

2 Corinthians 6 Commentary

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2 CORINTHIANS - PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT
Click chart to enlarge
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
[Another Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll
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Overview of Second Corinthians		
2Co 1:1-7:16 Character of Paul	2Co 8:1-9:15 Collection for the Saints	2Co 10:1-12:21 Credentials of Paul
Testimonial & Didactic	Practical	Apologetic
Past: Misunderstanding & Explanation	Present: Practical Project	Future: Anxieties
Apostle's Conciliation, Ministry & Exhortations	Apostle's Solicitation for Judean Saints	Apostle's Vindication of Himself
Forgiveness, Reconciliation Gratitude	Confidence	Vindication
Ephesus to Macedonia: Change of Itinerary Explained	Macedonia: Preparation for Visit to Corinth	To Corinth: Certainty and Imminence of the Visit
2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21
2Corinthians written ~ 56-57AD - see Chronological Table of Paul's Life and Ministry		

INTRODUCTIONS TO SECOND CORINTHIANS:

- **IRVING JENSEN** - [Introduction and study tips](#) - excellent preliminary resource - scroll to page 1877 (Notes on both 1-2 Cor begin on p 1829)
- **JOHN MACARTHUR** [2 Corinthians Introduction](#) - same as in the Study Bible
- **JAMES VAN DINE** [2 Corinthians - Author, Purpose, Outline, Argument](#)
- **CHARLES SWINDOLL** - [2 Corinthians Overview](#)
- **MARK SEIFRID** - [The Message of Second Corinthians: 2 Corinthians as the Legitimation of the Apostle](#)
- **J VERNON MCGEE** - [2 Corinthians Introduction](#)
- **DAN WALLACE** - [2 Corinthians: Introduction, Argument, and Outline](#)
- **DAVID MALICK** - [An Introduction To Second Corinthians](#)

2 Corinthians 6:1 And working together [with Him], we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain--

Amplified LABORING TOGETHER [as God's fellow workers] with Him then, we beg of you not to receive the grace of God in vain [that merciful kindness by which God exerts His holy influence on souls and turns them to Christ, keeping and strengthening them—do not receive it to no purpose].

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

NET 2 Corinthians 6:1 Now because we are fellow workers, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:1 Συνεργο ντες ὁ κα παρακαλο μεν μ ε ς κεν ν τ ν χ ριν το θεο ὁ ξασθαι μ ς·

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:1 As God's partners, we beg you not to accept this marvelous gift of God's kindness and then ignore it.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:1 Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:1 As God's fellow workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.

GNT 2 Corinthians 6:1 Συνεργο ντες ὁ κα παρακαλο μεν μ ε ς κεν ν τ ν χ ριν το θεο ὁ ξασθαι μ ς·

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:1 And working together also we call upon you that ye receive not in vain the grace of God --

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:1 And working together with him we entreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:1 Working together with Him, we also appeal to you, "Don't receive God's grace in vain."

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:1 Because we are colleagues, we encourage you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:1 As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:1 Working together, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:1 As his fellow-workers, we urge you not to let your acceptance of his grace come to nothing.

- **working together:** 2Co 5:18-20 1Co 3:9
- **we also urge:** 2Co 5:20 10:1 Mt 23:37 Ro 12:1 Ga 4:11,12
- **you:** Jer 8:8 Ga 3:4 Heb 12:15,25
- **the grace of God in vain:** 2Co 8:1,2 Ac 14:3 Ga 2:21 Tit 2:11 1Pe 4:10

Related Passage:

READ 2Co 6:1-2 IN CONTEXT - 2 Corinthians 5:18-2 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, **be reconciled** ([aorist imperative](#) JUST DO IT! see [need of Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to God. 21 He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 1 And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— 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"—

THE PRIVILEGE AND RESPONSIBILITY AS GOD'S CO-LABORERS!

This is another poor chapter division as this first section flows from 2Co 5:18-21.

Pulpit Commentary says Paul is continuing the entreaty from 2Co 5:20 (also used the same verb [parakaleo](#) as in this verse).

Steve Zeisler - In the passage to which we come this morning, chapter 6 of 2 Corinthians, the apostle Paul is concluding a lengthy section (chapters 2-6) concerning the nature of Christian ministry. The phrases "ministers of a new covenant," and "ministers of reconciliation" are described and advocated as superior to the ministry of a group with the inflated title, "super-apostles" who preached a "different gospel" (2Co 11:4-5). If our lives do not manifest vital Christianity, rather than a shallow substitute--a Christianity of substance, not of style--then we are in danger of receiving God's **grace "in vain,"** to use Paul's words in the opening verse of chapter 6:

These first two verses are not as straightforward as they appear. The phrase **not receive the grace of God in vain** has two main interpretations - (1) Paul is addressing believers at Corinth who are not partaking of grace to enable their sanctification (probably the majority of commentaries take this as the only interpretation. (2) Other commentaries feel Paul is addressing those in the church who had made a profession of faith in Christ but who had no fruit and thus were likely unbelievers who have never received grace resulting in genuine conversion. Some like John MacArthur favor both (1) and (2) as the recipients of Paul's urging.

