

2 Corinthians 6:1-7:1

Chapter 6

Verses 1-2:

--Paul is continuing his discussion from chapter five in relation to their new character as ambassadors for Christ. He acknowledges that they are **workers together with Him**—that is God—as is the clear and present context.

--This is not the first time Paul acknowledges the reality of working together with God.

1 Corinthians 3:9: For we are God's fellow workers...

--As such, Paul is pleading with them not to allow the grace of God in their lives—which put them in this honored and privileged position as ambassadors working with God—to be in vain.

--In that context, Paul quotes from **Isaiah 49:8**, which is speaking of Israel but also the Messiah, with the aim to press upon them the idea that they had been heard by God and lived in a time of grace! *Remember Jesus reading the Scripture in the synagogue at Nazareth and stopping short of future judgment in **Luke 4:16-21***

--Paul is not describing a loss of salvation. Paul was exhorting in a way that he commonly does in his letters. He would doctrinally instruct believers as to what they were in Christ and then exhort them to live that way by God's grace and power!

--You are reconciled—be reconciled. You are dead in Christ—put off the old man. You have been adopted—live like sons and daughters, etc. Paul always impressed doctrine with moral exhortation—not simply intellectual understanding. All Christians are to live in proper relation to our profession.

--Paul clearly even spoke this way of himself.

1 Corinthians 15:10: But 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.

--Obviously, Paul was not worried about the loss of his personal salvation. He was worried about the grace of God being wasted, set aside, or fallen from (**Gal. 2:21; 5:4**).

--Are we aware of the grace of God in our lives? Do we realize the wonderful day of God that we live in? Whether we are believers or unbelievers—this applies to the mixed multitude!

Verse 3:

--The whole thrust of Paul's exhortation was for them to live in the dignity proper to the incredible message of the cross and new life in Christ Jesus.

Proverbs 25:11: A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.

--If the wise man could understand the application of this principle in the context of speech and art—What of us in the context of the Incarnation of Christ and life in the Spirit of God?

Philippians 1:27: Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ. . .

--Our lives shouldn't give our hearers easy excuses to reject our message. They might not ever like what our message is but they should have nothing to say about our lives (only lies).

Verse 4:

--Now, in **4-10** Paul basically illustrates what he is exhorting through his own life experience. For most of us, life will include these things in some measure bigger or smaller.

--We are first and foremost to make sure people know we are **ministers of God**—not Calvary Chapel, or Calvinism, or the Catholic Church—but God!

--Second, a true minister of the gospel commends himself as such through **patience**. The word has the idea of *endurance* and relates to the general condition of all that follows.

--A true minister will stick it out to the end. There is no retirement from our ambassadorship.

John 12:26: If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

--**Tribulations:** Is the same word used in **1:4** and describes much of what Paul went through from their various angles. Much of these could be avoided if Paul quit the ministry.

--**Needs:** Are connected with tribulations here and in **1 Thess. 3:7**. Tribulations bring about needs and needs tribulations.

--**Distresses:** This word has the idea having no way of escape. We say, "the walls are closing in".

Verse 5:

--**Stripes:** This would include either rods or whips. This happened to Paul multiple times.

--**Imprisonments:** Had to be tough for an active man such as Paul. We know that he was in prison at least in Philippi, Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Rome.

--**Tumults:** Has the idea of unruly mobs. We are tragically growing more accustomed to these!

--**Labors:** We know Paul was bi-vocational as a tentmaker. I think we can even underestimate the literal distances Paul walked or the effort he expended in teaching.

--**Sleeplessness:** We know that Paul would labor during the day and teach at night! No doubt, his love and concern for believers also kept him awake many a night.

--**Fastings:** This word seems to have the idea of want of food Vs. fasting for religious reasons.

Verse 6:

--**Purity:** Sexually and in motive.

--**Knowledge:** Holding truth in mature understanding. *Think of Paul's numerous discussions with stronger and weaker consciences*

--**Longsuffering:** The word tends to lend itself to the idea of being so with people moreso than circumstances. Paul was longsuffering with sinners and immature saints.

--**Kindness:** This is more than *what* we do. Kindness is *how* we do it. God is kind.

Luke 6:35: *But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil.*

--***Holy Spirit:*** This seems to be a strange place to add in the Holy Spirit, as the work of the Spirit is the very beginning of our life in God. That said, I think Paul's point is that as we have begun our new life with a divine miracle, the divine-plus should continue to be a part of our path.

--***Sincere love:*** Not fake love or affectation. We don't need to put on anything.

Romans 12:9: *Let love be without hypocrisy.*

Verse 7:

--***The Word of Truth:*** We have THE word of truth in THE Word of God. (See again **4:2**) ***Truth comes from God—not our feelings.***

--***The power of God:*** Evident supernatural work. There should be something of the Lord in our service to Him. The apostles saw this and took it as the Lord's leading.

Galatians 2:8: *for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles.

--***The armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left:*** This is a man or woman that is covered on every side by right actions with God and men.

