

2 CORINTHIANS

for growing believers

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for growing believers

Bible Study Guide

From the leadership development ministry of

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH MISSIONS

Acknowledgments

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Revision 2

Progression Toward Maturity

- **Phase 1 – Relationship with God** – (Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 1:9) – Call of God is first to Himself - “Creation to Christ” - (Foundation for salvation)
- **Phase 2 – Position with Christ** (1 Cor. 1:30a) New Creation (2 Cor. 5:17) – “Positioned in Christ” and “New Birth Explained” – (Foundation for Sanctification)
- **Phase 3 – Dependence upon the Spirit** – (2 Cor. 3:17-18) – (Holy Spirit is the Spirit-of-Truth – John 16:13-14) – **Introduction of the Church** - (Church is the Pillar and foundation of Truth – 1 Tim. 3:15) - “Acts for Growing Believers”
- **Phase 4 – Practical sanctification** - **Identification with Christ/Co-crucified with Christ/ Conformed to image of Christ** – (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:28-29) – Romans to Revelation for Growing Believers, “Principles of Spiritual Growth”, God’s Masterpiece the Cross,” and “Looking unto Jesus” lessons
- **Conclusion** – **Recommended order of study**

Detailed Explanation of Each Phase

Phase 1 – Foundation for Salvation - (“Creation to Christ”)

The Christian life is a relationship; therefore our desire is to lead our readers into a deep and intimate relationship with God. In order to grow into that level of relationship with God, there are foundational truths that must be clearly taught and understood. These foundational truths include the following;

- The attributes of God - His love, power, grace, omniscience, omnipotence, justice, immutability, hatred of sin, faithfulness.
- The sinfulness of man, his helplessness to save himself, and his need for a Savior.
- Only God can provide a way of salvation
- The Gospel.

Phase 2 – Foundation for Sanctification - (“Positioned in Christ” and “The New Birth Explained”)

The moment someone is born again, there is an immediate change of position that takes place in his or her life. At that very moment, one becomes a child of God, and is taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. All that Christ is, and all that Christ has, becomes ours. Therefore, before service to God is considered, one must be grounded in an understanding of who we are in Christ. Some important foundational truths that should be emphasized in phase 2 teaching, includes the following;

- Placed into Christ
- Justified (declared righteous) and accepted in Christ.
- Child of God
- Restored to oneness with God
- Eternally secure in Christ
- His Divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness through His finished work on the cross.
- Our part is to believe.

Phase 3 – Dependence upon the Spirit and introduction of the church – (“Acts for Growing Believers”)

The position change that takes place in every believer's life at salvation, is immediate and complete. The daily "living out" of that position, on the other hand, is a growth process. It is the progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is working all believers through in His process of conforming us to the image of Christ.

In order for believers to move on to maturity, we must learn to walk and depend upon the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our purpose in phase 3 teaching is to reveal the Holy Spirit's ministry, and His faithfulness to lead, guide, feed, and protect God's children, as well as to introduce the church. Some of the important foundational truths that should be emphasized include the following.

- The Holy Spirit's ministry to lead, guide, feed, protect, and establish us in truth.
- To emphasize the FAITHFULNESS of the Spirit to fulfill all that Jesus promised.
- To reveal the early church's dependence upon the Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit is as faithful in our lives today, as He was to the early church in the book of Acts.
- Introduction of the church and her role.

Phase 4 – Practical sanctification; Identification with Christ; Conformed to the image of Christ – (“Romans to Revelation for Growing Believers,” Principles of Spiritual Growth, God’s Masterpiece the Cross of Christ,” and “Looking Unto Jesus” lessons.)

The Holy Spirit is teaching us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit, with Christ becoming more and more the object of our hearts.

In phase 4, we will study through the epistles with the purpose of learning to rest in our identification with Christ and His finished work. As we, by faith, begin to appropriate identification truths, our co-crucifixion with Christ, our lives will become more and more conformed to the image of Christ, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

Some of the important truths that will be emphasized in Phase 4 includes the following.

- The believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (Crucified with Him, and raised to newness of life)
- Sanctification is the process of walking less and less in the flesh and more and more in the Spirit.
- Our part in the process is faith in the finished work of Christ, and our identification with it.
- What it means to truly walk in the Spirit
- Putting off the old and putting on the new.
- Manifesting the life of Christ/ fruit of the Spirit.

