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2 Corinthians 7.

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Learn the Bible with Friends

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

2 Corinthians 7.

Topics.

- The eternal promise of God.
- The heart of a true shepherd.
- To die together and to live together.
- God, who comforts the downcast.
- Feigned love or true love.
- Godly grief and worldly grief.
- Repentance that leads to salvation and repentance that leads to death.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter Paul warned the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain, not to put any obstacle in anyone's way and about human passions hindering the gospel of Christ. He spoke of being unequally yoked and about brothers and sisters in Christ being the Temple of God.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

- In certain chapters this letter is written as though Paul is having a conversation with the Corinthians (i.e., he asks them a question and then answers it etc.).
- Though Paul's letter is directed to the Corinthian church the content applies to any church or believer in the same situations.

2 CORINTHIANS 7:1

The Eternal Promise of God.

- **2 Corinthians 7:1:** Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.

The words, "Since we have these promises" (v1) refer to the previous chapter in which Paul wrote, God promised, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (2 Cor. 6:16). Since God will make his eternal dwelling place amongst the family of Christ Paul calls the Corinthian brothers and sisters and by extension all of us to cleanse ourselves from everything that defiles the body and the spirit, i.e., pride, greed, unlawful sex, orgies, dishonesty, idolatry, witchcraft, hate, strife, jealousy, fits of anger and rage, contentions, conflicts, arguments, divisions, envy, drunkenness and things like these (Gal 5:20-21). The book of Revelation records a vision that majestically and gloriously reveals the fulfilment of the promise Paul is referring to. The vision was given to a godly man named John on the Isle of Patmos. He expressed this royal and eternal vision in the following glorious and majestic words:

- Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the *dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them*, and they will be his people, and *God himself will be with them as*

their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away” (Rev. 21:1-4).

Can there be any more glorious words of comfort, joy and hope for those who belong to the global and spiritual temple God at this present time is building in the Lord Jesus Christ? Thus the reason Paul calls all brothers and sisters in Christ to live in a manner that honours God and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, but this is not the only reason those who belong to the family of Christ are called to live in the Spirit, (i.e., showing love, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, mercy and grace toward others).

The following are two other very important reasons Paul calls us to live in the Spirit:

1. When we live in this manner others will respect us and we will never be alone, but rather surrounded by many faithful friends.
2. Those who do not know God and the Lord Jesus Christ will be far more favourable in seeking the Lord if we are living a lifestyle that fulfils the Royal Law “Love your Neighbour as yourself.”

No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves so loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. It means do-good to others and not harm. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, sexually, verbally, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do-good to others. It is interesting to notice that the major crime that God points out in Noah’s time and one of the main reasons for the flood was because of all the violence in the land.

Leviticus chapter nineteen makes it clear that our neighbour is every other person, showing that the law requires justice to all people. The six commandments regarding mankind should be applied to everyone and we must abide by them ourselves. To love in the biblical sense is not an emotional attitude, but the keeping of these laws in relation to our neighbour. This is the general law of justice, beyond that; our conduct is to be regulated by relationship. We must render honour and justice to all people wherever due, but we have a particular responsibility to care for our families and those who belong to Christ.

2 CORINTHIANS 7:2-5

The Heart of a True Shepherd.

- **2 Corinthians 7:2-5:** Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. ³I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. ⁴I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy. ⁵For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn— fighting without and fear within.

Though Paul deeply loved the Corinthian brothers and sisters (so much so that he would have died for them) there were amongst them certain leaders who stood in opposition to his ministry, thus the reason he is highlighting the fact he has not corrupted or taken advantage of anyone and the reason he asks the Corinthian brothers and sisters to make room in their hearts for him and for those who minister with him rather than listening to those who are opposing him and giving them their affections.

Those standing in opposition to Paul were most likely Jewish converts who had not fully forsaken Moses Law and the Covenant of circumcision.

NOTICE: as messed up as the Corinthian church was (and it was messed up) Paul not only does not want to do anything that would make them feel condemned, but he has great pride in them so much so that even though they have caused him mental and emotional distress and hurt he is still full of joy to see them.

We have taken advantage of no one: Paul's statement, "We have taken advantage of no one" (v2) means he has not burdened anyone to support him in his ministry, even though he had the right to be supported, he preferred not to for the following two reasons:

1. He did not want to place any hardship on those he proclaimed the Good News of the Gospel to for fear of hindering the Gospel message.
2. Secondly, he did not want to feel as though he was bound by others, (i.e., the more financial aid a person receives from any particular individual or group the more there is a danger or temptation to either conform to what they want or avoid anything that may upset them). Paul knew if he supported himself, he was emotionally free to proclaim the message of Christ without any of these emotional and mental tensions.

