



**Galatians 6:7-16; Psalm 66:1-9; Luke 10:1-11, 16-20**  
**Reverend Giuseppe Mattei (July 6, 2025)**

Generally speaking, people have mixed feelings about Christianity. A recent study declares: “Most churchgoers believe Christians have a good reputation with Americans in general, but they worry those feelings are starting to sour.”<sup>1</sup>

According to some, Christians have an image problem. Those of us who love the Church have certainly heard young and not so young people accusing Christians of being hypocrite, manipulative (being nice for the purpose of getting converts – wanting to fill pews rather than displaying a genuine interest in people), out of tune with reality, inward focused, and hateful towards homosexuals.<sup>2</sup>

We can’t deny that many non-Christians and former church goers are exhausted from the **judgmental attitude** of the Church and all the frowning and finger-wagging they see.

Facing discord is a biblical advice.<sup>3</sup> Paul instructs Christians to **correct one another in a spirit of gentleness** (Gal 6:1).

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<sup>1</sup> [Is the public perception of Christians declining? - Baptist Courier](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Christianity Has an Image Problem - Preach It Teach It](#)

<sup>3</sup> Matthew 5:17-24, 38-40; Matthew 18:15-18; 2 Corinthians 5:11-21; Romans 5:10; 12:1-2; Ephesians 1:3-10; 4:2-3; Colossians 1:20-22; Hebrews 12:14

Rehabilitation done in a spirit of gentleness avoids a judgmental attitude that will well up inside the confronter as spiritual pride. Paul warns Christians that, since **we all have baggage**<sup>4</sup> which wears us down and causes us to stumble, we ought to use humility when correcting others.

When in conflict, what's the charitable thing to do? How about helping others with their baggage when it gets too burdensome and afflicting for them to carry? How about treating others as **siblings** and not as **enemies**, showing them we are on their side, using compassion, patience and understanding the way we want to be treated? Correcting someone with love means fulfilling the Law of Christ (v. 2).

In Gal 6:7-10 Paul picks up the theme of **self-indulgence** again<sup>5</sup> when he warns us not to sow in our own flesh.

We do not simply self-indulge when we eat too much ice cream, watch too much TV, or feel too lazy to follow a health plan. We show self-indulgence also...

- when we agree all too easily with what we hear on cable news without searching the truth,
- when we insist things must be done our way based
- when we give too much credit to our own opinions, assumptions and prejudices, or
- when we hold on to our pride and self-importance.

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<sup>4</sup> Romans 3:23

<sup>5</sup> Already encountered in Galatians 5:13

I would also venture that we are self-indulgent...

- when we hold on to a sense of superiority towards others,
- when we do not question an “us-vs-them” worldview,
- when we blame and point fingers,
- when we act out of indifference for other people’s pain,
- when we are careless and wasteful,
- when we show contempt for compassion and altruism,
- when we give in to rancor and vindictiveness,
- when we are hateful and enjoy cruelty at other people’s expense.

Paul talks about **endurance** – serving God because it’s the good and healthy thing to do, not expecting the reward or the spotlight of public recognition. How much do some people crave others’ attention and are bent out of shape when that doesn’t happen or they don’t get enough of that? That’s a huge emotional investment for a disturbingly disappointing small return: an obsession that becomes idolatry, a god that cannot satisfy.

Some people pretend to serve God but deep down they work to look good to other people. God cannot be mocked (Gal 6:7). A Christian’s glory should only be the cross of Christ, by which the lure of the world is not attractive to us (“crucified”) and we become of no interest to the world. (Gal 6:14)

Our reward for doing what is right should simply be the enjoyment of the gifts of the Spirit, and our pride should only be in the efficacy of the cross in associating us to Jesus.

I am reminded of a story about a missionary returning to his homeland after a lifetime of service in the missions. As his ship came near the pier, he noticed another ship with a celebrity aboard being greeted by a great crowd. He was disturbed that no one had come to greet him. Then he heard a voice say, “You aren’t home yet.”

“Harvest time” is now “if we do not give up.” (Gal 6:9)

I happened recently to read an article on the number of clergy who leave the ministry every year and the number who would like to leave but feel trapped. The numbers are high, because the pressures on clergy are intense and they often find it difficult to see that they have accomplished anything.

But people don’t have to be clergy to get discouraged. Lay people experience the same kind of **burnout** because the demands of the faith are high, and the discipline and trust necessary to remain faithful is immense: loving all (our enemies included), caring, advocating, listening, displaying compassion, forgiving is exhausting and takes commitment. Some will welcome us, and many will not (Luke 10). Prayer is at the basis of self-care in our Christian life commitment.

May our life reflect to others Jesus’ message: know that the kingdom of God is near. Amen.