

Living Like I mean It!

“I mean it, I’m really here to help you!”

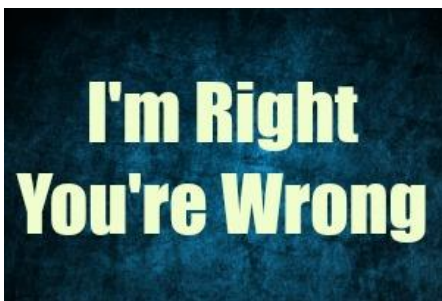
Galatians 6:1-10 August 25, 2019 Bob Szoke

Illustration: To begin this morning, let me ask you to think a bit about the last time you were right, and someone, (maybe even a family member) opposed you and said you were wrong. What was a simple disagreement soon became a bigger argument, and there was noticeable division between you and your family member or friend. Seldom could you get together and enjoy one another’s company without this disagreement of who was right and who was wrong. Then that day came. You’d been trying to be helpful all along, trying to be gracious, knowing you were right, and it was finally discovered that “you were right” after all, and your friend



was wrong! After all the time spent arguing with one another, all the moments of trying to avoid one another, now comes the moment when your reasoning, your facts, your judgments, and your understandings were all proven right. You were right after all, and your friend, (or family member) was wrong, and now he/she knows it, as well as do you.

This is what we need to see as we come to the end of the book of Galatians. **Paul had been teaching that there were some who were not living by faith but by their own understandings of what it meant to be a follower of Christ.** There were many who said that in order to be a follower of Jesus and inherit eternal life, one must keep all the Old Testament laws, one must observe the feasts that the Jews observed, one must keep the Sabbath, and so on. Many people thought this is the way one follows Christ, and that means being faithful to the Law, and the things of ritualism and traditions. But the whole point of Galatians is that such an approach is wrong, it is not in keeping with what it means to have a relationship with Jesus, and cannot be tolerated.



At the end of the book of Galatians, then are those who thought just the opposite, and aligned themselves with Paul.

Those who aligned themselves with Paul kept saying that following Jesus was enough! There was no reason to add to one’s faith all the rituals and practices the Jews did, no reason at all. The people who believed like this (probably people with

no Jewish background, the Gentiles) now stand vindicated as the end of the book of Galatians stands written. Faith in Jesus is enough, no need to add keeping the Old Testament Laws of purifications, feasts, Sabbaths, etc. These people were right, and a bunch of other people were wrong.

So here's the issue: What do you do when you've been proven right? Your motives were right, your theology was right, your actions were right, and you are the one who is seen as being truthful all along. What do you do? Typically, we may be tempted to say, ***"I told you so!" "Na, na, na, na!" I was right, you were wrong!"***

This is a very delicate situation because, (and we all remember) that there's part of us that wants to gloat and say, ***"I told you so, I told you that!"*** And we can call to memory those words as many times as we want. Yet, in all honesty, what good will that do? ***Will your "I told you so?" statements bring people back together as family?*** Will those feelings of being

**I TOLD
YOU SO!**

shown one was wrong, and you were right bring about any kind of healing? Probably not.

This is the situation of Galatians 6. With that in mind, I have entitled this sermon today, ***"I'm really here to help you... but what I need to do is make sure that what I do and how I do it doesn't destroy you, ruin our relationships, or divide us further or move one away***

from Christ and His church. What I want to do in this last sermon from Galatians is to help us see how to restore people who were wrong in their approach to life, wrong in their approach on how to live for Christ, wrong in what they assumed was right. The Apostle Paul has just spent 5 chapters telling a group of people how they were wrong to believe what they believed, how they were wrong to think like they thought, and how they were wrong to place their faith in performance of things rather than in Christ. Paul, in chapter 6, turns his attention to "those who were right, and how then to help restore those who were wrong.