Conclusion: Recommended Order of Study:

Being that there truly is a progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is taking all believers through, therefore our Bible lessons have been developed and arranged to line up with that work of the Spirit in our lives. Each set of lessons contain the foundational truths that must be in place in a person's heart in order to facilitate their growth unto the next stage of spiritual growth. Therefore, we believe that it is important to teach the lessons in the following order:

1. Creation to Christ
2. Positioned in Christ
3. Acts for growing believers

4. Romans for growing believers
5. Ephesians for growing believers
6. 1 Corinthians for growing believers
7. 1 Timothy for growing believers
8. Titus for growing believers
9. 1 & 2 Thessalonians for growing believers
10. Revelation for growing believers
11. Galatians for growing believers
12. Colossians for growing believers
13. 2 Corinthians for growing believers
14. Philippians for growing believers
15. Philemon for growing believers
16. 2 Timothy for growing believers
17. 1 & 2 Peter for growing believers
18. 1, 2 & 3 John for growing believers
19. Hebrews for growing believers
20. James for growing believers
21. Jude for growing believers
22. The Old Testament for mature believers
23. Acts through Revelation, verse by verse for mature believers

2 CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 1

A. Introduction

- Paul preached the gospel in Corinth for the first time on his second missionary journey; he then wrote the first letter to the Corinthian church while in Ephesus during his third journey.
- Paul wrote First Corinthians to show the believers that they were living in carnality and to implore them to return to walking in the Spirit (**I Corinthians 2:1-5**).
- Titus delivered that letter to the Corinthian church, and Paul then went on to Troas.
- After spending some time with the Corinthians, Titus had planned to meet Paul in Troas and to give a report.
- Something happened that prevented Titus from meeting Paul in Troas, so Paul went on to Macedonia and later Titus joined him there.
- The news that Titus brought back to Paul was both good and bad.
- The good news was that the Corinthians had accepted Paul's letter and even disciplined the man that was living in adultery; however, some new problems had arisen.
- These false teachers had been teaching in Corinth as they had taught in Colossae and Galatia, and some of the Corinthian believers were being led astray.
- The false teachers were saying that they were apostles and their message was truth, and that Paul was not an apostle and therefore his message was not true.
- It was during this time that Paul wrote this second letter to the Corinthian believers.

B. A Reminder

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia: Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Corinthians 1:1-2

- In much of Paul’s writings to the churches, he began by mentioning his apostleship; it was of God and therefore his message was valid.
- In 2 Corinthians, as in all of Paul’s letters, he reminded the believers that true grace and peace can only be found in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Man often attempts to find grace and peace in other ways, but true grace and peace comes only from God through the finished work of His Son.

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” 2 Corinthians 1:3-4



- We live in a fallen world that is full of trials and tribulations. All of us encounter hardship and difficulties, however Paul writes that it is God who comforts us in all hardships.
- How does He comfort us? In **Colossians 2:2** we read, ***“That their hearts might be comforted, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God’s mystery, that is Christ Himself.”*** Paul is clearly stating

to the church at Colossae that truth encourages and gives confidence.

- In **John 8:32** John writes, ***“You shall know the truth and the truth will make you free.”***
- This is the way in which God comforts us; with truth. In **John 14:6**, Jesus said that He is the truth. ***“I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life.”***
- As the Spirit leads us into a clear understanding of who Christ is, all that He has done, and who we have become in Him, to that degree will our hearts remain comforted no matter how difficult the circumstances.
- Paul goes on to say that one of the purposes in our becoming comforted by truth is so that God can use us to share that same comfort in the lives of others; to help lead others into the truths of our identification with Christ.
- There are many people in our churches who are going through difficult circumstances.



- Their greatest need is not for better circumstances, but rather to see more clearly who Christ is and all that is theirs in Him.

C. Christians Will Be Persecuted

“For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” 2 Corinthians 1:5

- As Christians, we are not exempt from trials and persecution.
- Even though it is because of Christ, that we are often called to suffer, the comfort that comes from knowing Him and from the inheritance that is ours in Him, will provide more consolation than the suffering causes misery. *“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12*
- In this world as we are brought to a deeper walk in the Spirit, we can expect persecution; however, Paul makes clear that the consolation in Christ will be more abundant.

D. Suffering

“And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.” 2 Corinthians 1:6

- God is using our daily circumstances to conform us more into the image of Christ.



- Sometimes He will use afflictions in our lives, and other times He may bring pleasant circumstances. But, He is using all in teaching us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit, with the ultimate purpose of conforming us more to the image of His Son (**Romans 8:28-29**)
- As this transformation process is carried out in our lives, Paul makes clear that it is also being used by God for the comfort and salvation of those with whom we have contact (**I Thessalonians 1:6-8**).

- The more Christ-like we become, the more equipped we are to lead others into that same life-style.

“And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.” 2 Corinthians 1:7

- Paul was writing of his confidence that this truth would affect the lives of the Corinthian believers, and even though their faith in Christ came with persecution, the Spirit would continue to lead them into more and deeper truth, and the consolation in Christ would be more abundant.

“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us; Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.” 2 Corinthians 1:8-11

- Paul continues on by giving the Corinthians an example.
- At one point while in Asia, Paul said that the trials became so difficult that they did not think they could possibly survive.
- He further explained that God’s purpose for these trials was to move their trust from themselves to the God who raises the dead.
- God orchestrates situations in our lives for the purpose of bringing us to the cross where the old man has been crucified and we come to the end of ourselves (**Luke 9:23**).
- As we are brought to this point, we are being set free from the reign of the flesh (**Romans 6:14**), to walk in newness of life (**Romans 6:4**); the Spirit begins to draw our attention to Christ and manifests the life of Christ in us (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).
- In verse 10, Paul writes that this process of coming to the end of self, being delivered from the reign of the flesh, and being conformed to the image of Christ will be a process that our faithful God will continue throughout our lives (**Philippians 1:6**).