Verses 8-10:

--Here we find the joyful light and sorrowful shadows of the Christian life. Paul is describing the contrasts of those who knew him after the flesh and those who knew him after the Spirit. These contrasts—in some measure—will be a part of every Christian life on this earth.

--The more Paul reflected Christ the more some honored him and others dishonored him.

--The more Paul reflected Christ the more people talked about him for evil or good.

--The more Paul reflected Christ the more people thought he was a cult leader and the more people followed him in the truth as he followed Christ in truth.

--**(9)** The more Paul reflected Christ the more he was unknown on earth and well known in heaven and hell. ***Seven sons of Sceva story***

--The more Paul reflected Christ the more he died to himself and lived in God.

--The more Paul reflected Christ the more he was chastened in the flesh (this has the idea of discipline or instruction) but not put to death. ***The Vindresser cutting what should go so the rest of the vine could live and produce fruit.***

1 Corinthians 11:32: *But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.*

--**(10)** The more Paul reflected Christ the more he found sorrow on earth but rejoiced always in the Lord. ***Boxer beat up but holding the champions belt or a new mother with her child.***

--The more Paul reflected Christ the more he found poverty on earth but made others rich by what he was and what he gave.

--The more Paul reflected Christ the more he realized that he really had nothing in this world (in earthly considerations or prospects) but possessed everything—**All things!**—in God.

Psalm 73:25-26: Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

--So, do **we commend ourselves as ministers of God** in these things? Do we retain our true character in God or are we thrown back and forth by the constant and unceasing waves of honor and dishonor? *Do we get too high off men's praise or too low off men's slander?*

1 Corinthians 3:21-23: Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours...And you are Christ's and Christ is God's.

Verses 11-13:

--Here, Paul admits that he is not holding back. His heart is wide open to them. If there is any coldness it is not on his side. And, he was not okay with that. He wanted his love reciprocated!

Verses 14-16a:

--Here in this verse we begin an interlude until **7:1**. You will notice that in **7:2-4** Paul picks up the thought from **6:11-13** perfectly. Some have a hard time making the connection here. I think it is clear.

--Paul is afraid that ungodly influences are connecting their hearts to the world and that is part of the reason that they are cold to him while he is open to them. It is obvious from **1 Corinthians** that the worldly life of Corinth was negatively influencing the church.

--**(14)** Here Paul states clearly what he feels the problem is: **Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.**

--No doubt this command would clearly bring the OT law to mind.

Deuteronomy 22:10: You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

--The obvious incongruity would cause problems but people who didn't care for their animals or their field wouldn't care for the law or its larger principle either. The Christian and the non-Christian are two totally different animals.

--Now this principle is often spoken about when we think of a believer marrying an unbeliever but is not written in the context of marriage. Paul covered those issues with the church in **1 Corinthians 7** and doesn't need to repeat the specifics here.

--That said, the spiritual principle Paul is emphasizing does still apply.

--Satan has convinced many that they will do an unsaved partner good when all they do is harm to themselves and the unsaved. How can we lead others into the truth of life and obedience to God, when we are acting in willful disobedience to satisfy our own fleshly desires?

--The sad results are evident in many marriages as people learn the truth of another spiritual principle: ***Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.***

--Let me also say that it is a totally different situation for a person having been unsaved and getting saved while in a marriage, than it is for a person to willfully enter into an unequal yoke while disobeying this spiritual principle and the clear command of **1 Cor. 7:39**.

--Here, Paul is thinking of more than marriage, he is touching the deeper spiritual principle of holiness, knowing that the grace of God in their lives would be in vain if they ignored separation from the world and were unequally yoked with unbelievers.

--That said, the holy *separation* Paul is arguing for is different than monkish *isolation* from the world. That is obvious in the example of Jesus, Paul, and the other apostles.

--Now Paul is going to lay out five rhetorical questions:

1) *What fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness?*

--Paul uses a unique word for ***fellowship*** here in the Greek. It is used only here in the Bible and has the idea of *sharing*.

--What priorities or values does the Holy Spirit in us share with the world? How do the righteous laws of God and the lawlessness of the world go together? We are seeing the bitter contrast of these things in the world we live in!

--In God's eyes it is right that Israel is in His land; that the unborn live in a mother's womb; that marriage is only between a man and a woman; that He only made two genders; that we are not to look upon the nakedness of others in the porn industry, on OnlyFans, or on movies and TV and phones; that He made the world. In God's eyes we are not to steal, commit adultery, lie, covet, or have any sex outside of marriage, or recognize any God other than Him.

--What righteousness is God sharing with the world's lawlessness?

2) *What communion has light with darkness?*

--The Greek word here for ***communion*** is *koinonia*. Which has the idea of selling all that we have and going into business together. This doesn't happen with light and dark in created nature or human nature.

--Light dispels darkness. It doesn't go into business with it. Those who walk in the light see things as they are. Those who walk in darkness are lost. They will only see things clearly when they are saved or the minute they step into eternity.

--God's rule between light and dark is separation not fusion. So too with us and the world. One of Satan's best lies is convincing us into fellowship with the world for "greater usefulness." But please listen to me! "Usefulness" is not the Christian object or aim. Obedience is. This simplifies things immediately once seen.

