

July 6, 2025  
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost  
St. Timothy Lutheran Church – Huber Heights, OH  
Pastor Joel Sutton

Galatians 6:1–10, 14–18

## YOUR SPIRITUAL TO DO LIST.

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

We're going to start with a little Catechism refresher this morning. **Law** and **Gospel** are the two major doctrines in Holy Scripture. The **Law** tells you what you should do and what you should not do. While the **Law** is God's holy will for how you should live your life, the **Law** accuses you of your sin and leads to you to despair because you can't keep it as you ought. The **Law** shows you your sin and condemns you to death.

The **Gospel** leads to salvation. The **Gospel** shows your Savior. It shows you what God in Christ Jesus has done to pay the price of your sin – and – what God continues to do for you for the sake of Jesus's suffering, death, and resurrection: namely, bestowing forgiveness of sins, and rescuing you from death and the devil.

In Catechism you were taught the Three Uses of the Law.

1. The First Use of the Law is as a **Curb**. It's how God uses civil laws to **curb** evil in the world and keep order for the good of His creation.
2. The Second Use of the Law is as a **Mirror** in which God uses to the Law to reveal your sin and call you to repentance. When you look into the **mirror** of the Law you see how far short you fall of the glory of God and your need for forgiveness and a Savior.
3. In the Third Use of the Law, the Law is a **Guide** by which you know how to live a God pleasing life. But of course, you can never live as perfectly as God demands – so the Third Use of the Law also accuses you of your sin. But even though it accuses – it also has another use. It's what the Lutheran Reformers called "**New Obedience**."

In the Augsburg Confession, article VI says:

*"Our churches teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruit [Galatians 5:22–23]. It is necessary to do good works commanded by God [Ephesians 2:10], because of God's will. We should not rely on those works to merit justification before God. <sup>2</sup> The forgiveness of sins and justification is received through faith. The voice of Christ testifies, "So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"* (Luke 17:10) (AC VI, 1–2)

In our epistle text today, St. Paul is teaching the Galatian Christians about this *New Obedience*. He's giving you and me a *"to do"* list. Not a legalistic *"to do"* list – but a spiritual *"to do"* list. In the first verse of our text, when he says *"you who are spiritual,"* he's speaking to you. (cf: Das, Galatians, Concordia Commentary, 603) You're a baptized child of God, given faith and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is now a living and active power in your life calling you to live a regenerated Christian life, a life of new obedience, a life of bearing fruits of faith, fruits of good works and deeds and love toward you neighbor. Again... these fruits don't add one bit toward your salvation – but are a result of, and flow from, saving faith in Christ.

First on Paul's list, he says:

***"... if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness."*** (Galatians 6:1)

Your first human inclination when you see a brother or sister in Christ going astray is to not get involved. You think if you ignore it, maybe it'll go away. But on the other hand, by ignoring the situation, they might fall into greater shame and vice, and perhaps fall from faith. You've seen it in the church and in your own family. If you, the church, and the pastor take a hands-off approach, little by little everyone becomes desensitized to the sin. People decide that maybe *that* sin isn't so bad after all. Besides, everyone else is doing it. God certainly won't send everybody to hell for doing that same thing. But the fact is – the wages of sin is eternal death. You'd never allow a child to play with poison. You'd never hand a child a loaded firearm. The result of living in unrepentant sin is much more deadly.

Believers and unbelievers alike love to say:

***"Let him who is without sin ... throw [the first] stone."*** (John 8:7)

But when Jesus said that, He was addressing the scribes and the Pharisees who brought to Him a woman who had been caught in adultery. And, yes, He did say:

***"Let him who is without sin ... throw [the first] stone."*** (John 8:7)

But when no one was left to condemn her, Jesus told her:

***"Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."*** (John 8:11)

That's what Paul is saying for you to do for your brother or sister in Christ. He says you ***"... should restore him in a spirit of gentleness."*** Not being accusatory or condemning but pointing out the danger of flirting with sin. Speak the truth in love. (cf: Ephesians 4:15) Respect their privacy, their self-esteem, and their dignity. Remind them that Christ died for their sins and there's a better way to live.

We're all vulnerable to temptation and we all fall into sin. That's why Paul warns us to:

***"Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted."*** (Galatians 6:1)

There's always a danger of being pulled into the same sin of the person you are trying to help. That very sin is crouching at the door and its desire is to rule over you. (cf: Genesis 4:7) The devil would love nothing more than for you to be deceived by it too.

Next on Paul's list, he says to:

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

In St. Paul's day bearing burdens was a slave's job. As a Christian, you are called to be a slave to others and bear their burdens. Everyone suffers from burdens. Some are public and some are private. Your burdens are your trials, your tribulations, and the load of sin you carry.