And working together (sunergeo in present tense - gives us our English "[synergy](#)") *with Him* - **NLT** = "As God's partners!" **NIV** = "God's fellow workers." **Working together** begs the question with whom? In the preceding context Paul had spoken of **ambassadors of Christ** (2Co 5:20+) who were given the **word of reconciliation** (2Co 5:19+) and that it was as if God were speaking through them (2Co 5:20+). It follows that in this verse they are **working together** with God (NAS adds "*with Him*" although not in the Greek text). Note it is not their work but God's work that they are invited to join God in accomplishing. Earlier Paul had described the gospel workers as "God's fellow workers." (1 Cor 3:9+). Note also that Paul uses the in present tense signifying that his working together with God is doing so as one's lifestyle, one's habitual practice. It is not hit and miss (Paul trying to do it his way at times, and at other times relying on God, but always in reliance on God. This is a good principle for ALL spiritual work, all ministry activities. Make it your habitual practice to do so, always seeking to rely on God's Spirit leading and empowering you. This is the secret of a successful ministry of reconciliation like Paul experienced (even in face of the manifold difficulties and troubles).

A warning – working not **FOR** Him > [asynergy](#)

An encouragement – working intimately **WITH** Him > [synergy](#)

THOUGHT - Believers have the incredible privilege today to join with God in His Word, working "synergistically" with Him! Not only is this amazing truth, but it is also encouraging truth because it means that the good works He has prepared for us (Eph 2:10+) are enabled and empowered by God's Spirit. We are neither helpless nor alone as we carry out His work as ambassadors of Christ. This simple truth begs the question - Whose strength are you depending on to accomplish His work? If it is your strength, you will very likely grow weary and lost heart. The antidote is to always to "consider Him (see Heb 12:1-2+) Who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." (Heb 12:3+) Apart from Him we can do absolutely nothing (Jn 15:5b).

Let there be no thought of what you can do for God,
but all thought of what God can do through you.

Kistemaker - The translation **working together with Him** is acceptable as long as we interpret it to mean that God uses his servants as instruments (1 Cor. 3:9; 1 Thess. 3:2). Further, messengers can never be on the same level as their sender (compare John 13:16; 15:20). ([2 Corinthians - NTC](#))

Paul Apple - Paul was working together with God because he was striving for the same goal; Christians should not be working against one another – Deut. 22:10+ “You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together” – sometimes God must marvel at what kind of animals we manifest ourselves to be Don’t act like a donkey!

Not only did they have the privilege and responsibility as God's co-laborers, but they (and we) also had God's authority. As Jesus instructed His disciples “All **authority** has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” “Go therefore and **make disciples** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always (THE EMPOWERING SPIRIT OF CHRIST - cf Acts 1:8+), even to the end of the age (UNTIL THE HARVEST IS COMPLETED).” (Mt 28:18-20+)

THOUGHT- Look for where God is working and join in His work (See John 5:17, John 5:18-19) (see [Experiencing God](#).) Many more people are willing to work FOR God than WITH God!

We also urge ([parakaleo](#) - present tense - continually pleading, begging) **you** - **We also urge** (continually beg) **you** uses the same verb [parakaleo](#) as in 2Co 5:20+ which says “we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were **making an appeal** ([parakaleo](#) - present tense - continually) through us. In essence our pleading is God's pleading! “God's ambassadors are *privileged pleaders*, begging their hearers to respond to the truth.” (MacArthur) **You** is emphatic (at the end of the Greek sentence) as if he is saying “**you**—do not receive the grace of God in vain”

Not to receive ([dechomai](#)) **the grace** ([charis](#)) **of God in vain** ([kenos](#)) - **Received** is [dechomai](#) which means a “welcome reception” (put out the “welcome mat” so to speak). **Received** is in the aorist tense and in context seems to refer to the past reception of the word of reconciliation, in effect the gospel of the **grace of God** (Acts 20:24b+). **Grace received in vain** means the **grace** failed to bring about God's intended effect and thus His grace was without result (“non-productive”), not because it was “defective” **grace** but because it had a “defective” reception or application by the hearers/recipients. While Paul does not state the specific ways God's grace was **in vain** or “wasted” (so to speak), from the overall context of the Corinthian letters (and the sinful city of Corinth), one likely consideration is that some of the Corinthian believers were either failing to grow in **grace** (2Pe 3:18+ - aka progressive sanctification) or were even overtly backsliding into sins that had characterized their pre-conversion life. And so in this sense, God's supernatural, all sufficient, life transforming **grace** was being “wasted,” or received **in vain**.

In his first letter Paul alluded to receiving **grace in vain** writing “by the **grace of God** I am what I am, and **His grace toward me did not prove vain**; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the **grace of God** with me.” (1Co 15:10+) Paul's spiritual “*lifeblood*” was the **grace of God** (and it should be ours beloved)! In 1 Co 15:10+ Paul of course is not referring to *saving* grace, but *sanctifying* grace, God's provision of daily grace dispensed by His Spirit of grace to supernaturally enable believer's lives to be a “sweet aroma of the knowledge of Christ in every place” (2Co 2:14+), lives characterized by being progressively transformed by the Spirit from glory to glory into the image of God's Son (2Co 3:18+).

As explained in the introduction (and in some of those quoted below, like John MacArthur), the second way **the grace of God** could be **in vain** is that some in the Corinthian church professed to believe in Christ but possessed only an intellectual belief. In their case the gospel of the grace of had failed to make them new creations in Christ (2Co 5:17+). The grace of God had not failed (or been **in vain**) because the grace was “defective” but the hearts of the recipients were “defective.” From reading a number of commentaries, it appears that most writers interpret this passage as directed to genuine believers in Corinth who were not allowing the grace of God to grow them in Christlikeness. While this may be Paul's intended meaning, this passage clearly can be applied to situations where recipients have been given the Gospel of grace and yet fail to receive it and believe it and either totally reject it or procrastinate (put it off to another time - the following passage suggesting the possibility that they may not have another “acceptable day of salvation.”)

