. Faith which works by love, is not faith which is constrained by men or law or fear of punishment but because of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. Therefore...

1 Corinthians 10:31: Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

Colossians 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him...23: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Galatians 6: 4: But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another

THE CONTRAST IN VERSE 12-13

Galatians 6: 12: As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13: For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

Men who love a show in the flesh, who try to constrain others to do what they think you ought to do, are doing it for these three reasons:

First, they cannot bear persecution for the cross of Christ--v12: **Only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ**

If they do not conform to the vain show of others in free will, works religion then those others will persecute them and they can't bear that. Those motivated by promise of reward or threats of punishment are persecutors toward all who would walk by faith rather than by law—they persecute. They did it to Paul and to all that till live godly in this world.

2 Timothy 3: 12: Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

1 Peter 4: 13: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. 14: If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy *are ye*; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

Those who insist on constraining men may claim they understand what it is to be under grace instead of law but because they do not have the rejoicing in themselves given by grace which makes a man willing to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, therefore when persecution arises because of the word they have no root to endure.

Matthew 13: 20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Secondly, their constraining others to keep the law manifests they themselves do not do the things they constrain others to do--**V13: For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law;**

Believers keep the law through faith in Christ who is the end of the law for righteousness. That is why Christ came. Those who rest in Christ are labeled antinomians by those who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. But far from making the law void through faith, through faith we have kept the law perfectly because Christ fulfilled it in every jot and tittle on our behalf. Christ is our Righteousness which exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees. The very strictest of law keepers, apart from faith in Christ, are breakers of the whole law of God.

Romans 3: 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Matthew 5: 17: Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. 18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. 19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

John Gill commented on this verse, “There will be no admission into heaven without a righteousness: it was the loss of righteousness which removed Adam out of his earthly paradise; and it is not agreeable to the justice of God, to admit man into his heavenly paradise without one; yea, it is contrary to his nature, and would be destructive to the comfort of saints, to receive an unrighteous person into his kingdom and glory. A "pharisaical" righteousness will never bring a person thither; nor will any righteousness of man's, be it what it will, because the best is imperfect; it must be a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees; and such is the righteousness of the saints: indeed their inherent righteousness, or the sanctification of the Spirit, is preferable to any righteousness of a natural man; it exceeds it in its author, nature, effects, and usefulness; yea, even works of righteousness done by believers are greatly preferable to any done by such men as are here mentioned: but, above all, the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to them, and received by faith, is infinitely more excellent in its author, perfection, purity, and use; and which is their only right and title to eternal glory; and without which no man will be admitted into that glorious state.”

Believers rest in Christ our Righteousness, we know Christ is able to make our brethren stand and therefore we trust him to do so—not by our constraint and coercion—by his gospel through his Spirit and Power. We do all in faith by love.

Galatians 5: 5: For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6: For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love....13: For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. 14: For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself... 6: 2: Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Thirdly, since self-righteous men do not have the rejoicing given of the Spirit of God in their own hearts, rejoicing which rests in Christ alone, in Christ's ability to teach his child, then they have to find rejoicing in another. Therefore, they seek to glory in what they coerce you to do—**v13:...but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh**

Such constraining of others to do—is law whether it be a constraining of others to keep the moral law or a constraining of believers to conform to any of the believers gospel privileges. It is all nothing but seeking vain glory. Such constraining of others is seeking preeminence—to be masters among men because they will not and cannot subject themselves to the law of faith and the law of love. It is seeking to Lord over you that they may glory in your flesh—in the converts and whited sepulchers they whitewashed. They will even glory in it before the Lord Jesus in the day of judgment, saying, “**Lord, lord didn't we do many wonderful works.**”

Matthew 7: 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Appearance, the flesh, carnal things is all that the carnal man glories and rejoices in because the things he can see with the carnal eye which he constrains others to do is all that he can see.

Romans 8: 5: For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. 6: For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. 7: Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8: So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 9: But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Philippians 3: 2: Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3: For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Believers born of Christ's Spirit are not out to make a fair show in the flesh, not out to make ourselves appear better than others, not out to force others to our way, not out to be seen of men.

Illustration: "Daddy, let's thank the Lord for our food?"

We were in a public place. Usually, at a restaurant, I thank God for my food in my heart and you'd never know it—I do nothing so you can see it. But let me explain how we did it that day so I could teach my children. In the house of God, and in our home, we bow our heads in reverence to God. But in public, out of reverence to Christ, we did nothing to be seen of men and yet we prayed as truly as if we had. Reverence to Christ because Christ said,

Matthew 6: 5: And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6: But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Let a man prove his own work then shall he have rejoicing in himself, not in another.

II. BEAR ONE ANOTHERS BURDENS AND TRUST THE LORD TO MAKE OUR BRETHREN STAND

The self-righteous were the ones who were always comparing their ways to Christ and condemning him for not doing as they. And because Christ would not turn to their fair show, they rejected him.

When they criticized Christ they only desired that Christ and his reputation be cast before all as evil so that his gospel would not be believed. Remember that when someone criticized your brethren in this place!

But throughout the scriptures, Christ and his disciples operate an entirely different way.

Romans 14: 1: Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. 2: For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. 3: Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

I have had brethren in the church where I worshipped before who believed the gospel of Christ.