(As we move through this text, we need to be continually making the connection with people in our world who are "following Christ but in their own understanding of what they think it's all about." Sadly, many are greatly mistaken when it comes to knowing what it means to follow Jesus. Even sadder, many we know are living a lie about what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Many of these "living a lie" are our friends, our relatives, and our neighbors who dismiss the commitment we talk about, disregard the need to be with other believers every Lord's Day, and disavow that Scripture has anything further to say to them about how they are living a false representation of what it means to be a Christian. I want us to be burdened by this very thing today, as this represents how the book of Galatians ends. How Galatians ends is what I would call burdensome on those who do understand what it's like to live by faith, and knowing there are those who are living a lie. We cannot remain unconcerned, disconnected, or uncaring about people based on how Paul ends his words to the people of Galatia.)

¹ Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, ⁵ for each one should carry his own load. ⁶ Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor. ⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Bible Study notes:

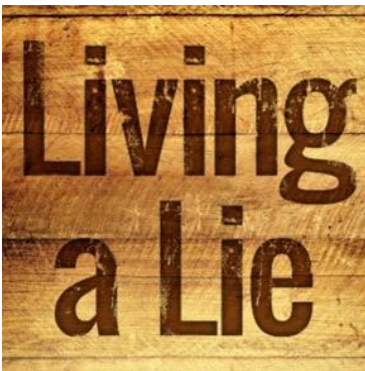
This text is about restoration, and in order to grasp what this process looks like, how we do it, and gain some insight into how to live better for Christ, let's do a Bible study on a few verses.

1. ***“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin,...”***

- a. **Illustration:** Some of you might be thinking a bit about people who were caught living a lie. One could easily think of the crowd that was in Waco, Texas, or those who were with Jim Jones in Guyana, South American and all died. There are people who are thoroughly convinced that they are right, that the life they are living is not sinful, that their actions are neutral, and ok with God. But, sadly, it's not.
- b. But there's another group of people who are living a lie, the people in our world with whom we interact on a regular basis. We hear them say, ***“I'm a good person, and even though I don't go to church, the Lord loves me. I do what I can and I'm sure He understands.”*** Or, ***“I did my duty, I'm nice to most people, and I know that's what God wants from me.”*** Or, ***“God knows I'm ok with Him.”*** Such gibberish ought to be enough for us to identify people, our loved ones and friends, who are ***caught in a sin and being deceived.***
- c. Delicately, Paul begins his summary by talking about ***“if”*** someone is finding themselves in this sphere of wrong influence, this person has become saturated with this false teachings, and then find out they are wrong.



- i. Think this through for a moment. When someone is found out to be in a relationship that is wrong, found out that what was believed was wrong, found out that one had been believing a lie, there may be things like guilt, shame, and no excuse is even considered. **That person may even become very defensive.**
- ii. When one is found out to be living a lie, one is just speechless, and though there may be a tendency to play the blame game, such will only make things worse.



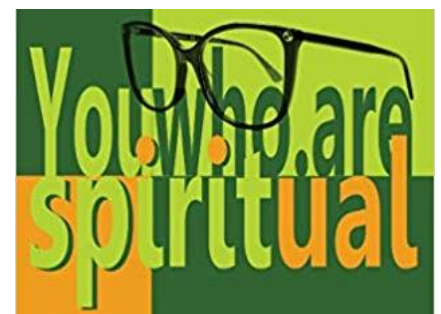
d. **Someone who is living a lie needs to have a face, that is, we need to make this very personal,** the face needs to have a name of someone we know. Otherwise all this is just philosophical **“how to”** stuff that one can read in any book. But specifically, we are talking about people we know, people we love, people who we care deeply about. And, it’s not **“if”** one knows he/she’s been living a lie, but about helping them know it and realize it! That moment came for many as they listened to Paul’s teachings about

faith in Christ.

- i. Many were devastated, as can be imagined. Many could only say, **“We were wrong.”**

2. **“...you who are spiritual should restore him gently.”**

- a. **Illustration:** Several years ago when I was working in a grocery store and preaching part time, I had a friend whose father was a preacher. Both Lorraine and I found him and his wife to be wonderful friends and in fact, it was he that helped me get a job at the same grocery store where he worked. Time seemed to go quickly, but there was an issue that arose. Several of my fellow workers had come to me, since they knew I was a preacher and my friend the son of a preacher, asking about my friend and his relationship with one of the check-out girls. At first, I just paid no attention to the accusations, but then I started listening as I heard the accusations of a married man dating a single girl. Again, I was asked over and over, **“Szoke, is this kind of thing ok? Are you going to say anything?”** After a while and talking with Lorraine and a lot of prayer, I decided to talk with my friend about these accusations. **My first approach was to just ask questions, making no assertions or statements.** He didn’t want to listen or answer questions, in fact, it was just a brief time later until he lost his job at the grocery store over being a married man and dating a single



woman. The only result I heard from all of this was that he did end up getting back with his wife, but in the process of all that, I lost a friend.