Dr John MacArthur interprets receiving the **grace of God in vain** in two ways - failure of initial conversion (profession without possession) and failure of genuine believers to experience progressive sanctification:

(1) **Paul was concerned first that the Corinthians not receive God's grace in regard to salvation in vain**
As in any church, not everyone in the Corinthian assembly was redeemed. Some had intellectual knowledge of the gospel but did not have saving faith. That is why Paul challenged them, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” (2 Cor. 13:5). Those in the congregation who were not regenerate were in grave danger of being deceived by the false teachers. To follow those preaching another Jesus, another Spirit,

and another gospel would lead to a waste of their privilege and to spiritual ruin. Paul was similarly concerned about the Galatians (Gal 1:6-9)

(2) **The Corinthians were also in danger of receiving God's grace in vain with regard to sanctification.** The legalists sought to turn them away from living in the power of the Spirit to living in the strength of the flesh. Paul chided the Galatians, also under assault by legalism, "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" (Gal. 3:3). Sanctification, like justification, is a work of God. It does not come from legalistically conforming to an external set of rules but from a Spirit-generated, heartfelt love for and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

Here is another note by **Dr MacArthur** in his study Bible - Most of the Corinthians were saved but hindered by legalistic teaching regarding sanctification (see 11:3 [note]; Gal 6:1 [note]). Some were not truly saved but deceived by a gospel of works (cf. 13:5; Gal 5:4), which was being taught by the false teachers. In either case, Paul's proclamation of the gospel of grace would not have been having its desired effect, and he would have had cause for serious concern that his many months of ministry at Corinth were for nothing. Both cases also prevented the people from effectively assuming any "ministry of reconciliation" (5:18). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

William MacDonald's explanation of the phrase **the grace of God in vain** is similar that of **John MacArthur** - Some understand that in this verse Paul is addressing the Corinthians and encouraging them to make full use of the **grace** that had been shown to them. (**ED: REFERRING TO WORK OF GRACE IN PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION**) We rather think that Paul is still giving an account of the message which he preached to the unsaved. He has already told unbelievers of the marvelous grace which has been offered to them by God. Now he further begs them not to receive such grace **in vain**. They should not allow the seed of the gospel to fall in barren soil. Rather they should respond to such a marvelous message by receiving the Savior of whom it tells. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Pulpit Commentary on **grace of God in vain - The grace of God.** To announce this is the chief aim of the gospel (Acts 13:43+; Acts 20:24+). **In vain**; that is, "without effect." You must not only accept the teaching of God's Word, but must see that it produces adequate moral results. It must not, so to speak, fall "into a vacuum (*eis kenon*)."...If you really are in Christ you must show that you have thereby become "a new creation" (2Co 5:17). The branches of the true Vine must bear fruit (cf Jn 15:5, 8). (For the phrase, "**in vain**," see Galatians 2:2+; Philippians 2:16+.) What the **grace of God** is meant to effect is sketched in Titus 2:11-12+. ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Homer Kent on **the grace of God in vain** - Paul was concerned lest any true believers, ones who had received the saving grace of God, should falter in their Christian lives, and at the judgment seat of Christ would be found empty (cf. 2Co 5:10+). There was also the possibility that some readers might have superficially accepted the gospel, as illustrated by the varying responses in the parable of the sower (Mt. 13:3-9, 18-23+), and would someday find it of no value.

A T Robertson - The plan of God, the work of Christ on the Cross, the pleas of the ambassador may all be nullified by the recipient of the message. ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Wayne Barber says ""don't receive the grace of God to where it bears no fruit (IN VAIN)." Don't receive the grace of God to where it's empty and without substance in your life." ([2 Corinthians 6:1-4a What is Involved in Working Together With God](#))

Colin Kruse on **grace of God** - The **grace of God** may be understood as all that was proclaimed in the 'message of reconciliation' (2Co 5:19), what God in His love has wrought through Christ and offers through the preaching of the Gospel. Paul's readers had accepted his Gospel and experienced something of the **grace of God** of which it speaks. Now he exhorts them to make sure their acceptance is not **in vain**. It is unlikely that Paul implies their acceptance may have been only superficial (like seed sown on rocky ground - Mk 4:5, 16+) (**ED: IN OTHER WORDS KRUSE DOES NOT FAVOR THIS PHRASE AS REFERRING TO CORINTHIANS WHO PROFESSED CHRIST BUT WERE NOT TRUE BELIEVERS**). It is more likely (**ED: "LIKELY" INDICATES KRUSE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE DOGMATIC**) that he has in mind how easily these people are influenced by others, whether by the offender who made the personal attack against Paul (2Co 2:5; 2Co 7:12) or the critics of the apostle who were already lurking in the background in Corinth. He does not want the lives of those who made a good response to the Gospel to be marred now by entertaining criticisms of that Gospel and the one who brought it to them. ([Full text of Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians](#) - Text format is awkward but material is present)

Warren Wiersbe on **grace of God in vain** - He not only beseeches the sinners in 5:20, but he beseeches the saints in 6:1. How tragic it is when churches and Christians receive God's grace in vain. The Corinthians were babes in Christ, immature saints, because they failed to grow in grace and knowledge. They had the greatest pastor available—Paul—and yet they failed to benefit from his ministry! (Wiersbe's Expository Outlines)

J Vernon McGee - How can one receive the **grace of God in vain**? God has been showering His goodness and mercy on us. To

receive His great goodness and to rejoice in the salvation of the grace of God and yet to live carnal, worldly lives is what it means to receive the grace of God in vain. Let me ask you this question: What response are we making today to the love of God's heart?

