

# Galatians 6:6

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Date: 24 November 2024

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] in Jesus' name. Amen. So this morning, I'm going to begin by talking to you about the big picture of this text, by reminding you of what you were made for and why you're here on the earth at this specific point in time, and even why you're here today. And so we go back to the very beginning in the book of Genesis. We're given a tiny glimpse of the first man and woman in paradise. They were placed in a garden, and while I am going to make an implication from Genesis 3.8, when Adam and Eve heard the Lord God walking in the cool of the day, and they hid, I believe that this was not the first time that they had walked and talked with God. Otherwise, how could they have recognized the sound of his walking? And while on this specific occasion they hid because they had sinned against

God's command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, I want us to go back to the times before this when they went walking with God in their perfect state, because here is where we find answers to what we were made for. Adam and Eve were the Lord and Lady of creation. They were image bearers of the one who walks unseen by our eyes. They were a 3D print of him they walked with.

And so their senses were designed to love beauty, to delight in good, to rejoice in truth, and their every action and thought was vertically oriented. Even their love for one another was a reminder of the one that loved them more. And they lived in the atmosphere of his love and abundant goodness.

And that garden's cultural air was permeated with the essence of God's character. And so their hearts responded to hearing him come walking with all the joy of a child on Christmas morning. This is it. Anticipation. Thrill. Delight. He was going to come and talk with them.

So what did they talk about? Well, we're not told that. But again, I'm going to make an implication that they needed input like that found in the first nine chapters of the book of Proverbs, where the father is talking to his son. And so they would hear words like these, that they would need wisdom and instruction to discern the sayings of the wise, to receive instruction in wise behavior, righteousness, justice, and equity, and to give prudence to the simplicity of their minds, to gain knowledge and discretion, to hear and increase in learning, and acquire wise counsel.

[ 3 : 1 3 ] And that's all from just Proverbs 1, verses 2 to 5. I am fairly certain that they needed to know what their purpose was in the garden and how to take care of it properly. God's words to them to subdue the earth and rule over the creation would also require God's instruction on how to do that.

But the first thing that I want us to think about this morning is that we were designed to work. Subduing and ruling is work. Subdue means to bring under control. And to rule is not telling others what to do. It is to model the rule of the one who has made us. And that means to work. If I want my children to pick up their toys, I don't just tell them to do it. I show them how, and I help them do it many times until I know that they get the idea and they delight in doing so on their own.

And if I want those under me to know what a clean bathroom looks like, I get in there and scrub the toilet and wipe up the floor on my hands and knees to demonstrate that is how you work. And then you want to be able to step back and say, it is good.

Children, kids, we were not designed for recreation. Going to Knoebels is fun and not a bad thing to do, but it is not what you're made for. You were made for keeping your room clean, taking care of your clothes, and putting your toys away. And why is that? Because those who are faithful in little things will become faithful with larger tasks. Your work in the future depends on how you take care of the things you have now. And for adults, the culture speaks very loudly of vegging out on the couch at the end of the day. And after all, I reason I've worked hard today and I deserve it. I need to sit back and take care of me. And while I don't doubt that we need to rest from our work, I wonder how many times I excuse myself with a me-centered approach to life that is more in line with the culture's idea about work than God's perspectives. Stewardship of all that I've been given means that I work and I delight in doing so. So my guess is that God said to Adam and Eve, I am working and I delight in doing it. And you are also to delight in your work. So rule well.

Remember that beautiful and perfect garden was to be augmented by the work that they were given to do. And so God told them about how to make the garden productive, to enhance its beauty, to bring its wildly growing greenness under control, to take the world's goods and increase their usefulness by inventing new designs and new delights. Steward it well.

[ 6 : 42 ] Just imagine God saying to Adam and Eve, crush the wheat heads, mix with eggs, bake over fire, make pasta, and then mix mashed tomatoes with garlic and pour it over the pasta and enjoy, enjoy.

Or he may have said something about the bdellium. It's a gum rosin. It's from the guggle tree. And learn its benefits to your health. Maybe he told them to learn how to take the Pishon River and augment their work and make it more productive. Learn how to enhance the onyx stone.

Learn. Polish it. Engrave it with your initials. A-T-M. You know, that was Adam the man. Give it to your wife. For there is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and tell himself that his labor is good. Ecclesiastes 2.24.

We were designed to delight in our work because of it being the way that we participate in bringing order to the world. It is participating in establishing a kingdom that is yet unseen when it is done with an eye to the King of Heaven.

And what was God's instruction in the garden all for? Well, Moses gets a glimpse of it in writing when he is on the mountain talking with his maker.

