

Benefits of God's Leading

2 Corinthians Chapter 2

1 Cr 1:23-24 But I call God as witness to my soul, that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm.

1) Joy In Relationship vs 1-4

2Cr 2:1 But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again.

2Cr 2:2 For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad but the one whom I made sorrowful?

- As we have seen in chapter 1, Paul was defending his decisions from those who felt Paul didn't do as he said and that because of this he could not be trusted.
 - The Corinthians thought that Paul would come and visit them first before going to Macedonia. He didn't and he went to Macedonia first.
- Paul gives his reason: he felt that his visits and letters were harsh and that he intended that he would not come again to Corinth unless he could come in a different tone.

2Cr 2:3 This is the very thing I wrote you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy would be *the joy of you all*.

- As a minister, Paul's joy is found in the people. Paul was the most joyful when the church is loving Jesus, loving within the church and lovingly rescuing the lost outside the church.
 - **Philippians 2:2** "make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose."
- Our joy will be Fully Found in the People Around Us
- Paul wanted that joyful relationship with the Corinthians. Dealing with conflicts and correction is sorrowful. It is important but it isn't the joy in the relationship.

2Cr 2:4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

- The motive of the severe letter previously written was not without concern or compassion. Paul wrote a severe letter with affliction and anguish of heart and tears. Thus our correction of others should also have the same serious of our soul.
 - See intro of Chapter 1 for notes on "Mysterious Sorrowful Letter"
- The goal is not to make the person being corrected to be made sorrowful but to that they would know the love and care you have for them.
- **Hebrews 12:5-11** "you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."
It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.
All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

2) Restoration for the Disciplined vs 5-11

1 Corinthians 5:1-5 "It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, I have decided to deliver *such a one* to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

2Cr 2:5 But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree—in order not to say too much—to all of you.

2Cr 2:6 Sufficient for **such a one** is this punishment which *was inflicted* by the majority,

2Cr 2:7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort *him*, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

- Paul in 2 Corinthians refers to a person that was disciplined by the church. Most likely it is the same person mentioned in 1 Corinthians 5:1-5. Notice the same language used to describe him “*such a one*”
- The person isn’t disciplined and forgotten. Paul writes about him again 1 year to possibly up to 2 years later. This time to restore him.
- It must be understood that discipline, Individual or Church, can be inflicted to the point of being excessive and can overwhelm the recipient.
- **Proper Approach to Church Discipline** -- 2 Timothy 2:24-26 “*The Lord’s bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.*”
- **Proper Goal in Church Discipline** -- Galatians 6:1 “*Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.*”
 - Discipline should have the purpose of Restoration attached ALWAYS. It may not happen due to a man’s unruly, unrepentant heart. But for the one administering the discipline, he should always have restoration the goal.
- **Proper Steps of Church Discipline** -- Matthew 18:15-17 “*If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. “But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”*”
- In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul used the sin of this particular man to show how wrong the Corinthians were to tolerate such a sin. Paul is now using the same person to teach it is just as wrong to not forgive and comfort the repentant.

2Cr 2:8 Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love for him.

2Cr 2:9 For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.

- After a person is disciplined and has repented, the Church should “Reaffirm their Love” for him.
- We should learn from this passage that if we open our mouth to correct, rebuke or discipline we are agreeing to **a long term commitment**. It is more than voicing displeasure over a fault.
- It is:
 - Voicing Biblically the fault
 - Looking for humility and repentance
 - Administering discipline
 - Looking for humility and repentance
 - Forgiving Comforting Restoring

2Cr 2:10 But one whom you forgive anything, I *forgive* also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *I did it* for your sakes in the presence of Christ,

2Cr 2:11 so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

- Paul is allowing the church to take the lead. They are closer to the situation. If they forgive then Paul knows he should forgive.
- The reason for us to forgive is so we would not be taken advantage of.
 - Satan Scheme:
 - For the Corinthians to tolerate sin
 - For the Corinthians to punish excessively (unforgiveness)
 - For the man to lust and sin
 - For the man to be condemned and lost in hopelessness and despair