[Pastor Matt Postiff](#) is similar to **Kruse** but is somewhat more dogmatic -This passage not suggesting that the Corinthians are repudiating God's grace, neither is it that they received it earlier but now it is in vain. Rather, the Bible urges them to not receive it without effect, in a less-than-fully-operational fashion, as it comes to them in the present. Some of them may actually be doing that. Others may not but are being warned— don't do it now or ever in the future. God's grace is always being supplied to us, and we can take it for granted and not make use of it in our lives. So how do you waste God's grace? Not taking advantage of it to the ends God desires—growth, avoidance of sin, service, etc. God graciously provides those opportunities. You might miss an opportunity for reward at the judgment seat (2Co 5:10). God's supply is so rich. The question is do we take advantage of it, or do we even consider it?

[Pastor David Roper](#) on the **grace of God in vain** - This word is addressed to Christians. This book was written to a church in Corinth. We apply this passage to non-Christians, but its primary reference is to the Christian. Paul says, "You Christians know something of the grace of God. God's resources have been poured into your life. Everything that God has is available to you. Put it to use! Don't let it become an empty thing. Put it to the very use for which it was intended. Don't resist it; don't distrust it; don't be ignorant of it; put it to work."

[Pastor Ray Stedman](#) on the **grace of God in vain** - The "**grace of God**" is a general term that covers all that God has done for us in Christ. It means being reconciled to God. So Paul is saying this to people who are already reconciled (**ED: BELIEVERS**), "Now, don't let that be in vain, empty, worthless, in your life."...What he is saying here is, when you received Christ He came in to live within you to do two basic things: One, to show you the difference between right and wrong....Second, to give you the power to do the right and to reject the wrong. That is what, he has come for, and He intends to have you use that in every area of your life. If there are some areas where you do not listen to Him, where you do not pay any attention to Him, do not apply or draw from Him the strength you need to act, then, in that area, because you have Christ (**ED: AND THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST WHO PROVIDES SUPERNATURAL POWER**) but you are living is as if you did not have His power and it does not profit you anything. In that area of your life you have received '**the grace of God in vain**.' Now God will help you, He is at work to change that, but until you agree with God in that area, Christ "has profited you nothing" (cf Gal 5:2KJV+).

[Pastor Brian Bell](#) - What is Paul's fear here of them receiving **Grace in vain**? The fear is not that they would lose their salvation (**ED: [Can a Christian lose salvation?](#)**), but that they would not effectively carry out **the ministry of reconciliation** (2Co 5:18+). Is your life and ministry "grace-orientated" or "law-orientated"? Some Christians have a hard time living in Grace. They are so afraid of liberty in Christ (cf 2Co 3:17+) that they become, or remain, a legalist! If they become or remain in this mode...then God's **Grace is in vain!**

David Guzik - The Corinthian Christians had obviously received the **grace of God**. They would not be Christians at all had they not received the **grace of God**. Yet having received it, they were potentially guilty of receiving the **grace of God in vain**, so Paul pleads with them to not do this.. What does it mean to **receive the grace of God in vain**? It means to receive the goodness and favor of God, yet to hinder the work of **grace** in one's life (**ED: GUZIK IS REFERRING TO WORK OF GRACE IN PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION**). ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

[Reformation Study Bible](#) - If the Corinthians allow their church to be swept away by the "false apostles" (2Co 11:13), or if they refuse to purify themselves from "every defilement of body and spirit" (2Co 7:1), their lives will glorify God less and less, and the gospel they heard will bear little lasting fruit.

Murray Harris says **receive the grace of God in vain** means "one of two things: (1) The Corinthians were being exhorted not to show by their present lives that they had received God's grace to no purpose (cf. NEB: "You have received the grace of God; do not let it go for nothing"). Or (2) they were not now to spurn the **grace of God**, which was being perpetually offered to them (cf. Knox: "We entreat you not to offer God's grace an ineffectual welcome"). How would they fail, or show they had failed, to profit from that grace? By refusing to purify themselves from everything that contaminated body and spirit (2Co 7:1; 2Co 12:20, 21), or allowing a chasm to develop between faith and conduct, or embracing a different gospel (2Co 11:4)—one based on law keeping as the ground of acceptance before God. ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#) or [here](#))

[Richard Pratt](#) - **not to receive God's grace in vain**. On a number of occasions, Paul warned the Corinthians not to falter in their faith (1 Cor 2:4-5; 16:13; 2 Cor 1:24; 5:6-7; 10:15; 13:5). He did not believe that true believers among them could lose their salvation (Rom 8:28-39; 1 Cor 1:4-9; 2 Cor 4:13-14; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30; Phil 1:6; Col 3:3-4; 1 Thess 5:23-24), but he was not convinced that everyone in the Corinthian church was a true believer (13:5). During this life, it is necessary for all who profess faith in Christ to make certain that their faith endures. Otherwise, the mercy shown to them in the preaching and reception of the word of God will be **in vain** or useless.

Working together with (4903) **sunergeo** from **sun** = together with, speaks of an intimate relationship + **érgon** = work; English - synergy) means literally to work together, to be a partner in work, to co-labor, to engage in cooperative endeavor, to assist.