- b. The apostle Paul says, **“you who are spiritual...”** and there’s that process of self-evaluation where one has to ask, **“Am I spiritually able to do this, to help someone who is caught in a sin, or someone who doesn’t see the wrong in what they are doing? Am I willing to take this risk?”** Most of us would say that we are not, we are not spiritually strong enough to help someone who is caught.
- c. Let me add then at this point: if you don’t see yourself as spiritually able to assist someone who is caught in sin or someone who is living a lie, **then you better figure out how to get there**, to become spiritually able, because this is where you need to be anyway.
- d. Remember, spiritually, this is about restoration, and not destroying a person.
 - i. This is about spiritually... **more than just your friendships with someone and not wanting to hurt someone’s feelings.**
 - ii. This is about spiritually... **someone’s walk with Christ and us not allowing a lie to be perpetuated as if it makes no difference.**
 - iii. This is about us, **being spiritually mature, seeking to become mature because the people we need to work with are caught in a lie and they can’t see it or if they do, that it doesn’t matter.**
 - iv. It’s about us, seeing danger, and not doing anything to help people avoid what could be a life disaster.
- e. Add to this that the whole process of restoration must be couched in gentleness.
 - i. The **“I told you so”** thinking that is so easy to grasp isn’t the kind of context where we will be able to bless other’s lives... but rather to restore with gentleness. With gentleness, we are more likely to bless another’s life.
 - ii. Gentleness is not a weakness. As one author says, **“Gentleness isn’t the opposite of strength but its wise application... People are breakable. Even when they hurt themselves, they still hurt. Gentleness helps you help someone put the pieces back together rather than compounding the fractures... gentleness always aims at another’s good... Gentleness takes stock of someone’s background, build, and bent, and finds a way give them what they can receive. Gentleness recognizes that we all have limits, the giver as much as the receiver... .Of course, being appropriately gentle, whether in help or rebuke, doesn’t guarantee a warm reception. Some people don’t know what’s**



good for them. To an extent, we all don't know what's good for us. So gentleness isn't deterred by misunderstanding or rejection.

<https://www.christianity.com/christian-life/discipleship/why-we-re-not-impressed-with-gentleness-and-why-we-should-be.html>

1. Gentleness is a strong hand with a soft touch. It is a tender, compassionate approach toward others' weaknesses and limitations. A gentle person still speaks truth, sometimes even painful truth, but in doing so guards his tone so the truth can be well received.
2. **(Illustration)** Here's a simple understanding of what it means to be gentle. When my daughter was young, she used to love to squeeze my hand as hard as she could, trying to make it hurt. She could squeeze with all her might, but it never hurt. She didn't need to be gentle

because she lacked the power to cause me any pain. Then, just for fun, I'd give her hand a tight little squeeze until she yelped. It's the strong hand, not the weak one, that must learn to be gentle.

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/the-strength-of-gentleness/>



- f. One's spiritual assessment of himself is perhaps to be considered as important as the sin, the lie one has been living. How much is it like Paul to here flip the card and instead of talking about how awful it is that one has been living a lie, but instead talk now about how those who have been in the "right" all along must shape themselves spiritually to serve those who need it.
3. **"...but watch yourself, or you also may be tempted."**
 - a. **Note the shift.** The pressure is on the one who is spiritual and needs to have the presence of Christ in order to truly help.
 - b. The temptation is there to be self-righteous and boastful.
 - i. Remember this teaching Jesus told in **Luke 18:9-14?** **To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said,**