Part of restoring your brother and sister from their sin is bearing their burdens. Sitting with your neighbor when they've lost a loved one and just being there for them is bearing their burdens. Helping your neighbor to be accountable from their addiction or helping them flee from their sin is bearing their burdens. Bearing the burdens of others is having the same compassion on others as Christ Jesus has on you. He is the ultimate burden bearer.

The Christian life is a shared life. This visible church in which we gather this morning is part of the invisible Church, the holy Christian and Apostolic Church. It's a life shared of bearing one another's burdens. It's a shared life of worshipping together, praying together, and here in a few minutes, partaking in the Lord's Supper together. It's life together as a member of the body of Christ.

Next on Paul's list is personal pride. Paul says:

***"... if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself."***  
(Galatians 6:3)

Your personal opinion of yourself shapes your conduct toward others. If you believe you have everything under control and you can ***"go it alone,"*** you're less likely to sympathize with others' shortcomings. Human nature says: *"If I can do it, they certainly can do it too."* When you think you're better than you really are, you're likely to be deceived into greater sin.

God has created good works for you in advance that you might do those good works to show others the love of God and that He might be glorified. (cf: Ephesians 2:10; James 2:18-26) God has put people in your life so that you can bear their burdens – and – He has put others in your life to help bear your burdens as well.

Paul says that we reap what we sow. (cf: Galatians 6:7–8) But you already know this. You've witnessed it time and time again. Just as when you sow vegetable seeds in your garden and you reap the fruit, when you sow seeds of materialism and greed, you reap the evils of selfish ambition, envy, idolatry, hatred, and discord. Those who sow the seeds of kindness – reap joy, peace, goodness, gentleness, and self-control. (cf: Galatians 5:22–23)

Paul urges us to:

***"... not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. <sup>10</sup> So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith."*** (Galatians 6:9–10)

Yes, your spiritual ***"to do"*** list might sound like a burden in itself – but don't weary in doing good. By the grace of God, He'll provide you the strength. Once you plant seed in your garden, you turn it over to God to provide the growth. (cf: 1 Corinthians 3:6) Just because you try to restore a brother or sister fallen in sin doesn't mean they'll repent and return to God. Just because you bear the burdens of another, doesn't mean that they will in turn bear your burdens. The Christian doesn't live a regenerated life so that they might receive earthly blessings in return.

God alone gives the growth. In Christ, He has already lovingly provided you the forgiveness of sins and eternal blessings. Your works and deeds are a response to God's love for you.

Of course, there's no way you can do everything on Paul's spiritual ***"to do"*** list on your own. First, it's God who provides the seed. Only then can you sow the seed, water the seed, and fertilize the seed. But God does much more than just provide you the seed, He provides you the rich soil in which to sow, and the water, and the fertilizer.

It's God alone who created you, and gives you the strength and energy, sends you to do His work in His creation – as you work as a new creation in Christ. (cf: 2 Corinthians 5:17) You can't boast of any accomplishment. You can't make the seed grow, it's only God who provides the growth when and where He wills. (cf: John 3:7–8; 2 Cor 9:10–11) In our text St. Paul writes:  
***"... far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."*** (Galatians 6:14)

Apart from Christ, you and I are nothing condemned sinners awaiting our eternal execution. You boast in the cross of Christ Jesus because it's ***there*** where He paid for all your sins – both the things you have done and things you have left undone. By His work on the cross, the world is condemned, and the world, in turn, condemns you for your faith. It's a daily battle as you struggle with your corrupt flesh in a corrupt world, but in Baptism your old self has been crucified with Christ and now Christ lives in you. (cf: Galatians 2:20) You are a new creation living by faith.

Paul bore the marks of Christ and he endured great sufferings as he spread the Gospel. (cf: Galatians 6:17) You too, and all Christians, bear the marks of Christ. As you pick up your own cross and follow Jesus you are marked with the trials, tribulations, and the sufferings of this world. The faith given by the Holy Spirit is a living and active power in your life as you bear the fruit of good works and deeds. And yet you're not redeemed by your good works. Your good works are evidence of your faith in Jesus Christ. (cf: James 2:18–26)

You were purchased from sin and death with the precious blood of Jesus and His innocent suffering and death. In exchange, He has given you new life in Him. Through the Holy waters of Baptism your sin and transgression washed away and you are clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Today, by the power of the holy Spirit and faith, you are enabled to flee from your sin and bring forth the good fruit of faith and good works as commanded by God. He alone gives the growth.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understand, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,  
Amen.