[ 8 : 20 ] And while it was written in the do's and don'ts of the Decalogue, the point of the whole is summarized by the Lord Jesus Christ himself in Matthew 22, 36 to 40, where he answers a question from a lawyer.

The lawyer asks, Which is the greatest commandment in the law? And Jesus answered, Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

This is the great and foremost commandment. And the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole law and the prophets.

Earlier, a similar question was asked by a wealthy man, and Jesus used the law to point out the young man's misplaced emphasis. The man had bought the lie that the point of working is to get money, and money is to be had so that it can be used to acquire property or stuff.

Notice the misunderstanding. God's design for Adam and Eve to work was to be a good steward of the things given.

[ 9 : 37 ] Probably some of the conversations with Adam and Eve were to help them understand the delight in working and stepping back from their work and saying, It is good. That way they would image their maker when he said in his creating acts, It is good.

And the byproducts of their work, and I am not spelling that B-U-Y, byproducts, were an expression of loving God by loving their neighbor.

Money, and all that it buys, is to express our care for others as we delight in what God has done for us. So the reminder in all this is to tell us to get our focus right as we look at the small picture of the passage for today.

Let me summarize. One of God's purposes in making us like himself is to be a worker, and to be workers delighting in the subduing task given to us and keeping an eye out to our neighbor's needs.

The reason I call the passage today a small picture is that we're reading somebody else's mail. Galatians was written to a specific people for a specific purpose located in a specific time period.

[ 11 : 03 ] And a pastor's job is to take all that into account and update the story to their own people with the pressures they face at this moment in time. And so now, let's look at Galatians 6, verse 6.

Follow along as I read. And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. Now, in the context of what our brother has been graciously speaking to us these last several weeks from Galatians 6, he is showing the work of God walking no longer in the cool of the day in paradise, but rather walking with his people in the wilderness of a broken world.

And what is God saying? He is telling us what the second table of the law looks like. So, in verse 1, how do I respond to those who are caught with a sin that they're too blind to see?

You gently restore them, being aware that you are just like them. Verse 2 tells why. Because it's a way of loving your neighbor.

What we're saying is I care too much to let you get stuck in a habit of indifference to others around you by scrolling on your phone when you are with others that are physically present.

[ 12 : 32 ] Pastor Dave emphasized the need for fellowship so that we can come alongside of others as their friends. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor participating in the Nazi resistance during World War II, said it this way, quote, the first service one owes to others in a community involves listening to them.

Just as our love for God begins with listening to God's word, the beginning of love for others is learning to listen to them. God's love for us is shown by the fact that God not only gives word, gives God's word, but he also lends us God's ear.

We do God's work for our brothers and sisters when we learn to listen to them. End of quote. Then in verse 3, Paul reminds the Galatians, beware, don't think more highly of yourself because you're helping bear someone's burdens or because you can see your brother or sister's errors when they cannot.

Remember, that is the story of the speck and the plank. I see very clearly what is wrong with you, but meanwhile, the beam in my eye I am blind to.

Again, a quote from Bonhoeffer, judging others makes us blind, whereas love is illuminating.

[ 14 : 04 ] By judging others, we blind ourselves to our own evil and to the grace which others are just as entitled to as we are. End of quote. Verse 4 says this, In examining myself, I must ask whether my motive in bearing others' burdens is because I love God or for selfish gain, and then in verse 5, I must work and delight in it for God's sake.

My time and money are to be used to advance the kingdom of God through loving my neighbor. Now, all of us here today work hard.

We work hard at what we do. We drive trucks, we wash dishes, we clean house, we plant, we harvest, we write tax returns, we investigate crime, we make and ship products, we raise the next generation.

On top of that, we sweep the floor, clean toilets, feed our families, we pull weeds in the garden, we repair broken steps, we change oil in the car, and we should do it all for the kingdom-building delight of partnering with the king of heaven because he works and steps back and says, it is good.

A side point, but I think an important one, is that my fear is that we too have bought the lie of the young rich man in our story earlier.

[ 15 : 31 ] And that is that money that makes my, is what makes my work worth getting up for in the morning. The amount of money defines whether my job is pleasant and good.

And that money and what I gain from it in terms of purchase power is my sole objective for going out the door to work. Yeah, I know God has said that a good man leaves an inheritance for their children's children in Proverbs 13.

And then earlier in verse 11 of Proverbs 13 it says, whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow. And Lady Wisdom in chapter 8 of Proverbs talks about riches and honor following those who are wise.

But all of those verses are talking about the byproducts of work. Ezekiel 28 and verse 5 warns that because of your wealth your heart has grown proud.

Proverbs 10 15 says that the wealth of the rich is their fortified city. What you trust in will be your God. And notice that the attitude toward money is the problem not the gaining of it.