**WATCH
YOURSELF**

'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

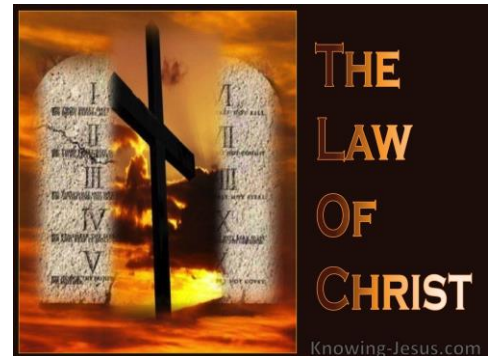
- ii. Jesus also said, (**Matthew 5:20**) that our righteousness must surpass that of the Pharisees. The problem with the Pharisees was that they became so impressed with themselves that they became boastful in just how great they considered themselves. What was lacking in their lives a great deal of the time was humility.
- c. The temptation, as I stated earlier, is the hold someone's failure over his/her head, to act self-righteous, and diminish any good that we might have done.

4. **(vs 2) Carry each other's burdens...**

- a. **Illustration: A perspective.** A few years ago, my neighbor decided to have a professional landscaper redo her back yard. She told me that it was something she'd always wanted to do, and finally it was going to happen. She told me how different plants would be in certain places, and native flowering plants would grow, spontaneously, she hoped. I listened and wished her well. Last year was not the first year her landscaped yard was completed, but it was the first year that I noticed something that I'm sure we had a different perspective on. In her back yard, being cultivated and watered on a regular basis was a large Canadian Thistle weed. It kept growing to over 6 feet tall before it started producing flowers and then seeds. **From my neighbor's perspective, the flower were natural and beautiful, but from my perspective, it was a weed and meant the possibility of dealing with Canadian Thistle all the next summer.** My perspective came true. Just the other day when I was cutting my grass, I had to stop and spray sprouting Canadian Thistle at least 15 times because the seed has taken root in my back yard. To my neighbor, the flowers were beautiful. But, to me they were annoying.
- b. **Here's the perspective: When we know of someone who is living a lie, who is not being truthful to what it means to live for Christ, we see them as someone with a burden that is taking them down.**
 - i. **Burdens can be horrific.** Many who have been to war come back with **PTS (Post Traumatic Syndrome)**, a burden that our government has recognized as debilitating and needs to be recognized for what it is. In our own way, we want to know if there is something we can do to help lighten the burden of

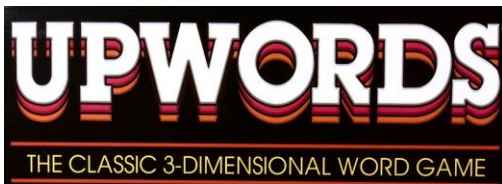


- iii. That's a full concept! **Illustration:** I remember sharing with you a few weeks ago about a wedding Lorraine and I attended. After the wedding we got to talk with the bride a bit (because we'd known her since a baby), and it was she who told us about her dad's wish for them to work on being debt free as quickly as they could after they were married. The dad's wish was that the burden of debt would be removed from his daughter's new life as a wife. How many people are burdened with huge debt, and the only way to deal with it is to remove it?
 - iv. The wisdom is the burdens need to be removed!
 - e. **The concept we are taking about is that our responsibility is to love them, to care for them, and help to remove that burden of "living a lie" that had become accustomed to, that had weighed them down and accepted as normal.**
 - f. The perspective for us, who are in the right, who see those who are in the wrong, is to see them as if greatly burdened by lies that need to be not only comforted but removed.
 - g. And, as previously said, this can only happen with gentleness.
5. **... and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.**
- a. There is an oddity here and I just want to point it out. The phrase, **"the Law of Christ"** is an unusual phrase, especially after all Paul has said in Galatians about the Old Testament Law. **This is the only time this phrase is used in the entire Scriptures.** (There is an allusion to this in **1 Corinthians 9:21**). Imagine this: by bearing one another's burdens we will fulfill the Law of Christ.
 - b. Just reflecting on all Paul has said about the Law, let me reference a few verses.
 - i. **Galatians 2:21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"** Basically, if there was a law we could keep perfectly, that God would then say, "ok" you get heaven. If that law existed, Christ died needlessly.
 - ii. **Galatians 3:21 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.** Again, same kind of emphasis. If there was a Law that we could keep perfectly, then it would have been unnecessary for Christ to die.
 - iii. **Hebrews 7:18-19 The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless 19 (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is**