2 CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 2

A. Godly Sincerity

- As we study through this portion of scripture, please keep in mind that the false teachers were attempting to discredit Paul's teaching.

“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.” 2 Corinthians 1:12

- Paul was being falsely accused of many things, and he wanted the Corinthians to know that he rejoiced in the fact that his conscience was clear and that his ministry was done in humble dependence on God and His grace; in the Spirit and not in the flesh.

- As Paul was walking in the Spirit, his ministry in the lives of others was sincere and for their benefit and not in an effort to exalt himself.



- In the flesh even our ministering to others will have a self-serving motivation.
- In a similar way, there will always be those grace haters who speak evil of the truth (**2 Peter 2:1-2**); but to the degree that we walk in the Spirit, we too, will have a clear conscience before God.

B. False Teachers

“For we write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end; As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus.” 2 Corinthians 1:13-14

- It seems that the false teachers, in an effort to discredit Paul, were accusing him of dishonesty.
- They were saying that Paul really didn't mean what he had written.

- Therefore, Paul is making it clear to the Corinthian believers that what he had written and said to them at various times is exactly what he meant to communicate.
- In the Spirit, our lives will be sincere and transparent; we will not be hiding things in our hearts.
- But in the flesh, we put up a “false front” for the purpose of hiding the true motives and feelings of our hearts.
- Paul also states that he hoped the Corinthians would once again accept and have confidence in him as they did when he first proclaimed the gospel to them.
- In the Spirit, Paul’s concern was not for himself, but for the Corinthians. For them to be suspicious of Paul and reject his message would be to reject the truth and follow the heresy of the false teachers.
- We have consistently seen that Paul’s greatest concern was for people to walk in truth and be molded into the image of Christ (**Galatians 4:19**).

“And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea. When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay?” 2 Corinthians 1:15-17

- At some point, Paul had told the Corinthians that he had planned to visit them both on his way to and from Macedonia; neither time did God permit him to fulfill his plan (**Acts 16:6-7**).
- Because of this, the false accusers were telling the Corinthians that they were foolish for following a man’s teaching who did not keep his word.
- It appeared to them that Paul was only living for self; he told the Corinthians that he would come, but later changed his mind.
- Paul is explaining that he didn’t flippantly decide in the flesh to do what he wanted.
- He was communicating that he was being led by the Spirit and that the Spirit was influencing and controlling his decisions.

C. The Revealing Word of God

“But as God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us”. 2 Corinthians 1:18-20

- Paul is writing that just as God is true, so was Paul’s teaching to the Corinthians.
- His teaching was centered in Christ through Whom God had faithfully fulfilled all of His promises.
- Therefore, for the Corinthians to reject Paul’s teaching would be to reject Christ, for Christ was Paul’s message.
- In saying that all of God’s promises are fulfilled in Christ is a very significant statement (**Ephesians 1:10**). This would mean that there is nothing left for man to do but to, by faith, receive what Christ has provided for us.
- In order to believe and receive what He has accomplished, we must first know what He has accomplished. And only the Holy Spirit can reveal this to us through the Word of God.
- The Spirit’s role in our lives, is to use the written Word of God to reveal to us the living Word of God (**John 16:13-14**).

“Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts”. 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

- Paul is making clear to the Corinthians that the teaching they had heard was not flowery words of man’s wisdom that have no impact on their lives.
- But rather Paul’s teaching had emphasized that God had placed the Corinthian believers into Christ and had sealed them with the Holy Spirit (**Ephesians 4:30**), guaranteeing that all Christ was and had accomplished had been fully bestowed upon them for all eternity (**Romans 8:17** - joint-heirs with Jesus).
- Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that in Christ they truly had received all of God’s promises, and these promises were not some teaching which they would never experience.

D. By Faith We Stand

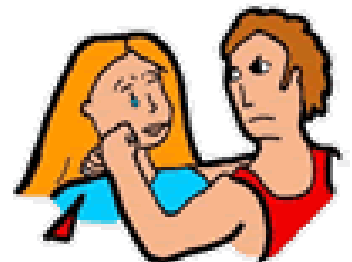
“Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand”. 2 Corinthians 1:23-24

- Paul now tells the Corinthians why he did not come to visit them.
- It was out of consideration for them that he canceled his visit. He had written to them previously confronting their sin, and to follow his letter with a visit would appear that he was trying to force them to change
- Paul said he could not force them to believe, but merely point them to truth and trust the Holy Spirit to bring about the change. Only as they came to know, understand and believe the truth would they be able to, by faith, stand in it.