Receive (1209) **dechomai** = middle voice of a primary verb) means to to receive something offered or transmitted by another (Luke 2:28). To take something into one's hand and so to grasp (Luke 2:28, 22:17). To be receptive to someone (Mt 10:14, 40). To take a favorable attitude toward something (Mt 11:14). As illustrated in some of the verses below Jesus used dechomai to describe the way that humble, childlike believers (Mt 18:5), faithful preachers of the gospel (Mt 10:14), and the gospel itself (Luke 8:13; cf. Acts 8:14; 17:11) should be received. **Dechomai** means to accept with a deliberate and ready reception of what is offered, to receive kindly and so to take to oneself what is presented or brought by another. It means to welcome as a teacher, a friend, or a guest into one's house. The word describes accepting persons with open arms, minds, and hearts, even going beyond normally expected gracious hospitality. The term was often used of welcoming honored guests and meeting their needs with special attention and kindness.

Vain (2756) **kenos** means literally to be without something material and thus means empty or without content. Most often **kenos** is used figuratively referring to things that lack effectiveness and thus are futile, useless, of no purpose or without result.

Always now

We ... beseech you that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. 2 Cor. 6:1.

The grace you had yesterday will not do for to-day. Grace is the overflowing favour of God; you can always reckon it is there to draw upon. "In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses"—that is where the test for patience comes. Are you failing the grace of God there? Are you saying—'Oh, well, I won't count this time?' It is not a question of praying and asking God to help you; it is taking the grace of God now. We make prayer the preparation for work, it is never that in the Bible. Prayer is the exercise of drawing on the grace of God. Don't say—I will endure this until I can get away and pray.' Pray now; draw on the grace of God in the moment of need. Prayer is the most practical thing, it is not the reflex action of devotion. Prayer is the last thing in which we learn to draw on God's grace.

"In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours,"—in all these things manifest a drawing upon the grace of God that will make you a marvel to yourself and to others. Draw now, not presently: The one word in the spiritual vocabulary is Now. Let circumstances bring you where they will, keep drawing on the grace of God in every conceivable condition you may be in. One of the greatest proofs that you are drawing on the grace of God is that you can be humiliated without manifesting the slightest trace of anything but His grace.

"Having nothing ..." Never reserve anything. Pour out the best you have, and always be poor. Never be diplomatic and careful about the treasure God gives. This is poverty triumphant. ([My Utmost for His Highest](#))

Jon Courson - According to 2 Corinthians 5:20, we are **ambassadors for Christ**, sharing the Good News of the Gospel with everyone we meet. But here's the most delightful part—we are workers not just **for** Him, but **with** Him. He doesn't send us on an assignment, wishing us luck as we leave. No, moment by moment He's **with** us as we talk to, share **with**, and love people. And He's **with** them too! This gives me a great deal of confidence in ministry.

If you were hungry, I could share with you my peanut butter and pickle sandwich. But I would not be certain it would minister to you. Maybe you'd like it, but maybe you wouldn't. Thus, it would be with a certain amount of apprehension that I would offer it to you.

There are a number of things we could sell or share about which we'd feel some hesitancy. But when we share Jesus Christ, all hesitancy dissipates—for He is guaranteed. Consequently, to the person who comes to me with a troubled heart, I can say, 'Let me pray with you right now because Jesus is truly right here—and He will give you peace. He'll walk with you through this valley. He'll make Himself known to you in the right way at the right time. I know this to be so.'

I've yet to send a person out to seek the Lord who has come back saying, 'It didn't work. I prayed. I read my Bible. I talked to Him. I waited on Him. But it didn't work.' That's because the promise of James 4:8 is that if we draw near to Him, He will draw near to us—not that He might draw near—but that He will. (A Day's Journey)

F B Meyer - Workers together with him.

Christian worker, be clean, pure of heart, and simple in motive. See to it that there be no friction between your will and Christ's. Be

adjusted, in gear, well set and jointed. Subdue your own activities as much as your own natural lethargy. Stand still till God impels you. Wait till He works in you to will and to do of His good pleasure (Php 2:13NLT+). Exercise faith that God should accomplish in you the greatest results possible to the capacity of your nature. Let there be no thought of what you can do for God, but all thought of what God can do through you. Nothing will make you so intense and ceaseless in your activity as this.

Sam Storms - 2 Corinthians 6:1–2 “Receiving the Grace of God in Vain”

What does Paul mean when he refers to the possibility of receiving the grace of God “in vain”? See also Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16; 1 Thess. 3:5 (cf. 1 Cor. 15:2). Some suggested answers:

1. Perhaps he is urging them not to forfeit the grace of salvation which they had earlier received. In other words, it is an exhortation to persevere, to avoid apostasy. On this view, Paul would be implying that a born-again believer can lose or forfeit his/her salvation. (See [Can a Christian lose salvation? | GotQuestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org/Can_a_Christian Lose_salvation.htm))

2. Some suggest the exhortation in vv. 1–2 is not directed to those Corinthians who are already born-again, but to those in Corinth who had repeatedly heard the gospel but had made no decision. Paul was not so naive to think that everyone in the professing church was necessarily truly converted. Therefore, his command not to receive the grace of God in vain is equivalent to an exhortation to all men not to reject the gospel of Jesus Christ. But is “to receive in vain” really the same as “reject”?

3. God’s grace may be received in vain when it is received superficially or externally, as in the parable of the soils(Luke 8:4–15; Matt. 13:18–23). There the seed (gospel) falls upon rocky ground or among thorns, to be snatched away or choked by the temptations of this world. This view is similar to the previous one, insofar as the people in view are unbelievers. The difference is that, according to this interpretation, people don’t explicitly reject the gospel but “receive” and “believe” it, but only in a superficial way. Their so-called “faith” is spurious and therefore temporary.

