



Bear One Another's Burdens

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"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."

1 Corinthians 2:13

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

I find “The Law of Christ”¹ to be an intriguing, important, and immeasurable topic, requiring many volumes, and far beyond the scope of this very brief article. I have written on both “*The Law of Christ*” and “*Bearing One Another’s Burdens*” elsewhere.² But here, I’d like to briefly comment again on these topics with some reflections on the terms “burdens”, “bear”, and “fulfill”.

“Burdens”

“*Life is hard.*” We must acknowledge and be reconciled to the fact that life – for everyone, everywhere, in all generations – comes with many and diverse “burdens”. The explanation as to “*Why?*”, of course, begins with the spiritual reality that “*We live in a fallen world.*” It has been Divinely decreed – there is no escaping it, and no one is exempt.³

¹ 1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2; Cf. Romans 8:2

² “The Law of Christ”: [“The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus”](#), [“The Realm of Christ”](#).
“Bearing One Another’s Burdens”: [“Kingdom Households”](#)

³ Genesis 3:17-19, 5:29, 6:11-12; Psalm 39:5-6; Ecclesiastes 1:2; Romans 8:20-22.

There are many categories of burdens – and *“They come in all shapes and sizes.”* Some burdens are common to all Humanity. But at the same time, some burdens are unique to ourselves. There are certain types of burdens which are the experience of people in certain nations at particular times. And there are particular burdens which arise at different stages of life. Again, there are many and diverse burdens.

“Bear”

In Galatians 6:5, the apostle Paul, wrote: “For each will bear his own load.” But just prior to that, in verse 2, he also wrote: “Bear one another’s burdens.” The two phrases can be reconciled this way:

“The community is obliged to rally around the overwhelmed, while individuals remain responsible for the stewardship God assigns them. Romans 15:1 widens the circle: ‘We who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the weak, and not to please ourselves.’ Here βασιτάζω functions as a charter for patient, sacrificial fellowship.”⁴

⁴ *Bible Hub, Topical Lexicon.* For further commentary: Eric Lyons, Apologetics Press, “*Bear One Another’s Burdens, or Just Bear Your Own?*” <https://apologeticspress.org/bear-one-anothers-burdens-or-just-bear-your-own-1273/>

The Greek word translated “bear” is *bastazo*⁵, which literally means to “take up and carry”, and figuratively means to “endure” – as in endure someone else’s burden.

This speaks of “compassion” – *having passion with, feeling with* – someone else in their suffering.⁶ This mirrors the identification with our human condition which Jesus took on Himself for our sake.

“Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8) Like ourselves, as the “Word made flesh” He had to *learn* obedience. What was that *obedience*? It was to love the fallen creature even as “God so loved the (*fallen*) world.” (John 3:16) And Jesus left us the “new commandment” of the New Covenant: “Love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” (John 13:34)

Often, “loving one another” most certainly involves suffering – that “having passion with”, when enduring one another’s burdens. Both the suffering and obedience are “compounded” so to speak, when we consider that someone who has a “burden” is often relating to others in unloving ways. This calls for increased patience, kindness, and self-control as well as resisting irritability

⁵ Strong’s # G941

⁶ Cf. 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

and resentment⁷ on the part of the one helping to bear the burden. God's purpose in all of this is for us "to become conformed to the image of His Son."⁸

"Fulfill"

In this verse, "Bear one another's burdens, and thereby **fulfill** the law of Christ", the word "fulfill" has always intrigued me. Bearing someone's burden can actually "fulfill" the law of Christ? How so? What did Paul mean to convey with that phrase?

The Greek word translated "fulfill", is *anapleroo*.⁹ *Pleroo* means to fill, and *ana* intensifies it meaning "up", as in completing a process – the supplying of what is lacking for fullness.¹⁰

This commentary may be helpful in understanding this concept of *supplying of what is lacking for fullness*:

"Completion of Corporate Responsibility: Paul twice applies the word to describe believers who compensate for what others cannot personally supply.