E. The Flesh and the Spirit

“But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me? And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.” 2 Corinthians 2:1-4

- The false teachers were accusing Paul of being untrustworthy and insincere, but notice how far from their accusations were his actual motives.
- Paul’s greatest desire for the Corinthian believers was to see Christ formed in them (**Galatians 4:19**). This was so much his desire, that he put off his visit to give them more time to repent and grow into Christ-likeness. In so doing, when he finally did visit them, the focus of his visit could be on praising God for their spiritual growth, rather than on the sadness for continued sin in their lives.
- In reading I Corinthians, it is easy to view Paul as being angry because of the sin in their lives.
- But, verse 4 makes clear the true attitude in which it was



written, *“out of much affliction and anguish of heart, and with many tears...”*

- In the flesh, our response to others’ sin and failure will be anger or condemnation, but in the Spirit, it will be loving concern for one who has gone astray.

F. True Forgiveness

“But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things.” 2 Corinthians 2:5-9

- In these verses, Paul is referring to a man in the Corinthian church who was living with his father’s wife. In I Corinthians 5, Paul had told the Corinthians that he must be disciplined by the church.
- Apparently the Corinthians had done this, and the man had repented and wanted to be forgiven and accepted back into the church body; however, it would appear that many of the believers in the church were unwilling to accept him.
- Paul writes that the discipline had served its purpose and the man had repented; now they must forgive and accept him before he became greatly discouraged.
- The goal of church discipline is not condemnation and judgment, but restoration and forgiveness.
- When a church continues to hold confessed sin to a man’s account, it has become inconsistent with the grace of God and is not acknowledging the forgiveness which God has granted to that person in Christ.

“To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also: for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ; Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.” 2 Corinthians 2:10-11

- Paul stated that if they would forgive this man, he would likewise forgive him. He went on to point out that the basis for forgiveness of him was the forgiveness that was theirs in Christ.
- Refusing to forgive a repentant brother is to reject God's grace on his behalf, which indicates that the flesh is active as we exalt ourselves above God.
- In the flesh, we are deceived, for the fleshly mind cannot discern the things of God (**I Corinthians 2:14**), therefore Satan can easily gain an advantage.
- To remain in this state will be to further depart from truth and the grace of God.

2 CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 3

A. Good News/Bad News

“Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.” 2 Corinthians 2:12-13

- Paul had written I Corinthians from Ephesus and had given Titus the responsibility of delivering the letter to the church in Corinth; he had planned to meet Titus some time later in Troas.
- While in Troas, Paul had opportunity to share the gospel with some people.

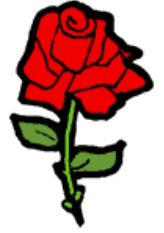


- It's interesting to note that Paul acknowledges God in all that he says and does, **“And a door was opened to me by the Lord.”**
- The work of evangelization is the Lord's work, therefore it's important that we depend on the Spirit to lead us to those whose hearts have been prepared to hear and believe the gospel.
- After a time of teaching in Troas, and Titus still had not come to meet him, Paul became more concerned and traveled to Macedonia looking for him.
- It was there in Macedonia that Paul finally found Titus; he had come from Corinth with both good news and bad news.
- The good news; the Corinthians were responding to Paul's teaching in his letter. Titus also had bad news; the false teachers were attempting to destroy Paul's ministry to the Corinthians.

“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:” 2 Corinthians 2:14-15

- Not only was Paul eager to give all glory to God, but he desired to give thanks to the Lord for any and all victories. It's interesting to note Paul's clear

statement that **“God always causes us to triumph in Christ.”** As we rest in our position in Christ; and daily abide in Christ (**I Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:37**). Paul also wrote that Christians are a fragrance of God in every place.



- As we walk in the Spirit, the life of Christ is lived out in and through us and many will find love, grace, tenderness and the gentleness of Christ to be a sweet fragrance.

“To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.” 2 Corinthians 2:16-17

- To those who reject the gospel, we are the aroma of death. We are a constant reminder of their sin and darkness and they will hate us as they hated Christ (**John 17:14**).
- But to those who are teachable and accept the gospel, we are the sweet aroma of life.
- Paul asked the question, who is worthy of being used by God in this way? No man is, however, as we rest in our position in Christ, and abide in Christ, God makes us as such (**John 15:5**).
- Paul goes on to remind the Corinthians that he was not teaching the Word of God for worldly gain, but rather because God had led him to do so.
- In the flesh, Christians often seek to serve God for fleshly motives, but in the Spirit, our motives will be pure and genuine.
- Paul was not corrupting the Word of God by adding works and the keeping of the law to grace, nor was his focus of ministry to the soul (mind, will, emotions). He never tried to change people’s minds, or change their desires, or make them feel good. His ministry was a spiritual ministry, always pointing people to Christ.

