

I Am Nothing

Gal. 6:3 - “For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.”

I Am Nothing

- What does Paul mean by “he is nothing”?
 - That we are “nothing” in the sense that we are totally worthless?
 - That we are “nothing” in comparison to God?
 - That we are “nothing” in comparison to what we are deceived into thinking we are?
- How should we understand this nothingness?
 - We are not worthless. God loves us enough that He moved heaven and earth to save us.
 - Certainly, we are nothing in comparison to God; however, the gift of being created in His image means that we are something.

I Am Nothing

- Paul is talking about spiritual disciples helping fallen disciples, and he is warning them about the temptations that come with the work of restoring the fallen.
 - What do the scriptures teach about being nothing?
 - How do we apply this in our relationships with fallen disciples?

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- The context begins in Gal. 5:26 and continues through Gal. 6:6.
- Gal. 5:26 - 6:6 - “Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. 5 For each one shall bear his own load. 6 Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.”

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- He injects a reminder that everyone will be judged based on what he does and why he does it.
 - Gal. 6:7-8 - “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.”
- He resumes the context in Gal. 6:9-10.
 - Gal. 6:9-10 - “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- Paul is emphasizing humility for the spiritual disciples in their treatment of falling and fallen disciples.
- The Adversary does not want you to restore what he has labored to draw away from the Lord.
- He attaches temptations to the work of restoration in the hope that whether or not the fallen one is restored, he wins the spiritual one by leading him into temptation.

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- God expects spiritual disciples to reach out and help the fallen ones.
 - 1Thes. 5:14 - “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.”
 - James 5:19-20 - “Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- We need to do so unselfishly concerned for them with no personal interests beyond their well-being.
 - Rom. 15:1 - “We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”
 - 1John 4:21 - “And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.”
 - 2Cor. 1:24 - “Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.”

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- It is tempting for spiritual disciples to become proud of their knowledge.
 - 1Cor. 8:1-2 - “Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. 2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.”

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- It is tempting for stronger disciples to become proud of their maturity.
 - Luke 18:11-12 - “The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.”

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- We must remember that we have become stronger because God has helped us, time and trials have trained us, and other disciples lifted us up in our weak and falling moments.
 - 2Cor. 3:5-6 - “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant...”
 - 1Cor. 15:10 - “By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- It is tempting for spiritual disciples to become proud of their faithfulness.
 - Rom. 12:3 - “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith.”
 - 2Cor. 13:5 - “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? --unless indeed you are disqualified.”
 - 1Cor. 10:12 - “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- It is easy, through self-deceit, for spiritual disciples to fall to the sin of arrogant thoughts, words, and behavior toward drifting disciples in their weakness.
- “He deceives himself”: phrenapatao - “to be a mind-misleader, self-delude or deceive, hallucinate; to see what does not exist.” (Strongs)
- “A peculiar word: he puts himself under an hallucination; persuades himself of the existence of that which has no reality.” (Barnes Notes)

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- They deceive themselves, because they lack the virtues that would make them great in the kingdom of God.
 - Gal. 5:22-23 - “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control...”
 - 2Peter 1:5-7 - “But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.”

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- The apostle Paul used himself to illustrate this danger.
 - 2Cor. 12:11 - “I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.”
 - 1Cor. 9:27 - “I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”

What Do The Scriptures Teach About Being Nothing?

- Nor did he allow the arrogance of others to interfere with his own efforts to lift up and edify others.
 - Gal. 2:6 - “But from those who seemed to be something--whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; God shows personal favoritism to no man--for those who seemed to be something added nothing to me.”

How Do We Apply This In Our Relationships With Fallen Disciples?

- “Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness”
- The spiritual ones must be gentle in the work of restoration. If one is proud of himself for not falling like others have, it is impossible to keep that out of his words and behavior.

How Do We Apply This In Our Relationships With Fallen Disciples?

- “Considering yourself lest you also be tempted”
- Those who are most confident may fall. They may feel secure, think it impossible that they should sin, and that they are safe. These are just as vulnerable to lost as those they are trying to restore.

How Do We Apply This In Our Relationships With Fallen Disciples?

- “If anyone thinks himself to be something when he is nothing”
- He has not performed a careful self-examination and has overlooked a weakness in his own character.
- “It is very common for a man to look upon himself as wiser and better than other men; and as such, he believes himself fit to dictate to them. Everyone is advised to teste his own work. The better we know our own hearts and ways, the less shall we despise others, and the more be disposed to help them under infirmities and afflictions.” (Matthew Henry)
- This kind of conceit will prevent the spiritual one from helping to bear another’s burdens; in fact, he increases them.

I Am Nothing

- It is ironically tragic that someone, in an attempt to lift up another, ends up falling himself, always to his own destruction, and often to the harm of others.

“The wind of joy will blow most clean
When you and I have felt and seen
That sin keeps joy from being wide
And many sins take root in pride.”