

## *Which is It?*

It is frustrating when we feel like we cannot get a straight answer from someone.

"I do not enjoy Italian food," someone might say, "but I love chicken parmesan."

Or perhaps, "I cannot stand the Yankees, but I really like Derek Jeter."

What? Which is it?

Do you like Italian food or not? Are all Yankees anathema or do you secretly like them?

Politicians are masters of these sorts of statements. They love small business, but cater to the largest corporations and lobbyists. They denounce corruption

in others, but pass off their concessions of character as peccadilloes.

We long for someone who will be consistent, who will say what they believe and mean what they say.



Sometimes, we can have a similar reaction to passages of scripture. Indeed, there are places in the Bible that upon first read seem to be making competing statements, that is, things that cannot be true at the same time. We read these verses

and are left asking, "so, which is it?"

### **One Such Example**

In Galatians 6:2 Paul writes to the church, "carry each other's burdens."

Got it.

But, a few moments later in verse 5 Paul informs the church that, "each one should carry his own load."

Now I'm confused.

Essentially Paul is saying that we need other Christians, yet we do not need them at all.

Which is it? Are we supposed to carry each other's burdens or our own? How can we at the same time

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## **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

**"NOW THAT I, YOUR LORD AND TEACHER, HAVE WASHED YOUR FEET, YOU ALSO SHOULD WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET. I HAVE SET AN EXAMPLE THAT YOU SHOULD DO AS I HAVE DONE FOR YOU."**

**JESUS IN JOHN 13:14-15**



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## *5 Reasons Serving Together is a Good Idea*

A fantastic way to bring new energy to your group is to find a way to serve together. Here are 5 reasons why serving together is a good idea:

**1. We are never more like Jesus than when we serve.**

In John 13 after Jesus' washed his disciples' feet, he instructed them to do the same for each other. When we serve, we mimic

the love of Christ.

**2. Shared experience helps us to connect with one another.**

As we come to know each other better our group discussions become much more effective.

**3. When we serve others, we grow.**

We grow closer to God and closer to each other.

**4. Serving reminds us**

**that others are to come first.**

Jesus made it very simple: love God, and then love others. We always default to putting ourselves first. Serving puts our priorities in line.

**5. It's a good time.**

When we actually get out and serve, we will find ourselves enjoying it and wondering why we do not do it more often.

Questions / Comments  
Please contact Pastor Brian

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“It is the part of a Christian to take care of his own body for the very purpose that by its soundness and well being he may be enabled to labor... for the aid of those who are in want, that thus the stronger member may serve the weaker member, and we may be children of God, and busy for one another, bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfilling the law of Christ.”



- Martin Luther

### *Which is It?*

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carry our own loads and the burdens of others?

#### **Bear Each Other's Burdens**

Paul's instruction to “carry each other's burdens” is important.

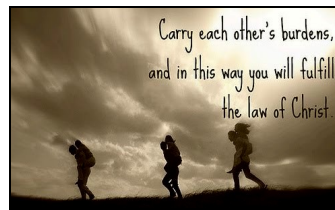
As followers of Jesus we are to support one another on the journey. This truth is quite well attested in scripture. If we follow Jesus, than we are fellow travelers on a difficult road, and need each other to survive.

At times along the journey we will play different roles. At one time we will find ourselves fulfilling the role of the stronger brother or sister helping our weaker traveling partners along. At other times, we find ourselves the weaker party needing the love and support of those who are strong to carry us.

As a result, we must labor on behalf of others when we are strong so that others might provide us support in our weakness.

Paul states that as we do this we

“fulfill the law of Christ,” and this thought is easy to embrace until we read further.



#### **Carry Your Own Load**

Paul's statement in verse 5 that “each one should carry his own load,” is connected to his instructions in verse 4 that each one should test his own actions without comparing himself to others.

Although we are called to help one another along the path, one individual cannot provide salvation for another. That choice is the responsibility of each person.

When we stand before the Lord, we are accountable only for our own actions. What others have done is of no consequence.

So, which is more important, my own load or other's burdens?

Here Paul's answer: Each one of us is to shoulder the burdens of others, to help them when they are struggling and to give them a shoulder to lean on. At the same time, as individuals, we are responsible for our own actions and our choice to follow or dismiss Jesus Christ.

Jesus has instructed us to love God first and to love others second and to put ourselves a distant third. Therefore, in order for our individual actions to be acceptable to God, we must put other people and their needs ahead of our own.

Ultimately, we have to take responsibility for our actions, but as followers of Jesus those actions best include loving and supporting others. So at the same time we carry our own loads, we carry each other's burdens.

Perhaps then one can dislike Italian food and like chicken parmesan, however, we cannot deal with that here.