To die together and to live together: Paul's words, "To die together and to live together" (v3) carries the idea that all who die in faith die in Christ and in this sense we all die together, while the words, "And to live together" refer to the following glorious, encouraging and comforting words of Paul:

- For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4:15-17).

Thus, it is in this sense that all who belong to the Global family of Christ not only die together (especially since there is not time in death), but will also live in everlasting glory together. Another way of expressing the words, "To die together" would be to say, we will all die in the same manner (i.e., in Christ). It is interesting to notice that the Bible refers to those who have died with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as being asleep in Christ, this is because for them death is only temporary, a day is coming in which they will be woken from this sleep and arise to everlasting life and eternal glory.

2 CORINTHIANS 7:6-7

God, who Comforts the Downcast.

- **2 Corinthians 7:6-7:** But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.

How wonderful and fabulous are these words of Paul, we often think of God's comfort coming to us in some mystical and supernatural way (and of course in times of extreme crisis the Lord does comfort and strengthen our hearts in a spiritual manner that surpasses human understanding and any effort on our part, but here we see God's comfort coming to Paul through another brother in Christ so much so that it not only brought Paul great comfort but also caused him to rejoice even more.

A practical lesson for today: there is an enormously important lesson for us all to learn from these words of Paul. Consider for a moment; Jesus himself spoke to Paul in a vision, Paul did not learn the gospel, but received it by revelation added to this amongst all the many writing and letters that existed during the time of the apostles God inspired human

men to use his letters to make up the majority of the New Testament, yet Paul despite all his miraculous miracles and successes needed and appreciated comfort. Thus, the lesson we learn is that no matter how strong or successful a person may seem to be on the outside we all have hidden fears, insecurities and needs on the inside and are therefore all in need of encouragement and spiritual and emotional comfort since they not only uplift the human spirit, but will also always be greatly appreciated by those they are given to. There is no doubt Paul would have continued ministering without any comfort or encouragement from others since he saw himself serving Christ and his highest passion was to rescue the lost so his service to the Lord was not dependent on the comforting and encouraging words of others, but his passion for Christ and sorrow for those who were without God and therefore without eternal life. But! There is absolutely no question that the comfort and encouragement that did come from other brothers and sisters lifted much of the pain and suffering and made his service for the Lord so much more enjoyable and the heavy load lighter.

Two God honouring aspects of Paul's character: following are two very interesting things to notice about Paul's character:

1. He suffered mockery, shipwrecks, imprisonments, beatings and had even been left for dead, yet he never at any time hesitated or waived in his ministry to the Lord, clearly showing that he was a mentally and emotionally strong man.
2. He did not hide how he felt about those he loved.

Throughout his letters he constantly tells those he is ministering to how much he cares and loves them. Some might say, "Yes but anyone can say they love someone," but what Paul suffered for those he ministered to is evidence of his love for those he proclaimed the Good News of the Gospel to. Paul did not become rich, famous or live in mansions far beyond what the common man on the street could afford, but rather mostly supported himself by his trade of tent making, worked long hours and had many sleepless nights (many of them in prisons), no-one lives a life of sacrifice for others unless their heart is full of love.

Paul a teacher or a father in Christ? Paul saw himself not as a teacher, but a father to those he brought to Christ and like any natural father he not only loves his spiritual children, but also understands that they have certain weaknesses and therefore rather than condemn them, not only shows grace and mercy but encourages, disciplines and teaches them the right way for the sole purpose of enhancing their life and preventing them from entering into future dangers and troubles. Paul's love is so great he like any biological father is prepared to suffer loss and even die for his spiritual children thus the reason his emotions of love and affection to his brothers and sisters (and by extension to all of us) is not hidden in his letters.

Feigned love or true love: people will feign love if they are going to gain from it, but no-one can hide honest love from those they love, since when love is true there will always be some degree of self-sacrifice (obviously the greater the sacrifice the greater the love). No-one is going to pretend to love another if there is nothing to gain; likewise, no-one is going to sacrifice anything for another unless they have love in the heart.

God Comforts the Downcast.