B. Our Lives Are Testimonies

“Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with

ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart.” 2 Corinthians 3:1-3

- Paul asks the question, do we need to prove the validity of our ministry among you, or do we need letters from you stating the validity of our ministry?
- The answer, no.
- Paul went on to say that the type of life the Corinthian Christians were living was a testimony of the ministry Paul and his companions had among them. As others saw and heard of their lives, it would give positive testimony to the ministry (**I Thessalonians 1:6-8**).
- God used Paul and Titus to share the life of Christ with the Corinthian church and then the Holy Spirit reproduced that life in them as they rested in their co-crucified position with Christ (**Galatians 2:20**).
- The false teachers were placing people under the law that was written on stones and that no one could keep, but the life of Christ is written on the hearts (mind, will, emotions) of men by the Spirit, and ultimately leads to Christ living His life through man as man occupies himself with Him (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).
- But Christ living His life in and through us will produce a testimony for the message of grace to those around us.
- The testimony of our lives, along with the frustration of living under the law may one day reveal new truth to those living under the law.
- The following testimony is from a young pastor in a foreign country who had just gone through some classes on grace: *“The first day of teaching was very difficult for me. I have been to Bible school, I know this Bible, and the things you were teaching was not what I know the Bible to say. During the second day of teaching, I began to see that the things I thought the Bible was saying were fading away, and new truth was coming in its place. By the third day, I was so encouraged, and on the fourth day I could see that this grace teaching might possibly change the way I treat my wife; I have not been treating her well since the day I married her, and I have been unable to change.”*

2 CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 4

A. God is Our Sufficiency

“And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;” 2 Corinthians 3:4-5

- Previously, Paul wrote that Christians, who are abiding in Christ, are a fragrance of Him as they live out the Christ-life and share Christ with others.
- Paul now goes on to say that Christians who are living out the Christ-life and affecting others in this way, are not able to live this kind of life because of anything of themselves, but that it is God who has made them adequate for such a life.
- It’s good to remember that those who are serving God in the flesh are doing it for selfish motives, but those who are serving God in the Spirit will serve Him with pure, selfless motives that are coming from Him.
- In the flesh, we will take credit for things that only God can do. But in the Spirit, we will do what Paul did; all credit goes to God, who is the supreme source of all that we are and do.

B. The Law Kills, But the Spirit Gives Life

“Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.” 2 Corinthians 3:6

- Here again, Paul is contrasting the law which the false teachers were teaching, with grace, which was the basis for all that Paul and his companions taught.
- He writes that it was God alone who made them to be able administrators of the new arrangement between God and man (**1 Timothy 1:12**).
- The new arrangement is not of the law, for all the law can do is condemn man for failing to keep it.
- The new arrangement or covenant, is of the Spirit, who reproduces the life of Christ in us, and gives us the ability (power and desires) to then live out the Christ-life.

“But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?” 2 Corinthians 3:7-8

- The story that Paul is referring to is found in **Exodus 34:28-36**: *“And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him in mount Sinai. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spake unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with him.”*



- Paul referred to the law, as the “ministration of death,” because it brought condemnation to all as no man was able to obey it.
- But even though the law brought death to sinners, it was still glorious, for it showed something of the glory of God; it showed God’s power, holiness, hatred of sin, and punishment for sin.
- It is interesting to note that after Moses returned from receiving the law, his faced shown with the glory of God until the Israelites could not look at it and Moses had to cover it.
- However, Paul writes that this glory was to be done away with. The fact that later, the glory did slowly fade from Moses’ face was a picture of what would happen to the law.

- Paul makes the statement that the new covenant is greater than the preaching of the law.
- The law was only given temporarily in order to prepare man for the coming of the new covenant, which was brought by Christ (**Galatians 3:22-26; 4:1-6**).

“For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory”. 2 Corinthians 3:9

- Paul goes on to say if that which brought condemnation and death revealed God’s glory, then the new covenant that brings salvation and life is much more glorious.

“For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.” 2 Corinthians 3:10-11

- Some lights can seem very bright at night, but no light seems bright once the sun comes up, for the brightness of the sun far surpasses the brightness of even the brightest of lights.

“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished:” 2 Corinthians 3:12-13

- Here again, Paul is contrasting law and grace.

2 CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 5

A. A Ministry of God

“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.” 2 Corinthians 4:1-2

- During Paul’s ministry, he was oftentimes under persecution and attack from the Judaizers (Acts 9:23; 13:45, 50; 14:12, 19; 16:22, 23; 17:5, 13; 18:6, 12; 20:3, 19; 21:27; 22:22; 23:12; 25:7).
- The ministry of teaching and living out the life of Christ was bestowed upon Paul by God’s grace and mercy.
- Therefore, even though he and his friends were persecuted, attacked and had seen many led astray from the truth, still their trust was in God who had placed them into ministry, and they were not discouraged.
- Because they were confident that this ministry was of God, they did not depend upon trickery and craftiness to persuade people; they simply presented the truth and trusted the Holy Spirit with the results.

