



## Better Together

April 21, 2024

Text: Galatians 6:2; Philippians 4: 4-9

### BIG IDEA

The English poet and theologian John Donne wrote, “No man is an island, no man stands alone.” But in American culture there are common lies we are taught and accept that keep us from asking for help, such as “I can do it on my own if I just try harder” or “I will just be a burden on someone”. Those are unbiblical concepts. God Himself is a communal God (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) and we are made in His image. However, we may not know what people need from us or how to be supportive. Since God created us for community with Him and with others, how do we bear one another’s burdens in a healthy and helpful way? How do we strive for community in a world that worships independence and individuality?

### *Conversation Starter*

- Can the Christian life be lived without the help of other Christians? Why or why not? What does the Bible say?
  - When was a time you benefited from the aid of another believer?
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### COMMENTARY #1

**(Galatians 6:2)** Paul’s admonition to the Galatians in Galatians 6:2, is part of a passage (6:1-10) that teaches about restoring someone caught in a sin, among other topics. In a general way, the passage

is about doing good to others in all circumstances.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. How is carrying someone else's burden fulfilling the law of Christ? What is that law?
  2. How can the desire to carry someone else's burden be a stumbling block for ourselves?
  3. How do we both protect ourselves and help someone?
  4. Asking for help is NOT weakness, but strength and obedience. Why does God desire for us to seek help?
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### **COMMENTARY #2**

**(Philippians 4: 4-9)** In Philippians, Paul lays out how the believers are to live their lives as they journey through the world. A large part of that is taking care of one another, assisting one another as they go. In addition, Paul seeks to build the habit of right-thinking in us as a weapon against discouragement and anxiety.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. How does living in a state of thanksgiving enable us to overcome anxiety?
  2. Often, our mental health struggles leave us feeling like we should "try harder" or just pray more, but that is not the heart of God. How can we invite God and others into our battles rather than fighting them ourselves?
  3. What is the peace of God that transcends all understanding? What (or who) is its source? How do we obtain it??
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## GOING DEEPER

1. Paul says that the God of peace will be with us as we do what he teaches. How is God the God of Peace?
  2. How does God's peace compare to the world's peace?
  3. Note that Paul commands putting these things into practice. How can doing that enable the believer to overcome mental struggles and barriers?
  4. How does putting them into practice relate to walking in faith?
  5. Note that Paul uses himself as an example to follow (Phil. 4:9) Could you say that to another believer? Should you be able to say that?
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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Soul Keeping - John Ortberg
  - Rhythms of Renewal - rest, restore, connect, and create
  - Try Softer by Aundi Kolber
  - Strong Like Water by Aundi Kolber
  - Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Peter Scazzero
  - Boundaries by Dr. John Townsend and Dr. Henry Cloud
  - Healing is a Choice by Stephen Arterburn
  - Tired of Trying to Measure Up by Jeff VanVonderen
  - Managing Leadership Anxiety by Steve Cuss
  - GODspectations by Loresa Stansell
  - Broken and Whole by Stephen Macchia
  - The gift of knowing yourself - David Brenne
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## GROUP ACTIVITY

Brainstorm a list of all the things that war in our minds against peace and joy. Look at the list in Philippians 4:8. For each element, make a list of things that are true, things that are noble, things that are right, et cetera. Now write down how you will put this passage into practice. Discuss among yourselves how you can support each other in praying with thanksgiving and in thinking on these things. Begin to do that weekly.



## **Fighting Together**

### **Supporting Passage**

### **Text: Luke 5:17-39**

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### **BIG IDEA**

Have you ever felt broken? Have you ever struggled in ways you were too scared to let anyone see? Have you felt like you had to “tough it out” yourself? After all, everyone else seems to have it all together and you do not want to be a burden to them. So you convince yourself that you are better off handling your pain or situations yourself because no one else could possibly understand... Sadly, isolation is one of the quickest things we as humans run to when we are hurting. We convince ourselves that no one else could possibly understand, they would not see us the same way, or that we are too much of a burden- so we hide. But hiding always keeps us in brokenness so God calls us to something more, something healing. He invites us to share our burdens not only with Him, but with each other. We were never made to do life alone, and healing comes when we open the door to let others in.

### ***Conversation Starter***

- Do you have a hard time talking about your own struggles? Why or why not?
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## COMMENTARY #1

**(Verses 17-19)** This passage makes it very clear that healing power was present. One could say that wherever Jesus was, healing was available; yet there were times where Jesus demonstrated miraculous healing more than others. During this teaching, Jesus is surrounded by people eager to hear and be healed when something unexpected happens. The tiles of the roof are ripped open as a man is lowered down to the feet of Jesus by his friends. Consider how he must have felt as he and his brokenness is made the center of attention- fully displayed for all to see. But healing was worth more than hiding and his friends knew that.

### *Discussion Questions*

1. Why do you think there are times where healing happens in one moment and times where it seemingly doesn't come?
  2. What did the crippled man have to surrender to come before Jesus? What would you?
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## COMMENTARY #2

**(Verses 20-26)** Then Bible then makes an astonishing statement, "When He saw their faith..." Jesus was compelled to heal this man not because of his own faith, but because of the zealous faith of his friends. This is why intercessory prayer (prayer on behalf of another) matters; why having friends who can have faith when you're weak is vital; why inviting others into your brokenness could be the thing that leads to your healing. Jesus is moved by our open surrender and others faith on our behalf. Sometimes we are crippled by our own brokenness and unable to come to Jesus- but

other can fight to bring us to Him.

### ***Discussion Questions***

1. Why do you think Jesus was moved by their faith? What is it about community that moves the heart of God?
  2. Do you have people that would lower you through a roof? A community that would fight to lay you at the feet of Jesus?
  3. What are some ways you can build a community like that? (small groups, church, intentionality/vulnerability in relationships...
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### **GOING DEEPER**

1. Who in your life needs to be lowered through a roof to the feet of Jesus? (Consider people who are crippled by their situations or struggles, weakened in their faith, currently hopeless/hurting etc...)
  2. What are ways you can be that kind of friend? How can you bring this person to the feet of Jesus?
  3. If you are someone needing the faith of your friends, how can you surrender your brokenness and be vulnerable and open about your need? Who can you tell?
  4. What are other passages that talk about confession/unity/communal healing? Why do you think healing comes apart from isolation?
  5. Why do you think we are prone to run to isolation?
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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [https://redeeminggod.com/sermons/luke/luke\\_5\\_17-26/](https://redeeminggod.com/sermons/luke/luke_5_17-26/) - Sermon Dr. Bob Utley
  - <https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?&q=video+luke+5&&mid=290BC053763761AD2E5E290BC053763761AD2E5E&&FORM=VRDGAR-> - “From the Top Down” Devotion
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## GROUP ACTIVITY

This week, plan one day/time when you can intentionally interact with a friend. This can be someone at work, someone in a life group with you, or someone you haven't seen in a while. Even if it inconveniences you, plan a lunch or coffee date with that person. Take time to listen more than you speak and truly hear their heart. Big challenge- turn off your phone completely or leave it in the car so that you can fully be present with them. Then, pray for them; if they're comfortable, do it after your meeting. If not, send them a written prayer over text or mail.