The words, "God, who comforts the downcast" (v6) should be of enormous encouragement to every brother and sister in Christ who is witnessing to those in third world countries, or to those in the western world who lack basic needs, or to those who are in sorrow and hardship, since the words, "God comforts the downcast" shows that God by His Spirit not only inhabits the heart of the suffering and those who lack wealth and material possessions, but also transcends our own human ability to find comfort in such difficult environments in a manner that surpasses human understanding and our own self-effort.

Godly Grief and Worldly Grief.

- **2 Corinthians 7:8-11:** For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. ⁹As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. ¹⁰For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. ¹¹For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

The letter Paul is referring to is his first letter to the Corinthian church.

Godly sorrow: is having sorrow for the hurt and pain caused to another person and the desire to correct it.

Worldly sorrow: is being sorry because of the punishment one is going to suffer, there is no thought for the other person's pain, hurt and suffering, the sorrow is for self, it is about what self is going suffer. Paul's first letter brought the Corinthian brothers and sister's grief since much of it is about correcting their wrong behaviour, but though it produced in them great sorrow they responded in a godly manner by doing what Paul had suggested which is why Paul is so excited and giving them so much praise.

Repentance that leads to salvation: the words, "Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret" (v10) refers to repentance that stems from the following two things:

1. From offending God.
2. From hurting another person.

This kind of grief leads to a change of attitude in the heart, thus the reason it is called godly grief, the sorrow is not about self, but stems from offending God and from hurting others this kind of sorrow leads to salvation, because it is honest repentance from the heart and truly sorry before God. There are three primary reasons Paul states that this kind of repentance is, "Without regret."

1. It allows God and those who have been hurt to forgive.
2. It unites the repentant person to God.
3. It saves those who repent to eternal life.

Repentance that leads to death: the words, "Worldly grief produces death" (v10) is in absolute contrast to, godly grief' since, worldly grief refers to a person who is full of tears of sorrow, but only because they have been caught and are going to suffer some form of punishment, this kind of repentance does not bring about a change of attitude in the heart since it's only focus is caring about self. This is the reason it is called worldly grief and worldly sorrow and the reason it leads to death (separation from God and death eternal) since this kind of repentance and grief has nothing to do with God neither does it care about the hurt it may have caused others.

Paul rejoices because He has Perfect Confidence in the Corinthians.

- **2 Corinthians 7:12-16:** So although I wrote to you, it was not for the sake of the one who did the wrong, nor for the sake of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your earnestness for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God. ¹³Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more at the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. ¹⁴For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before Titus has proved true. ¹⁵And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶I rejoice, because I have perfect confidence in you.

Paul did not write his first letter in which he told the Corinthian brothers and sisters to put the man sleeping with his father's wife out of their midst (I Cor. 5:1) because of the son doing the wrong, nor for the sake of his father who suffered, but to see if their faithfulness and devotion to Paul and those ministering with him would be revealed before God by their obedience to actually doing what he had written in his letter. Prior to Titus visited the Corinthians he had obviously boasted about them so of course he was enormously thrilled and excited to hear that not only had they done what he suggested (for their good and God's glory), but is also thrilled that they gave Titus such a warm welcome. There is no better testimony to any person than that others not only accept their advice but actually apply it to their own life, it is apparent the majority of the Corinthian church perceived that Paul genuinely cared and loved them and that despite the fact his advices gave them grief they understood it was for their benefit and not Paul's contrasted to prideful religious leaders who use their congregations to boost their egos and for their own selfish gain, self-importance, power and fame.

I have perfect confidence in you: when Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthian church it had many problems in fact so many that he could not address them as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ and instead of feeding them solid food had to feed them milk. Paul even told them that they were behaving and acting in a human way, because of their exaltation and boasting of each other and the many contentions, jealousies and strife that was amongst them (1 Cor 3:1-4). Their behaviour was so self-centered he spent much of his time teaching them about godly behaviour (the milk of the word) rather than on God's promises, prophecy, revelations and the return of the Lord etc., (the meat of the word), but he never questioned their faith in Christ or their salvation. Even with all their short-comings he was prepared to suffer loss for them. His final words to this chapter are beautiful and would have been enormously encouraging when this letter was read to the Corinthian church, "I rejoice, because I have perfect confidence in you" (v16) this shows the friendship between a church and their founder, even though Paul did not always tell the Corinthian brothers and sisters what they would have liked to hear they told Titus of their longing, mourning and zeal to see him again (v7) and Paul tells them he has absolute confidence in them.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.
