

*"Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."
Galatians 6:2*

*"But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor {to lead us} to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."
Galatians 3:23-25*

Help!

Help One Another – Galatians 6:2

No one person is an island unto himself.

I would like to think I am sometimes. Maybe you have, too. I even spiritualize it by saying that all I need is Jesus so then I can do it all on my own. I do not need a shoulder to cry on or a listening ear because that is what God is for. Right about then, something in life hits me and I am forced to realize that I need the help of my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Why is it that some people feel that they can do it all on their own?

How has our society at times conditioned us to be independent?

A quick look through a book store lets us know that there are tons of books on how to better ourselves and become more independent. Television and movies encourage us to retain our individuality even if we are in a relationship.

We are lost in a sea of everybody, wanting to be somebody with the help of nobody.

Independence is a part of the development process, and there are some ways in which independence is positive. What are some areas that we encourage positive independence?

Positive independence can be a training ground for growth. Consider parenting. Paul talks a little about this aspect in Galatians 3. He explains that the law was humanity's tutor or schoolmaster, but since faith has come, we have matured and are no longer under a tutor. Children need guidance and direction, but the guidance and direction that is provided to them has as its goal independence. Parents would rather not have their children living with them for all of life. They train them to be independent. This aspect of parenting can be seen throughout much of creation.

Another form of positive independence can be seen in electricity and batteries. A drill was not always run on electricity. It was a tool that was cranked by hand in order to make the hole. Electricity made it possible for the drill to work independently of human cranking. Now, batteries have made it possible for the drill to operate independently of a power cord. With each level of independence comes a new level of freedom.

But are we ever completely independent? Even the most independent person is still dependent on many things. Think of the most independent person you know – what are they still dependent on?

*"For the body is not one member, but many."
1 Corinthians 12:14*

Oxygen. We are all dependent on it. We need it to continue living. It is a simple chemical, yet we are dependent on it to sustain life. Nourishment is another form of dependence. We need to nourish our bodies in order to continue living. Gravity is another form of dependence. We would float away if gravity was not a part of our lives. These, and more, are outside of our being. Our life is also dependent on our bodies working correctly.

I know what you are thinking. "These things are assumed, and the independence we are talking about is independence from other people."

Look at 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. Paul explains that we, as Christians, are a part of the body of Christ. We each have our part and it would be foolish of us to say to one another, "I don't need you!" It would be like telling your lungs, "Lungs, I do not like being dependent on air, so I am going to remove you from my body." People need each other. Hence, this is the reason why Paul, in Galatians 6, calls us to help one another.

How can being a part of a local church "help" the believer?

Life is full of challenges and tragedies. Houses burn down. Loved ones pass on. Finances run out. We have all been touched by something that has brought heartache and pain. Paul explains that we need to help each other to carry the burdens of life. The word "burden" means a heavy weight. In some cases this weight may be the weight of sin issues. We are called to help each overcome sin and then we will fulfill the Law of Christ.

What is this Law? It is love as Paul explains in chapter five. It all comes back to "love one another". We do not love one another if we are not helping one another. Now this burden is different from the everyday burdens in verse five. The everyday burdens are like a hikers backpack. Everyone needs to carry their own backpack.

Let me try to paint a picture. A father and son are walking through their neighborhood. This is an activity that they often enjoy together, as it allows them to talk and share. They sit on a bench near their home. It is a familiar area with an ancient oak tree that towers over them. Unaware that the tree can no longer sustain the weight of its massive branches, it suddenly and unexpectedly comes down upon the father and son. The father pulls himself from the gnarled branches only to realize his son is trapped beneath the largest section of branch. The bench is keeping the weight of the branch from crushing his son; the bench will not last long. The father screams for help as he tries to lift the branch off his son.

What would you do? Would you cheer him on? Would you pat the father on the back and tell him he is doing a great job? Would you compliment him on his love for his son? Would you tell him you have experienced the same thing? Would you tell him you are praying for him?

Many of us in our churches are guilty of answering yes to one or more of these questions. We may not admit it, but we do. In the church, we act like we love each other, but we refuse to get into the mess. We refuse to get

tangled up and come alongside that person who is sweating and aching under the burden. We may be afraid of what it will cost us.

Jesus lifted the tree off our backs. Shouldn't we help one another?

What do you need to do in response to this lesson?

