

“Having A Commendable Ministry”

2 Corinthians Chapter 6

2Cr 6:1

1) Being a Commendable Servants of God vs 1-10

And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—

- 2 Corinthians 5:18 Paul just informed us that we have been given the “*ministry of reconciliation*”
- Now he tells us that God works in that ministry also and that we work with Him.
 - We are part of a WORK not an indulgence. There are things to accomplish, very important activity to participate in. This is not a spectator event.
 - The direction of the “togetherness” is that we work with Him. It isn’t that He works with us. Much like a young boy going to work with his father. The father is really doing the work but the boy is lovingly nurtured and blessed with a sense of accomplishment from the task.
- In 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 Paul begs the Corinthians to be reconciled to God. Paul in one line presents them the gospel. “*He (God) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*”
- “Paul Urges” - not to receive this grace in vain. To not just be saved. Not to just receive grace, but to allow the work of grace to labor through you.

2Cr 6:2

for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU." Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"—

- Paul quotes Isaiah 49:8
- He is saying “NOW” is the Acceptable time. “NOW” is the Day of Salvation.
- God grants a moment for each man to receive this grace. “RIGHT NOW” Is the time or the “Day of your Salvation” The nature of this grace is “Acceptable” so man is to respond appropriately.
- Paul is illustrating the URGENCY of the “*ministry of reconciliation*”
 - In verse one Paul urges. That word could be translated “beseech” or “beg”.
 - He begs them to not receive God’s grace in vain.
 - 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*”
 - Paul is telling the Christians to “Get to work!”

2Cr 6:3

giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited,

2Cr 6:4

but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God,

- The Warning and the Goal
- The Warning - not to cause any offense so that the ministry will not be tainted.
 - Paul knew the Gospel would give offense. This isn’t what he is talking about. He is referring to our behavior, our attitude or motives that taint or discredit the ministry of reconciliation.
- The Goal - Everything we do, our behavior, our attitude, our motives Commend us as Servants of God.
 - Commend means to “Approve” It conveys the thought of standing together.
 - So our behavior attitude and motives must show that we stand together with God as His servants.

What are the “in everything” situations?

2Cr 6:5

in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses,

in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,

- The KJV lists these situations of ministry by using the word “*in*”
- All men and women who sense a call to ministry (an office or position of full time ministry) need to understand the reality of a number of situations they will be in.
- In the same manner, every Christian, is in the ministry of reconciliation and will also find themselves in some of these situations.
- It needs to be understood that there are very wonderful times in the ministry. And even these situations listed here, even though they are unpleasant, the Christian must go through them with the mind of Christ. For these situations too are glorious.

- in Endurance - patience in troublesome conditions
- in Afflictions - pressure generally from persecution
- in Hardships - (KJV necessities) lacking basic needs of life to the point of distress
- in Distresses - internal heartfelt stress due to trouble
- in Beatings - physical abuse
- in Imprisonments - arrest and jail
- in Tumults - riots
- in Labors - work until exhaustion
- in Sleeplessness - (KJV watchings) late night prayer
- in Hunger - (KJV fasting) denial of self particularly food for the sake of prayer and devotion
- Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into jail
 - Acts 16:22-25 "*The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;*"

What is the "commendable" standard of response?

2Cr 6:6

in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,

2Cr 6:7

in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,

2Cr 6:8

by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report;

- The KJV lists these responses in ministry situations by using the word "by"
- Paul was honest with the situations of ministry. He is now honest with what is the "commendable" standard of the minister of reconciliation. It is easy to be the image of Christian Character when all is well. But in these troublesome times of ministry the stand the minister of reconciliation must be know by:

- by Purity - uprightness of life. Taking the moral high road when no one expects you to.
- by Knowledge - not simply general knowledge but a sense of moral wisdom.
- by Patience - longsuffering, constancy and forbearance.
- by Kindness - goodness in actions. A goodness expressing itself with deeds.
- by the Holy Spirit - of course being pure, wise, patient, and kind in affliction, beatings and hardships is evidence that the Holy Spirit is working through you. The minister is to be known for it, it isn't just a standard but a reality that the Holy Spirit is evident in a Christian's life.
- by Genuine Love - the emphasis is GENUINE rather than a feigned love.
- by the Word of Truth - the words on the lips are scripture not cursing and blame.
- by the Power of God - trusting in the Lord's ability not oneself
- by Righteousness - fighting to uphold God's standard of living.