- introduced, by which we draw near to God.** If there was some ritual we could do, some tradition we could keep flawlessly, then we'd be perfect and God would welcome us into heaven. But, there isn't!
- iv. What the Law could not do, Christ did. It's about faith in Him, not our performance.
 - c. **So, what does this verse mean, that if we bear one another's burdens we will fulfill the Law of Christ?**
 - i. First, let me say **I'm not 100% sure, but I do have some ideas** based on what I know of Scripture.
 - ii. Jesus did say in **John 13:34-35 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."** It is entirely possible that the Apostle Paul is taking the idea of the **"new command by Jesus"** and in this context of Galatians referring to it as the Law of Christ.
 - iii. In the book of James will be a reference to loving one another as if it is law. **James 2:8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right.**
 - d. Here's my take, it exemplifies the idea of **"living like I mean it," and "I'm really here to help you."** My take on bearing burdens and fulfilling the Law of Christ is that of all the distinguishing marks Jesus said would identify his disciples, **the one distinguishing mark would be how we love one another.** Helping to restore one another would be a huge example of what it means to demonstrate love for one another.
 - i. I think with a great sense of certainty that we can say loving one another, when the other has failed and helping to restore that person is of the utmost importance in living like we mean it and demonstrating that we truly love one another.

Illustration: There's a game that I don't usually play too much any longer and it's called



Upwards Scrabble. The idea is to make words out of different letters, and then build on those words to make even more words. I'm sure you can probably imagine why I'm not as welcome to play that game as others, because

I've been accused of making up words. But, the champion player of all time is Lorraine. She can look at letters and come up with words that either I didn't think of, or just didn't notice. I suppose we've all been like that, in situations where we just missed the obvious because

of something else, or we just weren't paying that much attention. What I want to do now is just mention **3 obvious observations about this text before we get to our application point.**

1. **This text is about us.** It's about how we go about the work of restoring our brothers and sisters, our loved ones, the people we know and they've either done stupid, lived or are living a lie, or just don't get it.
 - a. It's about when we are in the right, and even though it might not seem that it happens that often, it's about how we relate with one another, how we demonstrate Christ in our lives so we can restore others to Him, to us and to His church.
 - b. It's not about being arrogant, which would come easily, but about helping others, with gentle strength, to come back to Christ, to get their lives back in order.
2. Second, **being right puts a huge responsibility on our shoulders** to make sure all our actions and attitudes can be utilized for good in helping others to see their failures and come back to Christ.
 - a. It's a huge responsibility, and as I said earlier, when we do the self-assessments, we might not see ourselves as all that spiritual to attempt anything like this. The point is, we should be and we need to get to the place where we are... I'll call it simply spiritual maturity.
3. Third, **obedience isn't just about doing what you are supposed to be doing, but about being who Christ needs you to be in every situation.**
 - a. I talked already about those who were extremely obedient, and the Pharisees were just that... obedient to the minutest points of the Law. But we also remember what Jesus said about them and called them hypocrites!
 - b. Obedience is good, but with humility is the way God intended.



Application

Illustration: Does it work? Recently we had a problem with our technology here at Impact. I called Comcast to come and take a look and the diagnosis was that we have a bad router. What I later found out was that this router received an outsider's programming update and the update was explained to me like this. ***"The router said, "I've just got this update, and not sure what to do with it. I'll reach out to another component of the computer and see what it says." Receiving no response from another part of the computer, the router then said, "Well, I think I'll quit."*** And it did. It took down the whole system." Now I'm pretty sure the computer parts don't talk with one another, but this simple way of understanding made sense to me. All I know is the system still needs to be fixed, and that I understand.