- Ruin by the fall

- God’s unconditional election of grace unto salvation
- Christ’s particular effectual redemption of his people which is the only way whereby the righteousness of God is declared
- The Holy Spirit’s effectual, necessary and irresistible work of regenerating, calling.
- God’s keeping his people preserved whereby we persevere in faith.

This is our gospel—the righteousness and peace and joy of our heart wrought by God in Christ through the Spirit by his gospel. No compromise here.

But these brethren, who truly believed Christ and worshipped God with me in the same assembly, yet observed and performed things from which the believer is totally free. Yet, they did so in faith, not as a work to be accepted, not constraining others or condemning and criticizing their brethren. They did so by faith in love for Christ.

Those strong in faith are not to despise our weaker brethren and those weak in faith are not to judge our stronger brethren. Believers are not to try to force the other or put a stumbling block before the weaker. We do so that the gospel might continue and that we might continue with one another worshipping and rejoicing in Christ rather than biting and devouring one another. We trust God is able to make the other stand and increase each of us in faith.

Romans 15: 4: Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. 5: One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. 6: He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. 7: For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. 8: For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s. 9: For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. 10: But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11: For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. 12: So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. 13: Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother’s way. 14: I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. 15: But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. 16: Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. 18: For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men. 19: Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. 20: For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21: *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. 22: Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. 23: And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

Let me show you from that last statement why it is so wrong to coerce our brethren to do what goes against their own conscience. “**Whatsoever is not OF FAITH is sin**” and John said, “**Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**” (1 John 3:4)

We believe in Christ by the faith OF CHRIST who lives in us—OUR FAITH IS OF CHRIST. Of Christ we are given faith and that faith is increased in us according to the increase given OF CHRIST, even as we are justified by the faith OF CHRIST.

By the FAITH OF CHRIST we are justified. Our justification is not by our faith in Christ but by the FAITH OF CHRIST.

Galatians 2: 16: Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith OF CHRIST, even we have believed IN JESUS CHRIST, that we might be justified by the faith OF CHRIST, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

Philippians 3: 9: And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith OF CHRIST, the righteousness which is OF GOD by faith:.

Likewise, of Christ are we given faith to receive his free justification and our faith is increased by the FAITH OF CHRIST.

Galatians 2: 20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the FAITH OF THE SON OF GOD, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Colossians 2: 19: And not holding the HEAD [Christ], FROM WHICH all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the INCREASE OF GOD.

Luke 17: 5: And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

So whatsoever is OF FAITH—IS OF CHRIST—even as our justification was accomplished by the FAITH OF CHRIST. Weak faith is OF CHRIST even as strong faith is OF CHRIST “according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” (Eph 4:7) And only Christ gives the increase. So that what believers do is done by Christ working in us so that we do it in faith to Christ. Only then does Christ get all the glory for giving us faith and growing us in faith.

But if we do anything because we are constrained by another man it is not OF FAITH—that is, it is not OF CHRIST, nor is it done by faith in Christ working by love, it is sin. And because Christ is the believer’s fulfillment of the law through faith in him, everything and anything done which is not OF FAITH, that is OF CHRIST, so that it is done by faith in Christ, is a transgression of the whole law of God. Then Christ profits us nothing and we are debtors to keep the whole law of God—so “**whatsoever is not OF FAITH is sin**” and “**Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.**” (1 John 3:4)

That is why I do not want your faith to stand in the wisdom or power of men but in the wisdom and power of God. So what do strong believers do rather than constraining those weak in faith?

Romans 15: 1: We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2: Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. 3: For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

Paul said those who make a fair show in the flesh—**constrain you lest they should bear persecution for the cross of Christ.** But for his people, Christ bore reproach from those who persecuted and they persecuted him because he would not conform unto them.

I have had men reproach me because I would not lay constraints on you, my brethren, as they thought I ought. I can bear that by Christ living in me because of the love wherewith he bore reproach for me:

- They reproached Christ as a glutton, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners (Matthew 11:19; Luke 7:34)
- They said Christ was a Samaritan, and had a devil (John 8:48)
- They charged Christ with blasphemy and sedition (Matthew 26:65; Luke 23:2)
- On the cross, they mocked and reviled Christ (Matthew 27:39-44)

Yet, Christ pleased not himself but bore reproach and he did it for the edification of his elect. Even more, when Christ bore the sins of his people in his own body on the tree our reproach by which we blasphemed God, by which we trampled his law, his justice and holiness is part of those sins he bore from off us onto himself. And he made satisfaction for us by bearing the justice due to us. Christ pleased not himself, but did that which edified his elect people, to the full satisfaction of infinite justice.

There is my rejoicing by whose strength and grace I am able to bear your burden my brethren. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” (Ro 15:4)

Paul Practiced What He Preached. Well, Paul you have told the Galatians not to constrain and told those at Rome not to constrain, now what are you going to do to make sure they do it? Will you constrain them? Will you threaten them? What will you do? Paul trusted them to God our Savior.

Romans 15: 5: Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: 6: That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let every man prove his own work—wait on the Master, look to the Master, trust the Master—then you will have rejoicing in your own heart toward God, and not in another. Trust Christ our Master to make your brethren stand and bear one another’s burden. And I will do now what I have just preached to you. I trust you to God our Master Jesus Christ.

Amen!