B. Satan’s Deception

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

- Paul wrote that even though they preached the gospel simply and clearly, the truth of it was still hidden from those who did not believe.
- Satan, through his deceptive lies, is working to deceive the world from the truth of the gospel.
- Satan cannot force anything upon anyone, but through the flesh, he lies and deceives, and as the lies are believed, he gains influence and control over people.

- Depending upon the people group and their culture, he uses different tactics to deceive them from believing the gospel.
- In the west, he may use money, possessions, and fame.



- In other cultures, he may use the fear of spirits.
- Our own human wisdom and reasoning won't overcome Satan's deceptions.
- But as Paul said in Romans, the power unto salvation is in the gospel; (**Romans 1:16**).

- Therefore, we need only share the pure and simple gospel message and trust the Holy Spirit to communicate it to hearts that he has prepared.
- After salvation, Satan's great deception is to keep new believers from seeing and believing in their identification with Christ and to depend upon their own works for sanctification.



C. Christ, Not Self

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” 2 Corinthians 4:5-7

- Here Paul gives the reason he preached the gospel simply and purely; because the gospel is what Christ has done to save, not what man has done or must do.
- When we are preaching Christ and His finished work, we are preaching truth whether people believe it or not.



- Truth that is based on the finished work of Christ doesn't require our wisdom or flowery speech to make people believe it (**I Corinthians 2:1-5**).
- The God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness at creation is the same God who causes the light of the gospel to shine out of these fallen bodies of ours.
- As it was God that has done it in our hearts, it is only He that can do it in the hearts of others who are deceived; therefore, our

trust must be in Him and not in ourselves.

- In verse 7, Paul gives the reason why God has chosen to work in this way; it is so that there will never be any doubt that this message is of God and not ourselves.
- The fact that God takes sinful human beings, saves them, and then uses them to manifest the life of His Son to the world, is a work that should make absolutely clear to everyone that this message is from God and is administered in hearts by His Spirit.
- Had God used great and mighty angels to proclaim this message, people's focus would be on the messengers rather than the message.
- But, God chose earthen vessels to carry the treasure so that people would be taken up with the greatness of the treasure.

“We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.

For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.” 2 Corinthians 4:8-12

- Paul wrote that God has chosen to use earthen vessels to carry the treasure of the gospel.
- At the moment of salvation, each of us received a new nature (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).
- Even though we have received a new position (out of Adam and into Christ), and a new nature, unless God takes us through the process in verses 8-12, that treasure and new nature will not be manifested through our lives, but will remain hidden within.
- So God must take us through trying circumstances in order to show us the wretchedness of our flesh. The more we see it, the more we will accept and appropriate our co-crucifixion with Christ, which in turn will free us from the control of the flesh and enable us to walk in the Spirit, and ultimately leading to the Christ-life being manifested.
- **“Always bearing about in the body the dying (to self) of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”**

- “For we who live are always delivered unto death (to self) for Jesus’ sake that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh, so then death (to self) works in us but life in you.” This is the principle of death and resurrection that is throughout the bible.
- “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* “ (John 12:24) – The Bible has one interpretation and many applications. Here Jesus speaks of a seed rotting in the ground and dying to eventually produce fruit. He also speaks of his own life; he must die for us to have eternal life. This verse also speaks of Christians dying to self; in order for others to live, we must die to self.

D. A Purpose For Trials

“We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you” .2 Corinthians 4:13-14

- Paul is writing to say he is confident that all the trials and hardship that God had taken him through was for the purpose of causing him to be raised to walk in newness of life (**Romans 6:4-5**).
- Just as we were crucified with Christ, so have we been raised with Him to walk as He walked (**I John 2:6**)

“For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:15-18



- Paul continues by saying that the purpose of this difficult process is to make us more able ministers of God’s grace, which in turn will cause more thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.
- Paul explains that he was not discouraged by the process.

Even though his outward body was passing away, it was causing spiritual growth in his inner man, as he learned to walk more in the Spirit.

- Paul acknowledged his affliction, but knew it was only for a moment in comparison to eternity. If being afflicted while on earth means that we become more like Christ and more souls be affected for eternity, then the affliction is worth it.
- Paul said they were not looking at the visible things of this life, but rather only at that which has eternal value.
- In the flesh, our focus is earthly and temporal, whereas in the Spirit, our focus will be eternal and heavenly (**Colossians 3:1-3**).

2 CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 6

A. Paul's Focus

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked.” 2 Corinthians 5:1-3

- In Paul's life and ministry he endured much hardship and persecution; however, his hope was not in finding ways to avoid the hardship and difficulties, but rather his trust was in the Lord. He truly understood that while he was in his fallen body, life would be difficult, but the day was coming when he would be taken home and be free of his earthly body.
- While we are here on earth, we endure much hardship. Like Paul, our earthly tent is being torn down through sickness and disease, however, we too, know that we will be receiving a new body from God in heaven.
- Paul's hope was in Christ, not in striving for good circumstances in this life.