[ 16 : 44 ] I've forgotten who told me this it may have even been one of you here but it went something like this. If the mechanic thought of his work as helping people get to their destination instead of just a job that would change the motive for getting out of bed in the morning.

Now why all this talk about work and money when verse 6 of Galatians 6 talks about the supporting the one who teaches. Remember it says let the one who is taught the word share all the good things with him who teaches.

Well it is my contention that the way we often decide to put our hand to the collection plate has to do with our attitude toward work and toward money.

And our pastor works. Sometimes he is frustrated by the amount of time it takes to study and understand what God would have him say. It means that other work on his house cannot get done as quickly as he would like to.

He also visits people as part of his work of overseeing the flock. He asks hard questions. He has to entertain conversations on things that he has not thought through.

[ 18 : 03 ] He must respond to people's needs with all the wisdom he can find in what he knows about God. And he must work diligently understanding his sheep who don't even speak the same voice language as he does.

And he does it by communicating with the heart language of love for them. Yes, he too works hard. Now, let me wed together two things that I've talked about.

What is the purpose of the byproduct of your work? It is to be used for Christ's sake. Time and money are the two commodities that we all have.

Some more and some less of each. But the purpose of them is to demonstrate our love for God and our love for others. Perhaps we are to use our purchased car to take someone to an appointment, or to have people over to enjoy your purchased food in the warmth of your rented or purchased apartment or house.

It could be making a meal for the single mother living next door from your purchased goods on your shelves. And in thinking that way, Galatians 6 reminds us that the one who is taught the word, that's us, are to share all good things with the teacher.

[ 19 : 34 ] And these are all perspectives that come from the second set of commandments in the law. how do I use what God has given me to enhance the world's beauty and to be involved in others' lives for Christ's sake and to make him known by my attitude toward my work?

And how do I support the one that keeps that perspective in front of me? While this sermon is not about tithing, I believe at least it is appropriate for me to mention this, the story about tithing in God's word is to help us understand that money and the things it buys is not our end game.

Pastor Tripp often reminded us that hearses don't have U-Hauls following them. All that I possess in the way of stuff, it will be left behind. The principle of tithing is to give guidance to our dividing money between the responsibilities that we have for caring for our families, our children, the government obligations that we have, and God's people, the church.

And tithing one-tenth of our income was to be a general principle in that mix of responsibilities. But I again, I believe that our attitude toward work and money plays into what we think about tithing.

I am not mentioning this to bind anyone's conscience, but rather challenge your thinking about how do you support the one who teaches.

[ 21 : 11 ] And now I would like to talk not about the big picture or the little picture, but rather the picture we get when we look beyond what nuclear telescopes show us.

It is the God's picture of Galatians 6. There are two phrases in Galatians 6 that come into clearer focus from this viewpoint.

Who really does the teaching? Whose word is being given? Who does our pastor attempt to represent in his work?

And at this point, it doesn't matter if I think he always gets it right or whether he answered all my questions satisfactorily. It doesn't matter if I don't like his style or his apologies.

His position of authority in my life has to do with the one who put him there and who he represents. And that is why we share all good things with him who teaches.

[ 22 : 24 ] Are you worried today about not having enough money to give to the church? does tithing seem like an impossibility on your budget?

Obviously, you need to be wise and perhaps get counsel about your financial situation from your brothers, the deacons. But if Jesus Christ himself stood in our pulpit, would you be more willing to give and not be fearful about providing for all your needs?

Do you remember where we started this morning? Isaiah? 4110. Do not fear. I am with you.

Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. Surely, I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

The second phrase that I wanted us to notice from this passage is the one who is taught. That's you and me. Do you come with the anticipation of hearing from God?

[ 23 : 37 ] Do you remember whose word it is and look forward with the anticipation, thrill, and delight to these times of being together as Adam and Eve did in the garden, in hearing from their creator?

this is our cultural moment to be challenged by the truth of God's character in living in a broken world, using the by-product of our labor to serve our neighbor's needs, and in the delight of our creator who teaches us through his under-shepherd, our pastor.

Let's pray to that end. Let's pray. Father, we want our eyes to really see what is going on when we walk into this church.

We come to meet with you. We come to hear your word. We come to see what you want us to see. We come to hear what you have laid on our pastor's heart.

We come to want to be thrilled by being with you with that same joy and anticipation of children on Christmas morning.

[ 25 : 08 ] You're here today. You have had us hear what you wanted us to hear. We praise you for that and thank you and ask Lord that you would make us believe that our work is worth something when it is used for the kingdom building task of seeing everything in light of who you are and what you've done.

we pray that in Jesus' name. We pray that in Jesus' name.