



## Bags and Burdens!

If you look at almost any group of people you will see that some of them – perhaps most of them – are carrying a bag of some type.

I want to ask you to see those bags as representing the different physical, emotional or spiritual burdens each one of us carries from time to time.

It may help you to help people!

Paul wrote to Christians in one Roman province telling them to **“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way fulfil the law of Christ”**, Galatians 6:2. The immediate context shows this was to help people battling against sinful behaviour in their own daily lives, verse 1.

The great evangelist and teacher warned his readers to first examine their own lives before condemning anyone else.

Aim to help ease a person away from what is wrong in their lives and encourage them into what is good. Do this as you walk alongside them.

Some burdens people carry must be seen as unhelpful. They should be put down – and you may have to help them to do it.

Other burdens may be God-given (see below). Then it is much better to help some individual *carry* a load than to *condemn* him for dropping it! Verses 3-5.

Jesus said what all people who chose to follow Him should carry with them.

**“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me”**, Luke 9:23, and **“Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple”**, Luke 14:27. The immediate contexts are Jesus’ teaching about suffering while being a Christian disciple, and even suffering to the point of division between close family members.

Carrying a cross for our Lord Jesus is something every Christian should expect to do. Just like we pick up a handbag, a briefcase, a shopping basket or even a plastic carrier bag, so we must be mindful that we live with the cross of Christ on our shoulders. That cross overshadows all we do.

The one who carried a cross when Jesus did was soon to die.

As Christians we must learn to die to our own desires and to come alive only to what God wants – for ourselves and for others too.

Let us carry *only what God wants us to carry* as we step out into the future.