

Northeast Church of Christ

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From the Pen of Paul: *Burdens, and How to Deal With Them*

BURDENS, OF ONE SORT OR ANOTHER, are a common lot to all. Every individual, whether rich or poor, young or old, wise or foolish, weak or strong, has some burden to bear. How we handle our burdens has a lot to do with how successful we are in life.

The Scriptures reveal that burdens can be handled in at least three different ways. (1) Some may be *shared with others*. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2); (2) Other burdens cannot be shared with others, but must be *borne ourselves*. “But let every man bear his own burden” (Gal. 6:5); (3) There is a third class of burdens that *can only be borne for us*; of these burdens, we are told, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee” (Psalm 55:22).

Burdens that can be shared with others include many of the trials, sorrows, and heartaches that come our way; often just a friendly smile, or the touch of a friendly handshake, or a word of sincere sympathy and encouragement goes a long way in making the loads of life easier to bear. No one is immune from these burdens and, indeed, often they are so designed that we are made better by them. This seems to be the idea behind the teaching of James in James 1:1-4. When we see our fellow Christians going through such trials, it is our privilege to “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (Rom. 12:15). When we show love and encouragement for those who are having weak moments, and true compassion for those who are in need, we are demonstrating

the Christ-like life (I John 2:6). We should always have genuine love and show appreciation for every individual realizing that everyone has his/her own unique value in the Lord’s service. When burdens are lifted for others there is often a blessing for the giver as well as the one receiving the help (Mark 9:41; Heb. 6:10; Matt. 25:40; 12:50).

The word for *burden* in Galatians 6:5 is slightly different from the word “burdens” in verse 2. This word means “load” or responsibility. All of us have our own burden, load or responsibility that we are required to bear ourselves. Every individual has the responsibility of bringing his life into harmony with the “will of the Father” (Matt. 7:21). By this compliance with the will of God we determine which road we will travel (Matt. 7:13-14) and whether we are “wise or foolish builders” (Matt. 7:24-27). No one has the right or the ability to bear this load for us. They may instruct, train and set the proper example before us; but each must bear his responsibility. Each will have to “give an account of himself before God” (Rom. 14:12). This “load” cannot be borne by proxy!

The third class of burdens is burdens that are too heavy for us to bear alone. This is why the Psalmist tells us to “Cast thy burden upon the Lord.” Our sins are such a burden. They cannot be denied out of existence; they cannot be ignored until they go away; only “in Christ” can they be forgiven. Isaiah, in chapter 53 of the book bearing his name, explains how these burdens have been borne

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The Bible and TV Guide

On the table – side by side –
The Holy Bible and the TV Guide.
One is well worn but cherished with pride
(Not the Bible, but the TV Guide).
One is used daily, to help folk decide,
No! It isn't the Bible, but the TV Guide,
As the pages are turned, what shall we see?
Oh, what does it matter? Turn on that TV.
Then confusion reigns; they can't agree
On what they shall watch on the old TV,
So they open the book in which they confide
(No, not the Bible; it's the TV Guide).
The Word of God is seldom read,
Maybe a verse e'er they fall into bed,
Exhausted and sleepy and tired as can be,
Not from reading the Bible, but from watching TV.
So back to the table, side by side,
Is the Holy Bible and the TV Guide.
No time for prayer, no time for the Word;
The plan of salvation is seldom heard.
Forgiveness of sin so full and free
Is found in the Bible, not on TV.

–*Author Unknown*

by Christ for us. “Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows” (v. 4); “He was wounded for our transgression, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed” (v. 5); “...the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (v. 6); “...for He shall bear their iniquities...” (v. 11). Isn't it clear from these statements of Isaiah that Christ helps us with the burdens that are too heavy to be borne alone?

We are even promised help when our anxieties become too frustrating and depressing for us to handle alone; we are told, “Casting all your care upon Him; for He

careth for you” (I Pet. 5:7). And Paul urges us to “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil. 4:6).

How are you handling burdens? Are you assisting your fellow Christian with his burdens? Are you shouldering your own load of responsibility as you grow and mature in Christ? Are you claiming the help of Christ for those burdens that are so difficult to bear? The way you handle burdens says a lot about you to others and to the Lord.

—*Paul M. Wilmoth*