--I don't ever surrender my obedience to God for "usefulness" with the world. Christ's example is to surrender life before obedience. God does what He pleases. I do what I'm told.

--Now, I know this is not a popular message in our world, but it is Biblical and I will hold to it because it is the truth. *Don't jump into a mental bomb-shelter from these exhortations!*

--Some will say: *You will make people leave the church with that type of attitude!* Leave the church they may, and I can weep for them and intercede for them. But I will not lie to them. No man can serve two masters.

--Why do so many leave the church? Do they all hate God? No, they have just found something that they want more than God and they cannot stand the light. *Orpah + Rich Young Ruler*

John 3:19: *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

3) ***What accord has Christ with Belial?***

--The Greek word for ***accord*** is a musical term and is used only here in the Bible. Do Jesus and Satan make sweet music together? Do they harmonize? Would they be in a band playing the same songs? Does the Holy Spirit love godless songs, sung by godless people, who have no care for God's glory but instead enjoy taking the glory for themselves?

1 John 5:19: *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.*

--Do we know that? Maybe we need to be reminded.

4) ***What part has a believer with an unbeliever?***

--The Greek word for ***part*** has the idea of a portion out of the whole. It is the same word that is used for ***partakers*** in ***Colossians 1:12: Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.***

--What end goals do we share together? Too often we are fooled into believing there is even one. The unbeliever has no goal to please God, glorify Him, or live for eternal reward in heaven.

--How many things in life would people not even care about save for the admiration of the world?! *Think: Rolex; Fashion; Cars; Houses; Drinks; etc.*

*MacDuff (Sermons of John MacDuff): "Do not be ashamed to confess Christ in your daily life. Oh, how many are so—afraid to be deemed pious—afraid to be thought of as *enthusiasts*—afraid lest men should "take knowledge of them, that they have been with Jesus." They will strive, and struggle, and toil, to acquire earthly riches—give their whole heart's devotion to the world—and waste the energies of mind and body, in the effort to outstrip others in the race for wealth. They are *not* ashamed to be known as worldlings, but they *are* ashamed to be deemed pious! They can be cold, unimpressed, and indifferent, when a pious subject is brought before them; but warm, interested, and engrossed, when the conversation is of this world—its business, schemes, and projects. Brethren, let it not be thus with you!"*

5) **What agreement has the temple of God with idols?**

--The Greek word for **agreement** is another unique word used only here in the Bible and has the idea of *joining* or *fitting together*.

--There has never been, there is not now, nor will there ever be any religious unity of worship between God Almighty and any other god. The claims of Jesus Christ cannot be joined to the claims of any other religious figure. *Oprah or Rob Bell or the Pope*

John 14:6: I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

--We don't need to be rude but we sure do need to be clear! Speak the truth in love!

--Remember, the Corinthians had some serious problems with idolatry and idolatrous feasts (see **1 Cor. 8+10**).

--We are a temple because we are where the Holy Spirit of God lives. That is why Christ said His body was also a temple. (See **Jn. 2:19; 1 Cor. 3:16+6:19**).

--God is a jealous God. In the end, He will not share us with a false god or demons.

Verses 16b-18:

--**(16)** God's end goal is the dwell with us and walk with us and be our God.

1 John 2:15: Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

--We cannot say we love God and love all the things that God has no love for. The Holy Spirit is not in us loving the fallen world system: its laws, its dark and secret lies, wicked harmony with its ruler, its portions for the unbelieving, or its demonic false religions.

--**(17)** Instead, Paul quotes from **Isaiah 52:11** which was a call for the people of Israel to escape from Babylon—the land of idols. ***Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord!***

--Again, this is in separation and not isolation. Separation of body, mind, and heart.

--**(18)** Then God promises to be a Father to us. He promises that we are His sons and daughters.

--Can you actually believe that we are often tricked into falling for the lie that we have given up a great deal in leaving the world for our Heavenly Father?! What a lie!

Chapter 7

Verse 1:

--What promises? The promise of God's dwelling among us, walking among us, being our God, and us being His people. The promise of God as Father and I as His son or daughter.

--As sons and daughters of God we should tolerate no **filthiness**—which speaks of any action that defiles—of the **flesh** or the **spirit**.

--We think often of the filthy or wicked works of the flesh but not often of the spirit. These go together as Jesus made it clear that all sinful actions begin with an evil heart (**Mark 7:20-23**).

--Sins of *Action* and sins of *Attitude* as seen in the sins of the prodigal son and the elder brother. Both are symptoms of inner impurity.

You have the promise of God's help. Don't believe the lies of the culture that say He will not!

Also, don't believe the devil's lies about the bland nature of a cleansed life: boring, no excitement, envy sinners, live full of regrets, etc.

--How is this type of holiness to be perfected, or come to maturity? ***In the fear of God.*** One must continue in the very presence of God like the disciples did. *Do I order and organize my life in His presence?*

--Paul knows that if they had not been caught up in some type of worldly evil, there would be no relational distance between them and God or with him.