⁷ Cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 ESV

⁸ Cf. Romans 8:28-29

⁹ Strong's # G378

¹⁰ Cf. Gary Hill and Archer L. Gleason, *Emphatic Language Pointer System* (Synonym Glossary, Discovery Bible, NASB New Testament) Moody Press (1987)

- *Philippians 2:30 commends Epaphroditus, who ‘risked his life to make up for your service to me that was lacking.’ The Philippian church’s love-gift was incomplete until one brother crossed dangerous miles to deliver it.*
- *1 Corinthians 16:17 praises Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus because they ‘supplied what was lacking from you,’ standing in for the whole Corinthian assembly.*

In both settings God employs willing servants to finish what the body begins. The principle safeguards against isolationism; Christians are inter-dependent stewards, called to step into gaps left by distance, limitation, or delay.”¹¹

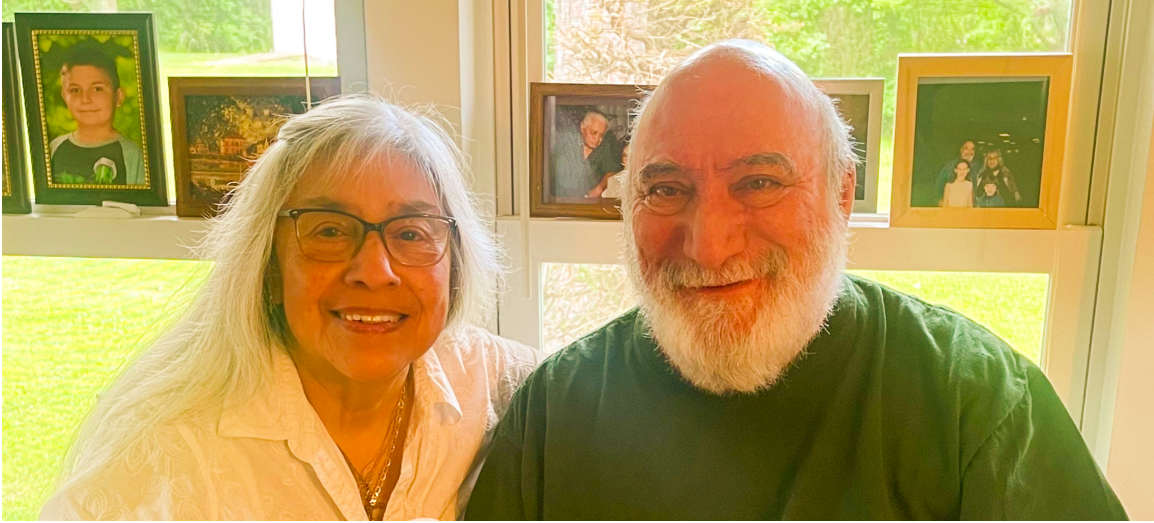
Moreover, all this brings to mind another verse penned by Paul which communicates the same concept: “Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh, I am **supplementing what is lacking** in Christ’s afflictions on behalf of His body, which is the church.” (Colossians 1:24) Paul understood that as Christ suffered for His Body, the Church (Ecclesia),¹² likewise, Paul also called to suffer for Christ’s Body, the Church (Ecclesia), thus **completing a process – supplying of what is lacking for fullness**. I understand this to mean: Not that Christ’s sufferings were insufficient, but rather that it is God’s intention for us to continue in the sufferings for one another, again “to become conformed to the image of His Son”.¹³

¹¹ *Bible Hub, Topical Lexicon*. For further commentary: “to fill up, make full, [1 Thessalonians 2:16](#) (to add what is still lacking to complete the number of their sins; on the meaning, cf. [Genesis 15:16](#); [Daniel 8:23](#); [Daniel 9:24](#); [Matthew 23:32](#), *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*.

¹² Ephesians 5:26

¹³ Cf. Romans 8:28-29

Bill & Frances Furioso
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... www.AtChristsTable.org

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