“For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” 2 Corinthians 5:4

- Paul wrote that while we remain on this earth in these bodies, we are greatly burdened and groan to be free. It's not that we desire death, but we desire to be with our Heavenly Father and to be finally clothed with our new heavenly bodies.

“Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 5:5

- After telling the Corinthians that the destruction of their earthly bodies would only result in a new and heavenly body, Paul took them back to why this is so; because God in His grace has made us fit for it.
- By God's grace, we have been made prepared to receive something of which we are unworthy to receive.

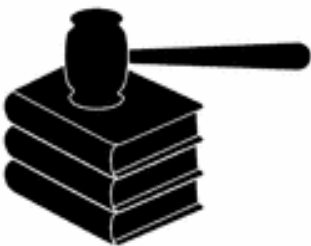
- Not only has God made us fit for this, but in the meantime, He has given us His Spirit as a guarantee that we will honestly receive all that He has promised.

“Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

- Because God has promised us a new heavenly body, has made us fit to receive it, and has given to us His Holy Spirit as a guarantee that we will receive it. Paul wrote that he remained encouraged even in the face of some of the most difficult struggles.
- He went on to say that we should walk with a view toward our hope in what God has promised, rather than focusing on what is physical and temporal.
- In the flesh, our focus is on ourselves and what is earthly; if times are difficult, we’re discouraged, if our circumstances are good, we’re happy.
- However, in the Spirit, all circumstances, whether hard or easy, encourages us because our hope is in Christ and His finished work.
- Paul states that he would rather be separated from his body and with the Lord. Even though this had not yet happened, it would, and the promise of that encouraged him.



“Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” 2 Corinthians 5:9-10



- Paul wrote of something else that was motivating him not to lose heart or become discouraged; whether he remained on earth or the Lord decided to take him home, he desired to be pleasing to God. The day is coming when we all will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and have our works judged (**I Corinthians 3:10-15**).

- Will our works be judged to see if we were good enough to get into heaven? No. Our works will be judged according to what was done by grace through faith in the power of the Spirit or through man's effort and the power of the flesh.
- Only that which Christ has done through us will be pleasing to the Lord.

“Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.” 2 Corinthians 5:11

- Because the day is coming when our works are going to be judged, we should desire to lead others to truth.
- God knows our hearts and motives in all that we do.
- Paul trusted that the Corinthians were convinced that his ministry among them had been of the Spirit and not with fleshly motives and ambitions.
- Often our ministry and service is carried out in the power of the flesh; we may even see good results from it, such as people helped, and even saved.
- But, as Paul said, God fully knows our hearts and our motives.
- If we are in the flesh, our motive can only be selfish, which is never pleasing to God.

B. Controlled By the Love of Christ

“For we commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause” . 2 Corinthians 5:12-13

- Paul, as well as his grace-based doctrine, was often attacked by the Judaizers whose focus was law-living.
- Paul was not exalting himself, but he wanted the Corinthians to know that he and his companions did everything out of faith in Christ and a desire to please God.
- Those who were attempting to put the Corinthians' church under the law were only concerned about appearance. Their focus was on themselves and their desire was to bring glory to themselves by appearing to have virtues that were really not in their hearts.

- Paul wrote if we are crazy as some accuse us of being, at least our motive is to be pleasing to God, and if we are teaching according to truth, it is for the benefit of the Corinthian believers (**2 Corinthians 4:5**).

“Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”. 2 Corinthians 5:16-17

- Paul is now bringing to our attention that believers who walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh, will have a new view of one another.
- Rather than knowing each other in the flesh, we will now know one another according to the Spirit, which means we will no longer see other’s flesh through our flesh.
- As we walk in the Spirit, our views and feelings toward others won’t be controlled by their fleshly actions and attitudes, whether they are our fleshly actions and attitudes or theirs.
- Paul goes on to say, **“though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more.”** Many of us came to Christ through fleshly, self-centered motives; we didn’t want to go to hell. Once saved, we most often continue living a self-centered life before Christ. We pray for good days, a good job, a new house, good health, all of our kids to be winners; thus our relationship with Christ is in the flesh. However, in the Spirit, our mind is thinking godly thoughts, our desires are His desires, and our motives are coming from Him. We no longer know Him in the flesh.

“And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.” 2 Corinthians 5:18-20

- God has reconciled (brought from the place of an enemy to the place of a friend) those of us who have believed.
- God has done this work in our lives so that we are restored to oneness with Him.

- Not only has He reconciled us, but now He has given to us the ministry of reconciliation, the ministry of bringing others.
- This ministry is first to bring others unto salvation and secondly, to an understanding and appropriating of all that Christ has done regarding our identification with Him.
- As ambassadors, we represent our home land and beseech others to be reconciled.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

- This is the message of reconciliation; Christ took our sin on Himself and was punished for it, thereby making it possible for us to receive God’s righteousness through Him. This is the message that reconciles man with God.

