

COMMENTARY ...

6:1a–b Brothers, even if anyone is overtaken in any trespass, you, who are spiritual, should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Those who are tripped up in sin should be gently restored by fellow believers. Instead of becoming arrogant and irritating and envying one another, believers should exercise concern and love for others, so that their goal is to build one another up. Instead of rejoicing that others have fallen, Paul exhorts the Galatians to restore those who have fallen into sin. The word “restore” (καταρτίζω) is used of rebuilding walls (Ezra 4:12, 13) and of mending fishing nets (Matthew 4:21). Restoration to spiritual health and vitality is in view here. [Schreiner, T. R. (2010). *Galatians* (p. 357). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.]

It is difficult to ascertain the nuance of the verb “is overtaken” (προλημφοθή) here. It could simply mean detected in sin by others, but it seems more likely that it denotes one who has been overtaken in sin by surprise. Even though believers have life in the Spirit, they still inhabit this present evil age (1:4), and hence sin attacks them in unanticipated ways. Paul is not suggesting that those who commit such trespasses are simply unwilling victims. They bear full responsibility for their sins. Still, Paul envisages situations in which believers sin in unplanned and unexpected ways—hence, the need for restoration. It seems likely that what Paul describes here generally accords with the first step of church discipline in Matthew 18:15–20. One who becomes aware of another’s sin should privately speak to the offender in order to restore him or her to fellowship with Christ. [Ibid. (p.357).]

οἱ πνευματικοί

“YOU WHO ARE SPIRIT PEOPLE”

**The fact that we are brothers and sisters in Christ does not keep us out of sin, however. As we have seen, the flesh wars against the Spirit. Thus there are times when the sinful nature knocks us off our stride, when a false step keeps us from walking with the Spirit. There are times when, through weakness, a Christian gets “caught in transgression.” This phrase may refer to a person who gets caught in the act, like the woman who was “caught in the act of adultery” (John 8:4). Or perhaps the sinner catches himself in the act. Temptation has a way of sneaking up on us unawares, catching us off guard. The sad reality is that sometimes Christians are surprised by sin; indeed, there are as many sinners in the church as anywhere else. [Ryken, P. G. (2005). *Galatians*. (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.) (p.245). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.]

When such a circumstance arises, **“You who are Spirit people should restore such a person in a spirit of gentleness.”** **“You who are Spirit people” is a cumbersome attempt to carry over into English translation what Paul means by οἱ πνευματικοί (hoi pneumatikoi).** [Moo, D. J. (2013). *Galatians* (pp. 374–375). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.]

These “Spirit people” are to be active in “restoring” a wayward brother or sister. ... To “restore” the offender is to put matters in order by integrating them back into full fellowship with the Lord and with their brothers and sisters. This restoring work (and the present tense of the verb suggests a process) is to be done “in a spirit of gentleness.” [Ibid. (p.375).]

PROCEED WITH CARE RESTORATION UNDERWAY