4. Perhaps receiving the grace of God in vain pertains not so much to salvation per se, or its forfeiture, but to the loss of potential blessings related to spiritual growth, knowledge, and joy that they would suffer by rejecting Paul as their apostle. In other words, the people are truly saved. They have genuinely received the gospel and believed it, but they have failed to progress in their Christian growth and stand in danger of losing those spiritual blessings and rewards they otherwise might have obtained.

5. Philip Hughes suggests that “for them to receive the grace of God in vain meant that their practice did not measure up to their profession as Christians, that their lives were so inconsistent as to constitute a denial of the logical implications of the gospel, namely, and in particular, that Christ died for them so that they might no longer live to themselves but to His glory” (218–19). In other words, the passionate conviction which accompanied their salvation had not as yet performed its transforming work in their lives. It is to that progressive transformation of their daily experience that Paul is urging and exhorting them. In the final analysis, this view differs very little from number 4.

6. Judith Gundry-Volf suggests that to receive the grace of God in vain may be referring to their opposition to the apostle himself. The context surrounding this statement is Paul’s description of his ministry on their behalf and his attempt to restore good relations with the Corinthians (5:13–14; 5:18–6:1; see especially his impassioned appeal in 6:11–13). In Paul’s opinion, to reject him is to reject the gospel of salvation of which he is a minister. If the Corinthians receive the grace of God in vain, it is not because of ethical/moral failure/rebellion, but rather rejection of the gospel as a consequence of rejection of the apostle and the apostolic message. Gundry-Volf then argues that Paul’s appeal is simply “for the sake of argument only” (280). I.e., he does not believe they will reject or deny him, but if they were to do so it would be tantamount to receiving the grace of God, which was his message to them, in vain. (Enjoying God Ministries)

Croft Pentz - THE CLEANSED CHRISTIAN 2 Corinthians 6:1–18

I. THE PARTNERS—vv. 1–2

1. Reception—v. 1. Paul asks that the people receive the message he was giving.
2. Redemption—v. 2. Now is the time of salvation! Delay may be fatal.

II. THE PATIENCE—vv. 3–10

1. Perfection—v. 3. Living so none can find fault with our way of living.
2. Patience—vv. 4–5. Paul suffered so much for the gospel. Note v. 5, and his suffering.
3. Proof—v. 6. Paul’s actions proved his testimony.
4. Power—v. 7. Paul used God’s power to live and do God’s work.
5. Persistence—vv. 8–9. Determined to live for God, regardless of the outcome.
6. Pleasure—v. 10. Though suffering, still we have the joy of the Lord.

III. THE PLEA—vv. 11–13

1. Love—v. 11. Paul tells the Christians how he loves their souls. This is love from God.
2. Lack—v. 12. If there was a lack of love, it was on the part of the Corinthians.
3. Learning—v. 13. Learn to return your love.

IV. THE PROBLEM—vv. 14–18

1. Connection—v. 14. Christians and sinners cannot have fellowship with each other.
2. Christianity—v. 15. Christians and sinners should not marry.
3. Closeness—v. 16. God is close to those, who live separated from the world.
4. Cleansing—vv. 17–18. Come out from the world.

2 Corinthians 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"--

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

NET 2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says, "I heard you at the acceptable time, and in the day of salvation I helped you." Look, now is the acceptable time; look, now is the day of salvation!

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:2 λ γει γ ρ· καιρ· δεκτ· π κουσ· σου κα· ν μ ρ σωτηρ ας βο θησ· σοι. δο ν ν καιρ· ς ε πρ σδεκτος, δο ν ν μ ρ α σωτηρ ας.

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:2 For God says, "At just the right time, I heard you. On the day of salvation, I helped you." Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:2 for He saith, 'In an acceptable time I did hear thee, and in a day of salvation I did help thee, lo, now is a well-accepted time; lo, now, a day of salvation,' --

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:2 (for he saith, At an acceptable time I hearkened unto thee, And in a day of salvation did I succor thee: behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation):

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:2 For He says: I heard you in an acceptable time, and I helped you in the day of salvation. Look, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says: I heard you in a timely fashion. I helped you on a day of deliverance. Observe! The time is just right—now. Observe! The day of rescue is here.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:2 For he says: "In an acceptable time I heard you, and on the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:2 As he said, 'At the time of my favour I have answered you; on the day of salvation I have helped you'; well, now is the real time of favour, now the day of salvation is here.

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:2 God says, "At the right time I heard you. On the day of salvation I helped you." Listen, now is God's acceptable time! Now is the day of salvation!

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:2 (For he says, I have given ear to you at a good time, and I have been your helper in a day of salvation: see, now is the good time; now is the day of salvation):

- **time:** Isa 49:8 61:2 Eze 16:8 Lu 4:19 Lk 19:42-44 Heb 3:7,13 Heb 4:7
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Isaiah 49:8 (**PAUL QUOTES THIS FROM THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATION**) Thus says the LORD, "In a favorable time I have answered You, And in a day of salvation I have helped You; And I will keep You and give You for a covenant of the people (cf Isa 42:6), To restore the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages;

Paul is quoting a section prophesying about the coming Messiah and His mission. **John MacArthur** adds that "Messiah is represented as asking for the grace of God to be given to sinners. God gives His favorable answer in a time of grace (cf. Isa 61:1) when salvation's day comes to the world (cf. Gal 4:4, 5; Heb 4:7). At His appointed time in the future, the Lord will, by His Servant, accomplish the final deliverance of Israel. Paul applied these words to his ministry of proclaiming the gospel of God's grace to all people (2Co 6:2)." ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Psalms 95:7-8 For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. **Today**, if you would hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,

Hebrews 3:7; 13 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "**TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE....**But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "**Today**," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 4:7 He again fixes a certain day, "**Today**," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "**TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.**"

Luke 4:19+ TO PROCLAIM THE **FAVORABLE** (ACCEPTABLE) YEAR OF THE LORD."