2 CORINTHIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 7

A. Now is the Time For Grace

“We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)” 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

- Just as the Judaizers had followed Paul to Galatia and Colossae, they had followed him to Corinth, attempting to persuade the Corinthian believers to depend on the law for their acceptance with God.
- Thus, Paul writes, **“receive not the grace of God in vain.”**
- The Corinthians had accepted the gospel and believed; and now Paul didn’t want them turning back to the law, depending on their own works, and discarding what they had freely been given in Christ.
- Paul quotes **Isaiah 49:8**: **“at the right time, God sent salvation and deliverance.”**
- And so it was now God’s time in their lives; God had sent salvation through His grace and Paul didn’t want them returning to law-living.

“Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;” 2 Corinthians 6:3-5

- Paul’s call to preach the Word of God and establish churches, was not an easy task, as it came with much hardship and affliction.
- There is an error today in people’s thinking, that the life of those who are walking with God will be smooth, joyful and easy. ***“I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed! Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother,***

mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” Luke 12:49-53 Jesus promised that the message of grace will bring conflict and division in people’s lives and families.

- The servant of God is called to a difficult work; Paul endured such hardship and difficulties as he walked in the Spirit through life.
- In the Spirit, Christ will be the object of our hearts and we will be so convinced of the truth of God’s Word that it won’t matter what happens to us in the process. We’ll just rejoice in the privilege of suffering with Him.
- But in the flesh, our focus will be on ourselves and the preservation of the things we hold dear; health, material possessions, reputation, etc.; thus when being a servant of God conflicts with our desires, we will quickly become discouraged and give up.

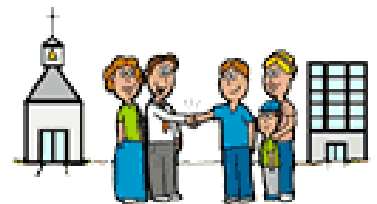
“By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,” 2 Corinthians 6:6-7

- Paul mentions the way in which he and his companions endured the hardships in ministry.
- He writes that while enduring hardship in ministry, they walked in purity, understanding, patience, kindness, love, righteousness, and truth.
- To respond to such hardship and difficulties in such a way as this is only possible by walking in the Spirit.
- In the flesh, we would respond in anger, revenge, and discouragement to such hardship.

B. Continue Walking in the Spirit

“By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” 2 Corinthians 6:8-10

- Paul now lists some of the ways in which he and his co-laborers were treated by various people, and through which they continued manifesting the fruit of



the Spirit.

- In some places they were honored and well accepted, but often they were treated like criminals or enemies.
- At other times, people lied about them, but on occasion the truth was told.
- They spoke the truth about God, but were regarded by some as deceivers.
- Many knew them and what they stood for, but out of hatred for their message, often they were treated as if they were unknown.
- While going through the process of dying to themselves, they continued to have life.
- They were beaten and stoned and thrown in prison and run out of town numerous times, but God preserved their lives.
- Though they went through many hard and trying times and often witnessed God's children being led astray, still they rejoiced in the grace and faithfulness of their sovereign God.
- They themselves were physically poor, yet their message and teaching made others rich in Christ.
- Though they had nothing materially, yet they were joint heirs with Christ and possessed all things pertaining to life and godliness.
- These men lived life in the Spirit.



“O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.” 2 Corinthians 6:11-13

- Paul is reminding the Corinthians of his open and honest ministry to them which was motivated by love.
- It's interesting that the Corinthian's response to Paul's loving ministry was to withdraw and reject him.
- Paul asks them to turn back to him in love and acceptance rather than withdrawal and rejection
- This is yet another manifestation of the flesh; rejecting the truth and all those who are preaching it.

C. Do Not Be Joined With Unbelievers

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.” 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

- The unbelieving false teachers claimed to accept the gospel, but they depended more upon the keeping of the law to obtain God’s acceptance.
- Therefore, Paul asked them some questions for the purpose of revealing to them how inappropriate it is to become “yoked” together with unbelievers.
- What does righteousness and wickedness have in common? And the answer is *nothing*.
- Can light and darkness mix together? No. Either we have light, or the light goes out and there is only darkness.
- Is there peace between Christ and Satan? No.
- What do believers have in common with unbelievers? Unless we are walking in the flesh, our affections and desires have changed and we can no longer have the fellowship that we once had (**Galatians 5:24**).
- As those who are the “temple” of God, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, what do we have in common with those who are unbelievers and worshipping other gods?
- In verse 17, Paul shares God’s desire for His children: to walk in the Spirit, to live holy and righteous lives, and that His sons and daughter no longer live in communion with the wickedness of this world.

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” 2 Corinthians 7:1

- Since we know that God desires a true knowledge of Himself (**2 Peter 3:18**), and this is why; a true understanding of His love, grace, and mercy to sinful

man, would cause us to separate from everything that might hinder our relationship with Him and only accept and desire that which will foster godliness and holiness in our lives.

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