

Dr. Tim Gombis, Galatians, Session 8, Galatians 6:1-18 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Gombis, Galatians, Session 8, Galatians 6:1-18, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Tim Gombis's session on Galatians 6:1-18 concludes his lecture series on the book, focusing on Paul's final exhortations after extensive theological arguments. Gombis highlights Paul's call for spiritual individuals to gently restore those straying, particularly concerning the divisive teachings in Galatia. He emphasizes that true Christian identity transcends earthly distinctions, finding its foundation in the new creation inaugurated by the cross of Christ and expressed through love. Gombis underscores the importance of communal unity and self-sacrificial love as defining characteristics of this new creation life, warning against behaviors that foster division. He also touches upon the authorship and context of the letter, and encourages contemporary Christians to apply these principles by recognizing and overcoming their own cultural and societal tribalisms in favor of their primary identity in Christ.

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Gombis, Galatians, Session 8 – Double click icon to play in
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]
Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament →
Pauline Epistles → Galatians).**



**Gombis_Galatians_
Session08.mp3**

3. Briefing Document: Gombis, Galatians, Galatians 6:1-18

Briefing Document: Dr. Tim Gombis on Galatians 6:1-18

Main Theme: This session focuses on Paul's closing practical exhortations in Galatians 6:1-18, emphasizing the importance of living out the new creation reality through gentle restoration, mutual burden-bearing (understood in light of individual responsibility), and a fundamental identity rooted in the cross of Christ. Gombis highlights Paul's concern for the Galatian churches being drawn back into old covenant practices by agitators and underscores the radical nature of Christian identity that transcends ethnic and cultural divides.

Key Ideas and Facts:

1. Restoration in Gentleness (6:1):

- Paul urges those "who are spiritual" (anyone inhabiting the realm of the Spirit, not a spiritual elite) to "restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness" when someone is caught in a trespass.
- Gombis interprets the "trespass" primarily in the context of the Galatians being drawn back to the teaching that they need to adhere to Jewish practices and exclude Gentile believers.
- The temptation for those restoring is not to fall into the same teaching but to engage with anger, force, or coercion. Paul believes these "present evil age means" cannot produce "new creation results."
- Gentleness does not equate to a lack of strength; Christians can be committed to inclusivity based on the cross with courageous boldness.

2. Bearing Burdens and Fulfilling the Law of Christ (6:2):

- Paul exhorts believers to "bear one another's burdens," which Gombis interprets as being patient and serving one another.
- "The law of Christ" is not a separate law but the Mosaic law read through the lens of Christ. The Old Testament remains Scripture for Gentile Christians, revealing God's character as seen in Christ, but it is not their national charter like it is for Jews.

3. Individual Examination and Bearing One's Own Load (6:3-5):

- While believers should bear each other's burdens, Paul also states that "each one shall bear his own load."
- Gombis reconciles this by explaining that each individual needs to "be examining their own work" and how they are participating in the community.
- Verse 5 refers to the eschatological judgment where each person will be evaluated on whether they are genuinely part of the new creation or the present evil age based on their behavior characterized by the fruit of the Spirit.

4. The Sovereignty of God and the Law of Sowing and Reaping (6:7-8):

- Paul warns, "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."
- This underscores that God sovereignly oversees what happens in the Galatian community, and individuals and communities will face eschatological reward or judgment based on their actions.
- Sowing to the flesh leads to corruption, while sowing to the Spirit leads to eternal life. This is a reminder for communities to constantly evaluate whether their life is oriented towards the new creation.

5. Paul's Handwriting and the Subversive Motives of Agitators (6:11-13):

- Paul notes, "See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand," indicating he typically dictated his letters. This letter's rushed and grammatically messy nature suggests Paul's intense emotion.
- The agitators ("those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh") compel circumcision to avoid persecution from their fellow Jews for associating with Paul's inclusive ministry.
- Their motivation is to "boast in your flesh" by claiming to have converted Gentile communities to a Jewish way of life.
- Paul argues that these circumcised individuals "do not even keep the law themselves" because true law-keeping involves obedience to God, which they are failing by prioritizing outward conformity over genuine faith and love.

6. Paul's Boast in the Cross (6:14):

- In stark contrast to the agitators' boasting, Paul declares, "But may it never be that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."
- The cross, a symbol of shame and weakness, is the means of the new creation and Paul's liberation from the old world.
- The closer one is to the cross (embracing suffering and humility), the closer one is to resurrection power.