John 4:35 "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.

John 9:4 "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

PAUL'S REMINDER THE BEST TIME IS "NOW!"

For (gar) is explanatory. Stop and ask "What is Paul explaining?"

Paul is explaining why the Corinthians should not **receive the grace of God in vain**. The reason they need to act now is because the **time** is **acceptable**, but the **time** (day) will not last forever and thus must be "seized," so to speak.

Kruse on Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 49:8 - "In their original context these words are addressed to the Servant of the Lord and applied to the time of Israel's release from exile in Babylon." ([Full text of Tyndale NT Commentary -2 Corinthians](#))

Henry Morris on Paul's quote - Cited from Isaiah 49:8. This application stresses the urgency of accepting God's grace and salvation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20-21) without delay. Note also Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13, 14+. ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

Wayne Barber says "From the 40th chapter of Isaiah all the way through is a prophecy of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. He quotes from Isaiah 49:8 and his point in using this Scripture from the Old Testament is to get them to understand the urgency and the privilege of living in the time in which they were living. ([2 Corinthians 6:1-4a What is Involved in Working Together With God](#))

R Kent Hughes "The logic of this appeal is drawn from Isaiah 49:8 (49:9, LXX, verbatim), where God speaks to his servant Isaiah in a text that prophesies the restoration of Israel and coincides with Paul's emphasis on the new creation in Christ. Paul says, in effect, that Isaiah's day of salvation has arrived in the reconciliation of the cross. Therefore, the Corinthians must not miss this long-awaited opportunity for salvation. The day of salvation is here. How unthinkable that they might "receive the grace of God in vain." How tragic is the thought that they might at one time have given apparent assent to Paul's proclamation, but now through unbelief and disobedience the wonders of the new covenant (with the new creation in Christ and the ultimate exodus from bondage) were being nullified. Paul was saying, you have been assenting to God's saving purposes; do not let it be in vain. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word](#))

John MacArthur - Paul emphasized his point by quoting Isa 49:8. He was passionately concerned that the Corinthians adhere to the truth because it was God's time to save and they were messengers for helping to spread that message. now is "the day of salvation." Paul applied Isaiah's words to the present situation. There is a time in God's economy when He listens to sinners and

responds to those who are repentant—and it was and is that time (cf. Pr 1:20-23; Isa 55:6; Heb 3:7, 8; 4:7). However, there will also be an end to that time (cf. Ge 6:3; Pr 1:24-33; Jn 9:4), which is why Paul's exhortation was so passionate. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

He says (present tense - continually), **"AT THE ACCEPTABLE ([dektos](#)) TIME ([kairos](#)) I LISTENED** (aorist tense - point in time in past) **TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION ([soteria](#)) I HELPED ([boetheo](#) - aorist - point in time in past) YOU."** - **Says** is in the present tense, He continually **says** meaning the following truth is relevant for all times and should serve as a continual reminder to the Corinthians of the day when God saved them. It is good for all of us to remember the day we were saved by grace through faith! In the original context Isaiah's prophecy was for all peoples, Jews and Gentiles. **Acceptable time** in Isaiah 49:8 applied to Messiah, but in the current context the **acceptable time** is the day when the saints at Corinth were saved by the Gospel. Notice that Paul "defines" the **acceptable time** as the **day of salvation**. **Helped** implies that in the past the Corinthians had cried out for Jesus to come to their aid and He did exactly that, rescuing and delivering them from eternal death and giving them eternal life in Christ (2Co 5:17+) on their **day of salvation**.

Wayne Barber picks up on and explains the use of **acceptable ([dektos](#))** to help understand what Paul was saying in quoting Isaiah 49:8.

Make sure you get the picture...Isaiah 49:6 ("He says, "It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.") (God the Father) talks about His Servant, Who is Christ (MESSIAH), Who is not just going to bring salvation to Israel (**ED: IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT THIS WAS FIRST SPEAKING OF DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL FROM THEIR EXILE IN BABYLON. THIS HAPPENED AFTER 70 YEARS IN CAPTIVITY.**) but to all the nations of the world (**ED: SEE PHRASE "LIGHT OF THE NATIONS" MEANING GENTILE NATIONS**). In Isa 49:6, "He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel.'" That's too small of a thing. It is much bigger than that, "I will also make You a light of the nations so that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth." Salvation will come to all the nations but at great price and cost to the Servant, the Lord Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 49:7, "thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and its Holy One, to the despised One, the One abhorred by the nation (ISRAEL - cf Jn 1:11), to the Servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes shall also bow down; because of the Lord who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel Who has chosen You."

