

'Against All Hope- HOPE WINS!' - Defining my Cross



1. **'Flesh Traps for Believers' – Deny self-life & take up your own cross daily. Lk.9:23**

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."
Luke 9:23



- 1) **Believers following programs to change the flesh** – You cannot improve your flesh! Paul said till the day he died, "In my flesh dwells no good thing" Rom. 7:18 We are to abide in Christ and walk in the Spirit.
- 2) **Believers following 'strong flesh' examples** – Sensual (carnal) Christians with strong flesh, even achieving much, can become the comparison/standard to follow, but if it is flesh, it is not achieved by walking in the Spirit.
- 3) **Believers trying to undo 'bad flesh', by doing 'good'** – An insidious deception, because of the very nature of our flesh. If a person seeks to please people all day, he/she will hate people at night. If you let 'good flesh' out for a walk, bad flesh will come out as well. Walking in the flesh is never the answer.

- 4) **The enemy's lie; there is no room for failure** – If you are self-righteous, it is depressing when you fail. But the truth is my flesh has never changed and 'failure' is built into the faith. It is your weakness that keeps you near Him.

- **Denying self-life/flesh-life, is choosing to put the cross to those desires.** It is not a heavy burden to carry but a decision. When the decision is made and the walk in the Spirit resumed, there is freedom and the burden is light. Matthew 11:30 "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light".

2. **Failed? Caught in Sin? – We will carry your burden & restore you gently. (6:1,2)**

Never look down
on somebody
Unless
you're helping
them up

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Gal 6:2



Galatians 5:24 – 6:2 *Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

- Note this burden *baros* (Gk.) is a heavy burden of sin, guilt and shame. Contrast this with Jesus use of 'burden' *phortion* (Gk.), The difference between *phortion* and *baros* is, that *phortion* is simply "something to be borne," without reference to its weight, but *baros* always suggests what is "heavy or burdensome." Thus Christ speaks of His "burden" (*phortion*) as "light" Matt 11:30 *For my yoke is easy and my burden is light*).
 - Fellow believers, "*in step with the Spirit*", in humility, not pride, are to play a loving vital role in assisting us in self-examining our ways, and then to turn to the Lord. This correction effort must be made in gentleness and friendliness. This is necessary because look at the warning brother & sister – you in your flesh could do the very same thing! This form of carrying another's burden is to be an exercise of spiritual fellowship, designed to help them stand against sin, and in the event of defeat, raise one-another up again. *Do you want to be part of a Church like that? You are here.*
- 3. Suffering & Burdens – Romans 5:2-4** *“And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.”*
- It is easy for the Believer to become discouraged when they see only the outward circumstances & compare themselves with the unbeliever. In these times of growth (Romans 5:4,5), you are very tender, & gentle and can offer nourishment to others.
 - Did you ever imagine that our loss, our suffering, our stress could actually feed the family of God? It does. HOPE WINS!