7. The New Creation as the Defining Reality (6:15-16):

- Paul reiterates a core conviction: "For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision but a new creation." Old distinctions of ethnicity and status are irrelevant in Christ.
- He calls this principle a "canon" or "rule," stating, "for those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God."
- Gombis interprets "the Israel of God" as referring to Jewish Christians who have embraced their role alongside Gentile Christians in the unified people of God.
- Any attitudes of division, factionalism, or discontent within church communities are "fatal threats to new creation life."

8. Paul's Brand Marks and Closing (6:17-18):

- Paul states, "From now on, let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear the brand marks of Jesus on my body." These physical scars signify his identification with Christ's suffering.
- The letter closes abruptly with the benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is with your spirit, brothers. Amen," lacking typical elements like the scribe's name or extensive greetings, reflecting Paul's distressed state.

9. Key Lessons for Christian Identity and Pauline Theology:

- Paul was thoroughly Jewish but his theological concern wasn't with Judaism itself, but with obedience to God and inclusion in the new creation people, regardless of ethnicity.
- Keeping the law for Jews meant remaining faithful to their covenant identity, while for Gentile Christians, it meant obedience to Christ, faith, love, and

participation in the new creation without adopting Israelite-specific elements of the Mosaic law as a national charter.

- Contemporary application requires recognizing and transcending tribalisms (political, denominational, cultural) within our own contexts, prioritizing the fundamental identity as members of God's family in Christ.
- Paul's apocalyptic vision, seeing the church between the ages, provides a lens for analyzing personal and communal behaviors in light of the flesh and the resurrection life oriented by the cross.

Quote Highlights:

- "Brothers, even if any person is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such one in the spirit of gentleness, each looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted." (Galatians 6:1)
- "You cannot create new creation results with the present evil age means."
- "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)
- "Each one shall bear his own load." (Galatians 6:5)
- "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7)
- "But may it never be that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." (Galatians 6:14)
- "For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision but a new creation." (Galatians 6:15)
- "For those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God." (Galatians 6:16)
- "From now on, let no one cause trouble for me, for I bear the brand marks of Jesus on my body." (Galatians 6:17)

This briefing document provides a comprehensive overview of the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Gombis in his session on Galatians 6:1-18, highlighting the practical implications of Paul's message for Christian living and understanding Pauline theology.

4. Study Guide: Gombis, Galatians, Galatians 6:1-18

Galatians 6:1-18 Study Guide

Quiz

1. According to Gombis, who is Paul addressing when he says, "you who are spiritual" in Galatians 6:1?
2. What does Gombis suggest is the likely temptation for those who are restoring someone caught in a trespass (Galatians 6:1)?
3. How does Gombis explain the seemingly contradictory statements in Galatians 6:2 ("bear one another's burdens") and 6:5 ("each one shall bear his own load")?
4. What does Gombis say is the significance of Paul mentioning that he is writing with large letters in his own hand (Galatians 6:11)?
5. According to Gombis, what is the primary motivation of the agitators who are compelling the Galatians to be circumcised (Galatians 6:12)?
6. In what does Paul boast, according to Galatians 6:14, and why is this boast so radical?
7. What does Paul mean when he states in Galatians 6:15 that "neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything but a new creation"?
8. What does Gombis identify as the "rule" or "canon" that those who walk by will experience peace and mercy (Galatians 6:16)?
9. How does Gombis interpret Paul's concluding blessing upon "the Israel of God" (Galatians 6:16)?
10. What does Gombis say Paul's "brand marks of Jesus" signify (Galatians 6:17)?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Gombis states that Paul is addressing anyone who inhabits the realm of the Spirit, not a separate group of super spiritual elites. He believes Paul is exhorting all believers who are in the Spirit to restore those caught in the false teaching.
2. Gombis suggests that the temptation is not necessarily to be drawn back into the false teaching, but rather to engage with the erring person with anger, force, coercion, or condemnation instead of gentleness.

3. Gombis explains that bearing one another's burdens refers to self-giving love and mutual support within the community, while each bearing their own load refers to the individual responsibility each person has to self-examine their participation in the community and face eschatological judgment.
4. Gombis explains that this was likely an unusual act for Paul, who typically dictated his letters. It serves as a personal and emphatic closing note, highlighting the importance of his final message.
5. Gombis argues that their primary motivation is to make a good impression on their colleagues in Jerusalem and avoid persecution from their fellow Jews for associating with Paul and his inclusive approach to Gentiles.
6. Paul boasts in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is radical because the cross was a symbol of shame, weakness, and God's curse, yet it is through this that the new creation was brought about and Paul found freedom and new life.
7. Gombis explains that this means old distinctions based on ethnicity or adherence to the Mosaic law are now irrelevant. What truly matters is participation in the new creation reality brought about by Christ.
8. Gombis identifies the "rule" as the principle that ethnic identity and the old world order no longer hold primary significance. Instead, what matters is participation in the new creation and faith working itself out in love.
9. Gombis interprets "the Israel of God" not as the church replacing Israel, but as Jewish Christians who have embraced their role in God's people alongside non-Jewish Christians in the church.
10. Gombis suggests that Paul's brand marks are a public demonstration of his identification with the death of Christ, signifying his suffering and commitment to the gospel.

Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the significance of Paul's emphasis on gentleness and restoration in addressing those who are caught in trespasses within the Galatian community (Galatians 6:1-2). How does this reflect the values of the "new creation"?
2. Analyze Paul's understanding of the "law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2) in relation to the Mosaic law as presented in Galatians 6:1-18. How does this perspective inform the identity and behavior of Gentile Christians, according to Gombis' interpretation?
3. Explore the tension between individual responsibility and communal care as presented in Galatians 6:2-5. How does Gombis reconcile these seemingly contradictory ideas, and what are the implications for Christian community?
4. Examine Paul's critique of the motivations of those who were compelling the Galatians to be circumcised (Galatians 6:12-13). How does Paul's own "boast" in the cross (Galatians 6:14) contrast with their desire to "make a good showing in the flesh"?
5. Based on Gombis' lecture on Galatians 6:1-18, discuss the ongoing relevance of Paul's teachings on Christian identity and the dangers of allowing cultural or social tribalisms to undermine the unity and mission of the church today.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Trespass:** A transgression, sin, or wrongdoing. In the context of Galatians, Gombis suggests it primarily refers to being caught in the false teaching that adherence to the Mosaic law is necessary for Gentile Christians.
- **Spiritual (οἱ πνευματικοί):** According to Gombis, this refers to anyone who inhabits the realm of the Spirit, any believer in Christ, not just a select group of highly devout individuals.
- **Restore (καταρτίζετε):** To mend, repair, or bring back to a proper state. In this context, it means gently guiding someone caught in error back to the truth of the gospel.
- **Law of Christ:** According to Gombis, this is not a separate legal code from the Mosaic law but rather the Torah understood and lived through the lens of Christ and characterized by bearing one another's burdens.
- **New Creation (καινή κτίσις):** A fundamental concept in Paul's theology referring to the transformed reality brought about by Christ's death and resurrection, where old distinctions (like Jew/Gentile) no longer define identity.
- **Flesh (σάρξ):** In Paul's writings, this term can refer to the physical body but often carries a negative connotation, representing the realm of human effort apart from God's Spirit and the source of selfish desires and division.
- **Spirit (πνεῦμα):** The Holy Spirit of God, the divine power that empowers believers and produces the fruit of the Spirit, leading to unity and love.
- **Cruciformity:** The idea of being shaped by the cross of Christ, embracing humility, self-sacrifice, and the values of the kingdom of God, even in the face of suffering and shame.
- **Israel of God:** In Gombis' interpretation of Galatians 6:16, this refers specifically to Jewish Christians who have embraced their identity within the people of God alongside Gentile believers in the church.
- **Brand Marks of Jesus (τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ):** Physical scars or marks on Paul's body that served as a testament to his suffering for the sake of Christ and the gospel.

5. FAQs on Gombis, Galatians, Galatians 6:1-18, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Galatians 6:1-18 Based on Dr. Gombis's Teaching

1. What is the main focus of Paul's exhortations in Galatians 6:1-18? Paul's closing exhortations in this section of Galatians focus on how believers, those "who are spiritual" or "inhabit the realm of the Spirit," should respond to fellow believers who are "caught in any trespass." His primary concern within the context of the letter is addressing those who are being drawn back into the idea that they need to adhere to Jewish Law to be fully part of God's people, thus creating division within the multi-ethnic Christian community. Paul urges a spirit of gentleness and restoration, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity based on the cross of Christ rather than ethnic or legalistic distinctions.