- 4 other times Paul speaks to the church to not be ignorant:
 - **Romans 11:25** - Concerning Blindness of Israel and their Ultimate Redemption
 - **1 Corinthians 10:1** - Israel's History is an Example for Us
 - **1 Corinthians 12:1** - Concerning Spiritual Gifts
 - **1 Thessalonians 4:13** - The Rapture of the Church
- It is interesting that all four of these topics the church is unclear about. Replacement Theology, Validity and Relevance of the Old Testament, Spiritual Gifts and End Time Events all are debated and have divided the church. All the while scripture tells us to not be ignorant of these things.
- Here Paul tells us that we ought not be IGNORANT of Satan's schemes.
 - Condemnation is Satan's Scheme
 - Conviction is the Holy Spirits Work
 - They both feel the same. Generally awful.
 - The difference is that Condemnation leads one away from God. Conviction leads one to God.
- **Luke 15:11-32** is the story of the Prodigal Son. It is also a story of the Other Son. After the son who loves the world more than family, whose selfishness hurt the father, wastes his inheritance, and nearly destroys the son, the son returns home to a forgiving father who celebrates his return. Meanwhile the other son who worked faithfully without much celebration finds himself at the crossroads. He can consume himself with himself and not forgive and celebrate his brother's repentance or he can participate in the joy of salvation others receive.
- So it is the same with you and me. Will we be people who are critical reminders of past sin or will we be those who celebrate the salvation of our God and Savior.

2Cr 2:12 3) Triumph in Christ vs 12-17

Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord,

2Cr 2:13 I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia.

- Titus was sent to Corinth and then was to pass through to Macedonia. And back to Paul in Ephesus.
- Timothy was sent to Corinth but was first to go to Macedonia.
- Both experienced delays. So Paul changed his plans and left Ephesus and went to Troas hoping to meet Titus there. Titus wasn't there so Paul went on to Macedonia and found both Titus and Timothy.
- Paul's strategy didn't go as planned. You can imagine when he realized Titus didn't keep the schedule, Timothy never made it to Corinth, Paul himself had to reroute his own campaign; that he knew that the Corinthians would think ill of him and he needed to defend himself to them.
- **Proverbs 16:9** "The mind of man plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps." The Lord directs us to the "open door"
- In the next few verses we see Paul understands when plans go awry, there is still God's work being done.

2Cr 2:14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

2Cr 2:15 For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;

- So far we have seen:
 - **2 Cor 1:4-5** "God is the god of ALL comfort and comforts us in ALL our afflictions."
 - **2 Cor 1:10** "God Delivered us, is Delivering us and Will Deliver us."
 - Now here in **2 Cor 2:14** we learn "**God, always leads us in triumph in Christ!**"
- In the ancient days a "triumph" was where a great victory over another kingdom, the victor would parade his captives and conquered treasures before his own capital to display his strength. This "*triumph in Christ*" is accomplished not by us parading conquered kings or the powerful before us as we journey. But by giving us an aroma.
- There should be something about the Christian.
- Every where the Christian goes he is leaving an aroma, a scent or fragrance. This isn't a fragrance of the Christian but it is the fragrance of Christ.

- We wonder what is the cool (in style) aftershave or perfume. What will we wear that will make me stand out among people.
Chanel, Estee Lauder, Red Door, Dolce & Gabbana, Polo, English Leather, Aqua Velva
- **The best fragrance is Christ.** It will stay long after you leave and will cause not only you to be noticed but also will bring attention to the Lord our God.
- Both those being saved and the lost are aware of the fragrance of Christ. Is there anybody left out?

What does it accomplish?

2Cr 2:16 **to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?**

2Cr 2:17 **For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.**

- This fragrance effects those everywhere:
 - **For those who are lost** (dead in Christ) it is an aroma of death. It is an indicator of their lost condition. It will demonstrate the futility of their efforts to be good enough, to save themselves.
 - **For those who are saved** (alive in Christ) it is an aroma of life. It is an indicator that we are His possession and that we have His triumph over death.
- Paul is distinguished himself from others who preach in error.
 - Those in error "*peddle the word*" (corrupt the word) they are driven to push the Word out there but themselves do not take it seriously. It is a job a means to make an income.
 - Paul on the other hand is sincere. He himself takes to heart the Word he preaches
 - Paul also and most importantly has the realization is that not only are the Corinthians his audience but God Himself is in attendance. (*that will change how you preach*)

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