

“Bear One Another’s Burdens...” What it means and What it does not

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*“Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of
Christ.” Galatians 6:2*

This week the Holy Spirit put a pause on our Signs of the Times series for reasons I will only explain briefly. This has been one of those weeks in which serious prayer needs were added to those already on the list. I do not recall ever having that many serious needs to pray over at the same time. I love to pray for and with people and while some consider me a prayer warrior,

I confess that I am too often a shadow of what should be. I say that with a heart of contrition before the Lord. **There is no greater work than prayer.** I love the words of Oswald Chambers that all Christians who have a prayer life, and especially those who do not, should learn.

***“Prayer does not fit us for the greater work. Prayer is the
greater work.”***

As I sat with my journal writing and praying what came to mind, I also suggested to the Lord this week had not afforded me time to prepare the next message in this series. In an instant, the Holy Spirit immediately brought to mind the verse in the title and the key points that follow. I am grateful for that and pray these words reach many who need to have their burdens lifted and those who can come alongside to help do some of the “heavy lifting”.

The Greek word for *burdens* in the verse is *phortion* (*for-tee'-on*). It means load as in cargo or things that are excessively heavy. The context of this verse is more about helping Christians dealing with sin, which includes helping them *bear* up through the process of reconciliation and restoration. The reference to the "law of Christ" is love as stated in the OT and NT. (Jesus said to "love our neighbor as ourselves").

That said, we know the word *burden* is used in several contexts in the broader sense as we would define them today—load or heavy weight. Here are two great examples of very comforting words to help those who are weighed down with burdens of all kinds:

King David wrote, "***Cast your burden upon the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.***"
Psalm 55:22

Similarly, Jesus spoke of the burdens on man that cover all of sources,

"Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is comfortable, and My burden is light." Matthew 11: 28-30

What I CAN do for another...

- Emotional: Comfort. We walk with, cry with, sit with, or hold someone's hand if that helps.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God." 2 Corinthians 1:3-3

- Physical: Serve, i.e., DO meaningful, helpful acts of

kindness and service

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'" Matthew 25: 34-36

▪ Spiritual: We Pray

"We tend to use prayer as a last resort, but God wants it to be our first line of defense. We pray when there is nothing else we can do, but God wants us to pray before we do anything at all." Oswald Chambers

"O LORD my God, I cried to You for help, and You healed me." Psalm 30:2

(Jesus prayed for Peter) *"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded to sift you like wheat but I have prayed for you..."*
Luke 22:32a

What I CANNOT do for another...

▪ We cannot bear another person's sin and shame. Jesus alone could and did for all who confess and repent.

HE WHO COMMITTED NO sin, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT found IN HIS MOUTH; and while being abusively insulted, He did not insult in return; while suffering, He did not threaten, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself brought our sins in His body up on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness; by His wounds you were healed. 1 Peter 2: 22-24

▪ We cannot take up (or bear) the cross of life for another brother or sister. Jesus commanded each of us to

bear his/her own.

“And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.” Mark 8:34

- We cannot stand in for someone else before God. Every person will stand before God Who judge us in Christ.

“So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.” Romans 14:12

One final thing **we can do**—whether or not we do, depends on the person and circumstances.

We can ask them if they know Jesus, the only One Who can heal eternally, and invite them to receive Him now. Some think that is too intrusive and it can be. But I would rather err on the side of asking and being rebuked by someone than not asking and have them face life and death alone without hope and eternity in Hell. Think about that.

For Christ’s sake,

Walter