2. When Paul says "you who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness," who is he addressing and what kind of restoration does he have in mind?

Paul is addressing all believers who are living in the realm of the Spirit, not just a spiritual elite. The restoration he envisions is not about condemnation or coercion, but a gentle appeal to those who are straying from the core message of the Gospel, particularly those being influenced by the teaching that adherence to the Mosaic Law is necessary for Gentile believers. He wants them to be brought back to the understanding of inclusion in the people of God through faith in Christ, regardless of their ethnic background.

3. What does Paul mean by "bear one another's burdens" and how does this relate to "each one will bear his own load"? Bearing one another's burdens involves patience, service, and mutual support within the Christian community, fulfilling the "law of Christ" – which is the Mosaic Law understood and lived through the lens of Christ. This emphasizes our interconnectedness and responsibility to care for each other. The statement that "each one will bear his own load" refers to the individual accountability each person will face on the eschatological day of judgment. Each person will be evaluated on whether their life and participation in the community have been characterized by the fruit of the Spirit or the works of the flesh. These two concepts are reconciled by understanding that while we support each other in love, we are also individually responsible for our own spiritual lives and how we live within the community.

4. How does Paul understand the "law of Christ" in relation to the Mosaic Law? The "law of Christ" is not a new legal code that replaces the Mosaic Law. Instead, Paul views the Mosaic Law through the lens of Christ. For Gentile Christians, the Law remains Scripture through which they can understand the character of God and Christ, but it is not their national charter as it was for the Jewish people. They are not obligated to its Israelite-specific components like diet and calendar. The "law of Christ" is essentially the principle of love and mutual service that fulfills the essence of God's will as revealed in the Law and exemplified by Christ.

5. Why does Paul emphasize the idea that "whatever a man sows, this he will also reap"? Paul uses this principle to underscore the seriousness of how believers live within the community. Their actions and investments, whether towards the flesh (self-indulgence, division) or the Spirit (love, unity, service), will have corresponding eschatological consequences. This is a reminder that salvation is not merely a past event but an ongoing journey that culminates in a final evaluation. Communities, as well as individuals, will collectively reap what they sow, whether it is new creation life or the corruption of the present evil age.

6. What is the significance of Paul's boast being solely in the cross of Jesus Christ? Paul's former boasts were rooted in his Jewish identity and achievements. However, the cross of Christ, a symbol of shame, weakness, and divine curse, has become his sole boast. Through the cross, Paul has been crucified to the old world and brought into the new creation. He recognizes the paradoxical power of the cross: that through suffering and identification with Christ's death, one experiences resurrection life and freedom. Boasting in the cross signifies a complete shift in identity and values, where worldly status and achievements are rendered meaningless in light of the new reality created by Christ's sacrifice.

7. What is the "rule" or "canon" that Paul presents in Galatians 6:15-16, and why is it so important for Christian community? The "rule" Paul presents is that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision matters, but what counts is being a new creation and having faith working itself out in love. This is the fundamental principle that should govern the lives of believers and the structure of Christian communities. It emphasizes that ethnic or former religious distinctions are irrelevant in Christ. The unity of the church, built on self-sacrificial love and service, is paramount. Attitudes of division and factionalism are not just unfortunate but "fatal threats to new creation life" because they undermine the core reality of what it means to be the people of God.

8. How does Dr. Gombis interpret Paul's closing remarks about the "Israel of God" and what are the implications for understanding Christian identity today? Dr. Gombis interprets "the Israel of God" in this context not as the entire Church replacing Israel, but specifically as Jewish Christians who have embraced their role in God's people alongside non-Jewish Christians. He suggests that Paul is acknowledging their unique place within God's historical plan while emphasizing that all believers, regardless of their background, are now united in Christ. For contemporary Christian identity, this highlights the importance of recognizing our primary identity as members of the new creation in Christ, which transcends other cultural, national, or political affiliations. While we may have other identities, our allegiance to Christ and our unity with fellow believers should be foundational, preventing these other identities from becoming sources of division and conflict.