

# The Spiritual Man's Relationships (Galatians 5-6)

by Bryan Gibson

We're calling him spiritual, because that's what God calls him—"you who are **spiritual**..." (Galatians 6:1). Really, that's what every Christian should be, because having "crucified the flesh" (Galatians 5:24) we now "walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:16, 25), and therefore bear the "fruit of the Spirit" (Galatians 5:22-23). What effect does being spiritual have on our relationships? Galatians 5-6 has the answers.

## **First and foremost, toward the Lord Jesus Christ?**

We fulfill His law (6:2); we crucify everything opposed to Him (6:14); and we gladly suffer for Him (6:17). This relationship is summed up in an earlier passage: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (2:20). "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all" (*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*).

## **Toward the world/flesh?**

"And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (5:24). "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" (6:14). "All the vain things (including the works of the flesh—5:19-21) that charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood" (*When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*).

## **Toward a brother in error?**

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness..." (6:1).

## **Toward brethren in general?**

"Through love serve one another" (5:13). "But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another" (5:15). "Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another" (5:26). "Bear one another's burdens" (6:2). "Do good...especially to those who are of the household of faith" (6:10).

## **Toward himself?**

"Restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted...if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For each one shall bear his own load" (6:1, 3-5).

## **Toward those who teach the word?**

“Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches” (6:6).

**Toward those who teach contrary to the apostles’ doctrine?**

“I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is” (5:10). God will judge them in the final Day, but we need to make the same judgment described in Romans 16:17: “Note those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.”

**Toward all men?**

We bear before them (and our brethren) “the fruit of the Spirit,” virtues such as “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (5:22-23). “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all” (6:10), understanding that the best thing we can do is teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ.