

Galatians 6:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.

Analysis

But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. Paul prescribes self-examination. "But let every man prove his own work" (to de ergon heautou dokimazeto hekastos, τὸ δὲ ἔργον ἑαυτοῦ δοκιμάζετω ἕκαστος)—let each person test, examine, approve his own work. Dokimazō (δοκιμάζω) means to test for genuineness, examine critically, prove. We're to examine our own lives, not others'. "And then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone" (kai tote eis heauton monon to kauchēma hexei, καὶ τότε εἰς ἑαυτὸν μόνον τὸ καύχημα ἔξει)—and then his boasting/rejoicing will be in himself alone, regarding his own work.

"And not in another" (kai ouk eis ton heteron, καὶ οὐκ εἰς τὸν ἕτερον)—not in comparison to another. Paul forbids comparative religion: measuring yourself against others to feel superior or inferior. Examine your work before God; if it's genuine, you can have quiet satisfaction. This isn't prideful boasting but sober self-assessment: am I faithfully doing what God called me to do? The standard is God's calling for me, not comparison with others' callings or achievements. This prevents both pride (I'm better than him) and despair (I'm worse than her).

Historical Context

Comparison was epidemic in the Galatian churches: Judaizers compared themselves favorably to Paul and other apostles; factions compared their leaders ("I follow Paul," "I follow Apollos," 1 Corinthians 3:4); believers measured

circumcision status. Paul commands: stop comparing! Examine your own work before God. God calls each uniquely; we'll answer for our stewardship, not others' (Romans 14:12, 2 Corinthians 5:10). Contemporary social media culture exacerbates comparison's toxicity. Paul's remedy: test your work against God's calling, find satisfaction in faithfulness, cease comparing.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does comparing yourself to others (favorably or unfavorably) distort your self-understanding and relationship with God?
2. What does it mean to 'prove your own work'—examining your life honestly before God rather than in comparison to others?
3. How can you find legitimate rejoicing in faithful service without falling into either pride or comparison?

Interlinear Text

τὸ	δὲ	ἔργον	ἑαυτὸν	δοκιμαζέτω	ἕκαστος	καὶ	τότε	εἰς
G3588	But	work	himself	let	every man	and	then	in
	G1161	G2041	G1438	G1381	G1538	G2532	G5119	G1519

ἑαυτὸν	μόνον	τὸ	καύχημα	ἔξει	καὶ	οὐκ	εἰς	τὸν
himself	alone	G3588	rejoicing	shall he have	and	not	in	G3588
G1438	G3441		G2745	G2192	G2532	G3756	G1519	

ἕτερον·
another
G2087

Additional Cross-References

2 Corinthians 13:5 (Parallel theme): Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

Psalms 26:2 (Parallel theme): Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

1 Corinthians 11:28 (Parallel theme): But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.

2 Corinthians 1:12 (Parallel theme): For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.