"right hand and left hand" -

Ephesians 6:16-17 "*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*"

- Whether in glory or dishonor, evil or good report. This is consistency from internal source not an external situation.

How is a
"commendable
servant of God"
perceived?

2Cr 6:9 *regarded as deceivers and yet true;*
as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death,
2Cr 6:10 *as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.*

- The KJV lists these perceptions of ministry by using the word "as"
- Paul knows very well that the minister of reconciliation will be perceived from two directions. The first is from the world's point of view. Those who are resisting the grace of God. Their perception will be wrong. Yet the minister of reconciliation will also be perceived from God Himself/ which is the only perception that matters.
 - as Deceivers - misleading, imposter to take advantage
 - o **yet True** - the real deal
 - as Unknown - no popularity with Man
 - o **yet Known** - popular to God
 - as Dying - lost cause, nothing will come of them
 - o **yet Live** - already secured for eternal life and living accordingly
 - as Punished - jailed, beaten, judged by man's authority
 - o **yet Not put to Death** - free from God's judgment
 - as Sorrowful - pathetic
 - o **yet Rejoicing** - filled with a joy unspeakable
 - as Poor - having no status or influence
 - o **yet Making many Rich** - changing lives w/ eternal results
 - as Having Nothing - having no material treasures
 - o **yet Possessing All Things** - Treasure in heaven
- 2 Corinthians 4:18 *"we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen"*

2Cr 6:11 **2) Fatherly Advice** vs 11-18

Paul leaves speaking in general terms, he now speaks specifically and tenderly to those he has ministered to in Corinth.

Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide.

2Cr 6:12 *You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections.*

2Cr 6:13 *Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide to us also.*

- Paul loves the Corinthians.
 - Speaks freely to them.
 - His Heart is open to them.
 - He speaks to them with the care of a father. "In their best interest"
- The Corinthians are the ones restricting the relationship.
 - Their affections for the pleasures of the world are causing the separation

2Cr 6:14 *Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

2Cr 6:15 *Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?*

2Cr 6:16 *Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God;*

- "DO NOT BE BOUND TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS"
 - Yoked Together (KJV) (in marriage, in dating, in business, in recreation)
 - Deuteronomy 22:10 *"You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together"*

- This unequal yoke speaks to what is clean and unclean. But is also speaks to safety and health. An ox and donkey yoked together will cause a chaffing and harm to one or the other. Ox pulls forward. A Donkey rebels and pulls backwards.
- Marriage - Unbeliever says a marriage is 50/50. The believer says it is giving 100% You can imagine the marriage where one partner is giving all to the one who is only giving 50%
- "A man who is truly pious, marrying with an unconverted woman, will either draw back to perdition, or have a cross during life.' The same may be said of a pious woman marrying an unconverted man. Such persons cannot say this petition of the Lord's prayer, Lead us not into temptation. They plunge into it of their own accord." (Clarke)
- Matthew 11:29+30 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."
- Certain thing just do not go together: like Ketchup and Ice Cream
 - Righteousness with Lawlessness
 - Light with Darkness
 - Christ with Belial (Belial = worthlessness, extreme wickedness. Proper name for Satan)
 - What Harmony (KJV concord) - *symphōnēsis beautiful music*
 - Believer with Unbeliever
 - Temple of God (you) with Idols

Paul explains why a Believe and Unbeliever are separate.

just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

2Cr 6:17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord.
"AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you.

2Cr 6:18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

- Why don't you mix well with unbelievers
 - Because you are God's People. You walk with Him. The unbeliever will not.
 - Because God wants to be a Father unto you to guide and counsel you through life. The unbeliever will not receive God's guidance.

**"Scripture quotations taken from the New American Standard Bible[®],
Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973,
1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)**