



Berean Christian Fellowship

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Bear with One Another

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

When people are going through trials or difficulties around us, we want to help. Unfortunately, this often involves us telling them what they “need to do” to get out of their trouble (or we tell others what they need to do to fix someone’s problem). It is American to believe EVERYTHING is achievable. After all, we live in the land of “opportunity.” We grow up being told that the sky is ours if we want it enough, and there is a solution to every problem. We like to think we can fix people’s problems, and so we lay down our formulas: “you need to go see so-and-so,” “try this diet,” or “take this pill.” If someone has a lasting struggle, we think they obviously aren’t trying to overcome it. And if they don’t take our advice, we wash our hands of it and say, “I tried to help!” Unfortunately this adds to the burden of a suffering brother, who now feels guilt or blame for their situation unless they legalistically do x, y, and z to our satisfaction.

Is this what Paul meant by bearing one another’s burdens? No! This worldview would have done nothing for Job, Jeremiah, Hannah, or Paul, who all went through great afflictions, for the glory of God. Remember, Job wasn’t simply suffering a physical complaint, he was under the power of satan for a time, and his restoration was in God’s hands. What advice could we have offered Jeremiah in his severe distress and anguish? Think of Hanna who was “*a woman oppressed in spirit*” with “*great concern and provocation*” (1 Sam. 1:15-16), yet the solution was between her and God for His glory. Concerning his “thorn,” Paul “*implored the Lord three times that it might leave*” (2 Cor. 12:8b), but God refused—no therapy, diet, or medicine would have helped

him, for it was a testimony that God’s grace is sufficient. It rarely occurs to us that God may have a purpose in suffering.

Does this mean we should leave the afflicted to their difficulties? May it never be! Our Heavenly Father neither burdens us with legalistic “solutions,” nor leaves us alone in suffering, for He “*is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble*” (Ps. 46:1), “*Who daily bears our burden*” (Ps. 68:19a). We must be PRESENT in times of distress and near to those in trouble, as “*the Lord is near to the brokenhearted*” (Psalm 34:18a). We must “*meet pressing needs*” (Titus 3:14b) and provide for needs, if they are clear (James 2:15-17). We need to speak the Word of God into the silence, for “*anxiety in a man’s heart weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad*” (Pro. 12:25). “*This is my comfort in my affliction, That Your word has revived me*” (Ps. 119:50). We need to hold the hands of our brothers and sisters as they endure the pain, as Paul requested: “*Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*” (1 Tim. 2:3). “*You have done well to share with me in my affliction*” (Phil. 4:14b). We need to wait with them in understanding, encouragement, and support while they wait for the Lord: “*the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother*” (Phil. 1:7b).

We must not imitate Job’s friends who sought to judge him guilty for some “wrong thing” he had done or was doing, which *must be* causing his burden. Nor should we imitate them in burdening Job with things he “should do” to fix it. Instead, may we imitate “*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 Cor. 1:3-4). “*He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you’*” (Heb. 13:5b). Amen.

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