1. **In the same way, there are some things we need to understand and put in motion as working applications** from these 10 verses in **Galatians**. **Verse 9** gives us our first point of application. **Galatians 6:9** *Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Here are some working applications:*
 - a. **Not everyone will respond with repentance and see that restoration is what you are all about.** Your responsibility is to approach this with gentleness, strength under control, along with a lot of love. Don't grow weary because you don't see the results you desire.
 - b. **You will run the risk of being identified as a hard non-understanding, judgmental critic because of your stand for Christ.** Perhaps some of these accusations will come from those you love the most.
 - c. **You will be tempted to give up or compromise because in the long run, you simply do not believe it's worth it.** Restoration didn't happen, you are discouraged, full of self-doubt. (Remember my story with my co-worker at the grocery store? I lost a friend).
 - d. **Don't become weary.** Let me phrase this another way. **"Don't let evil influence you that evil is not all that bad."** In our culture today we are being told to "tolerate" and to "accept" that which God does not accept or tolerate. (My recent experience on Facebook with a young man who was in our youth group over 25 years ago. He said he could no longer accept what I accept as truth, and that even though we could still be friends, it was his friends who then sought to chastise me for being influenced by fantasy things only religion can impose.) This was a very discouraging encounter. But, don't become weary.
 - i. The pressure is there, you will lose friends, family and people who are all about themselves. But, don't give up.
2. **A second working application from all this is from verse 10. Galatians 6:10** *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.*
 - a. Remember this, **you will be criticized for doing good.** Paul said this about Jesus in **Acts 10:38**. Jesus went around doing good, and they crucified him for that. We should anticipate nothing different, especially when we are working with people who may become defensive when we go about the work of restoration.



b. **You may not see the results you want.** I am reminded over and over that our responsibility is to be Christ like. We cannot force people to change, but we can do our best to represent Christ in any and every situation.

c. **You will become tired of “no results.”** Don’t give up, for the promise of Scripture is that at the proper time, the harvest will come. ***God’s promise here is as valid as His promise elsewhere in Scripture. We’ve got to believe this.***



3. **A third working application is then in the word, “opportunity.”**

As we have opportunity is all about making time to do this.

a. Here’s my thought in the form of a question: **“What can God do when we choose to do good for others?”** What can God do when we choose to give the time needed to bless people, encourage them, teach them, and show them how Christ lives in you? What can God do with all that? ***Can we assume that restoration is more likely to happen? More likely to take place?*** Sadly, we may never know because we haven’t sought the opportunities, or we became weary and gave up.

b. **We need to remember: We seek the opportunity but leave the results up to God!**

Conclusion:

As I conclude this message, I will admit that I wish I could end this message stronger, that we would be able to identify people who are “living a lie about Jesus” and that they would be open to change. ***I wish I could tell you that there are lots of people in your world who are just waiting for you to come and help them get free from the lies they’ve been living.*** I wish I could tell you that people who are sincerely wrong are willing to admit the truth and change. ***The sad reality is that many times they won’t... but some will!! That’s the good part!***

The importance of this message is for us to grasp that **“we really are here to help people.”** We really care. This final chapter in Galatians is real when it says, **“let us not become weary in doing good, let’s look for opportunities to do good.”** Those are great words to tell someone else, but to tell them to ourselves seems almost tiring. Were it not for the promise of God, **“at the proper time we will reap a harvest,”** I know I’d be ready to give up and just move on. But, that’s not the love of Christ, that’s not the power of this text. ***It’s His promise that keeps me moving, and I’m sure you too!***

I said earlier that this is about us! This text is meant to instruct us, encourage us, prod us on, and probably most of all, to know that this is what God wants us to do. He isn’t about us quitting, but persevering.

QUESTION:

1. I encouraged you earlier to put a name with the face of someone who's either living a lie or needs your help because they've realized that's what they've been doing. Paul urges us to get spiritually mature so that we can, with gentleness, help people. The question I have is: who is it, and will you become mature to help them?
2. Who are the people in your world with burdens that you need to begin help carrying, or carry a bigger portion than you have been carrying? Could you start today by praying more for them? Wouldn't that help?
3. Are you living for Christ like you mean it? Are you really here to help people be restored to Christ, or even come to Christ?
4. The book of Galatians is about some who were living a lie of following Jesus. Could this be us as well? Are we trusting in Jesus or the good things we think we do and impress God? If you've been living a lie, then today's the day to change. We're here to help.
5. What do you need to do because Jesus is Lord?

