

## 2 Corinthians 7

**7:1** Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God

In verse 1, Paul is finishing Chapter 6. In 2 Corinthians 6:16, he says that we are the temple of the living God and then quotes scripture to prove it. If we have God living in us as the Holy Spirit then that makes us His temple. If we are the temple of God then we should separate ourselves from the things of this world, especially idols. God is too pure to look upon sin. (Habakkuk 1:13) If we have sin or evil in us, then Paul says we need to “*cleanse ourselves of anything that can defile our body or spirit.*”

He says that since “*we have these promises*”, we are to cleanse ourselves. These promises are taken from the scriptures that Paul quoted at the end of 2 Corinthians 6. We are promised that if we separate ourselves from the world then:

- a. God will live with us. (2 Cor. 6:16)
- b. He will be our Father. (2 Cor. 6:18)
- c. We will be His sons and daughters. (2 or 6:18)

1 Peter 1:15 tells us how clean God wants us to be. Peter says that we must be holy, just as God is holy. That is a pretty lofty goal for mere mortals but we have the entire trinity on our side. This is a lifelong process called “sanctification” which means “set apart”.

Paul finishes verse 1 with, we should be “*perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*” (NASB) The NLT exchanges the word “purity” for “holiness”. The word holy is difficult to define. Most definitions include the word “sacred” but they are referring to the ground or objects. God’s holiness is something that is difficult for us to understand. It is our goal but it is a lofty goal.

“Neither the writer nor the reader of these words is qualified to appreciate the holiness of God. . . God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness he cannot even imagine.” (A. W. Tozer)

**2** Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. **3** I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. **4** I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

It is interesting, throughout his letters to the Corinthian church he preached love but here he is asking them to “Make room for us in your hearts.” He is saying show us the love that I have told you about. Just as he has also said through his letters, everything that he has taught them was from God. He preached the true Gospel and he has not wronged, corrupted or taken advantage of any of them.

In verse 3, Paul says that what he preached was a message from God and not intended to specifically condemn anyone. I have sat in the sanctuary on numerous occasions thinking that this message was directed at me. If it was directed at me it was sent by God and not the pastor.

Today in the world, people are hearing a Gospel that has been altered or watered down, a feel good Gospel. I believe that what people want is the Gospel that Paul taught. The last few months have been amazing. People are responding to the true Gospel that Pastor Brian has been delivering each Sunday.

Paul says that he is reciprocating their love. Whether they are living together or dying together, he loves them. In Philippians 1:7, Paul tells the Philippians the same thing. He loves them because they are all partakers of the same grace, God’s grace.

“Paul affirmed that his outlook for the majority of the church was positive: (1) he had great confidence in them; (2) he took great pride in them; and (3) he was greatly encouraged about them. It is unlikely that Paul approved of every Corinthian church member, especially to this degree.” (Holman New Testament Commentary - 1 & 2 Corinthians)

5 For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn— conflicts on the outside, fears within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

Paul says in this section that things were not going well in Macedonia. They were not only busy but they were under attack by Satan from every direction. This is what we are to expect as Christians. If we are not under attack from Satan then he does not consider us worth his time. Not a good place to be as a Christian.

Back in 2 Corinthians 2:13, Paul said that he was distressed about connecting with Titus. Along with the bad things happening in Macedonia, Titus had arrived in Macedonia which lifted Paul’s spirits and Titus brought good news from Corinth. Paul gave glory to God for this encouragement in verse 6. God knows what we need and when we need it.

At the beginning of this chapter, Paul sounded concerned that the Corinthian church would not want to see him but Titus told him that they were looking forward to Paul's second visit. Verse 7 says that Paul was filled with joy for this news.

8 Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— 9 yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

As we went through Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, we could see that Paul didn't pull any punches with the Corinthians church. He spoke the true Gospel and he told the church what corrections needed to be made to get them on track.

Telling someone the truth can cause them to turn away from you or move closer to you. Titus told Paul that the Corinthian church heeded Paul's instruction from his first letter and repented to get on the right track. Often when we share the Gospel, we point out to others that they are headed in the wrong direction. They may feel hurt or offended for a while until they think about it. Sometimes it can lead them to repentance. That is what happened with the members of the Corinthian church. Remember that along with correction, Paul taught them about love throughout the first letter.

In verse 10, Paul said that the sorrow that comes from being corrected and puts you on the right path is from God. Correction that comes from God which leads you to doing the "will of God" also leads to repentance. If it leads to repentance then it leads to salvation but correction that comes from the world leads to death.

11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. 12 So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. 13 By all this we are encouraged.

In verse 11, Paul says that this godly sorrow has produced the following things in the Corinthian church members. (NASB)

- a. Vindication of themselves
- b. Indignation (righteous anger)
- c. Fear
- d. Longing
- e. Zeal

- f. Avenging wrong
- g. Proven innocent

Paul says in verse 12 that he was not trying to point out the offender or to appease the person that was offended. He wanted them to show God that they were willing to make the changes necessary to do His will.

“He had wanted the Corinthians to see for themselves how devoted they were to the ways of Christ. He had wanted them to experience the joy of seeing God at work in their lives. This divine grace displayed itself in their godly sorrow and thorough repentance.” (Holman New Testament Commentary - 1 & 2 Corinthians)

In the first line of verse 13, Paul wants the Corinthians to know that he and his companions were encouraged by the changes made by this church.

13b In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. 14 I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. 15 And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. 16 I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

Have you ever had trouble with an employee of a company with whom you are trying to do business? If you and the employee can't work it out then your first step is to ask to speak to a supervisor. Paul is saying in verse 13 that it was good to hear that Titus was treated the same way that they would have treated Paul. It not only made Titus happy to be treated well but it also pleased Paul. There was no reason to call the supervisor.

Paul goes on to commend them for showing Paul's worship team that he was correct in trusting that they would treat Titus well. It had to also give Paul confidence in sending Titus and Timothy in his place, knowing that they would be treated well. If they would have treated Titus poorly, then Paul would feel that he had to do more and not be able to delegate.

In verse 15, Paul says not only did the Corinthian Church treat Titus well, they have developed a good personal relationship between them. They not only developed acquaintances but they had developed friendships that will last a lifetime.

“At the end of this chapter, Paul praises the Corinthian Christians and they seem to be in a place of victory. But in the “sorrowful letter” (mentioned in 2 Corinthians 2:1) there was no praise. What was the difference? Their real repentance, reported by Titus and commented on by Paul in this chapter. All through this chapter we see how concerned Paul was about his relationship with

the Corinthian Christians. This shows that people were just as important to Paul as ministry. He didn't want to do "ministry" at the expense of his relationships with people." (Guzik)