And then in Isaiah 49:8 Isaiah says (WAYNE PARAPHRASES IT) *"but this salvation will be at an acceptable time."* (**ED: NOW SPEAKING AS IF GOD HIMSELF WERE SPEAKING WAYNE SAYS**) Just like I have always been at the right time to rescue you and to deliver you, there will be a future deliverance and it will come at the right time. Isaiah 49:8, "Thus says the Lord, 'In a favorable time I have answered You, and in a day of salvation I have helped You; and I will keep You and give You for a covenant of the people, to restore the land, to make them inherit the desolate heritages.'" But what you (**ED: PAUL SPEAKING TO THE CORINTHIANS**) have got to see is beyond that (**ED: ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE FROM BABYLON**). There's coming a day of great salvation, greater than this deliverance from their captivity, greater than anything else, it's going to be their spiritual salvation and it will come at the right time, a favorable time. (**ED: AT GOD'S APPOINTED TIME IN THE FUTURE GOD WOULD BY HIS SERVANT YESHUA ACCOMPLISH THE FINAL DELIVERANCE OF ISRAEL. PAUL APPLIED THIS PROPHETIC PROMISE TO HIS MINISTRY OF PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION, THE GOSPEL OF GRACE HERE IN 2Co 6:2.**)

Now the Lord Jesus picked up on that term and, oh, if you're not excited yet, strap your seat belts on. In [Luke 4:16-21](#) Jesus does an amazing thing. Verse 16 says, "And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read." Now, wonder what the Son of God is going to read? Think He knows the Word? Verse 17, "And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written"—the word "found" means He knew exactly where it was, just turned right to it. He knew exactly what He was doing—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord." That acceptable time; that acceptable time. "And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, 'Today the Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'" The time is here: now is the acceptable time. Now is the favorable time.

Paul picks up on this promise and what he's trying to tell them is really simple but you have to go around the block to make sure everybody understands. He's trying to say, "You are living in that favorable time. Salvation is not going to come through the Law like the false teachers talk about. It's going to come through Jesus

Christ; only through the Servant that will die for you."

He wants them to pay attention to the fact that they're living in that favorable time. The window of salvation by grace is wide open to both Jew and to Gentile. The false teachers were still trying to get the Corinthians to go back up under law and he said, "Don't you do that! Don't you do that." Just like he said to the Galatians, "Don't you receive the grace of God in vain. If you go back to the Law, that's your flesh, that's your performance and it will never produce anything. It'll be vain; it'll be void. It will end up empty at the judgment seat of Christ. Be fruitful in the acceptable time. Live out the grace that God has put within you."

Paul is pressing them to realize the urgency of the time in which they lived. You know, folks, this is what excites me about it. We're still living in that favorable time. How do you know? Because He hasn't ended it yet —when He comes back for His church. We're still on this earth, and I'll tell you what, think about for a second the people that you know right now that don't know Christ. And you think, "I can't ever do anything there." And God says, "Listen, I'm the One who takes care of persuading men, but I want you to be My ambassador. I want you to be enabled by My grace. I want you to be a vessel so that while you're here on this earth, in this season, in this opportunity, don't squander it, don't throw it away. Let it be fruitful."

Be fruitful; let Christ in you bring about that which He would say is success, when people are persuaded of their reconciliation to God. And I believe God is saying to us in the 21st century to be fruitful, fruitful. Don't play around with this message of grace. You're here for a time; be useable to God in that time. And that's going to affect our evangelism in this city and this state, that's going to affect our missions around the world, that's going to affect our giving, that's going to affect everything that we do because we're not here for any other reason. We're strangers just passing through. God says, "I want to use you while you're here. Stop squabbling, stop being unreconciled to each other and get busy about what I have put you on this earth to be." That's what He's saying to us, folks.

Don't receive the grace of God in vain. How can we be reconcilers of men if we can't even be reconciled to each other? You see the point? So there's caution. Why is there caution? Because there is a window of opportunity and Paul does not want them to squander the grace that has been so beautifully to them. Don't receive the grace of God in vain for now is the day of salvation, now is the acceptable time. ([2 Corinthians 6:1-4a What is Involved in Working Together With God](#))

Behold ([idou](#)) **now** ([nun](#)) is "THE ACCEPTABLE ([euprosdektos](#)) TIME," **behold** ([idou](#)) **now** ([nun](#)) is "THE DAY OF SALVATION ([soteria](#))"- While this phrase is similar to the phrase discussed above which was their day of salvation, the difference is Paul adds two attention getting words **Behold** ([idou](#)) and **now** ([nun](#)). Using the interjection **behold**, Paul is commanding them to "Listen up" because what he is about to say is very significant. He amplifies the importance of the statement by using the adverb **now** ([nun](#)) in an attempt to stimulate the Corinthians to focus on the moment, the idea being that "**NOW** is the time," so they must give attention and do not miss what he was about to say. The tenor of Paul's words convey a sense of urgency. By changing the Greek word for **acceptable** from [dektos](#) to [euprosdektos](#) Paul is saying this time now is "super acceptable" (so to speak), this different word for acceptable emphasizing the thought that you don't want to miss this **acceptable** or favorable time!

Paul had a heart of passion for his flock at Corinth. Charles Simeon was such a man as testified by one of the obituaries after he fell asleep in Jesus - "And after having urged all his hearers to accept the proffered mercy, he reminded them that there were those present to whom he had preached Christ for more than thirty years, but they continued indifferent to the Saviour's love; and pursuing this train of expostulation for some time, he at length became quite overpowered by his feeling, and he sank down in the pulpit and burst into a flood of tears."

Wickham comments that **now** ("[nun](#)"; cf. its use in Eph 3:5, 10; Heb 12:26; 2Pe 3:7) ends when the Gospel age is finished (cf Heb 9:26-28). (**ED**: OF COURSE WICKHAM IS REFERRING TO THE AVAILABILITY OF THE DAY OF SALVATION. THE DOOR OF SALVATION IS OPEN IN THIS AGE, THE CHURCH AGE, BUT THE DOOR WILL CLOSE EVENTUALLY - SEE [RELATED DISCUSSION](#).)

[Wayne Barber](#) asks a practical question -- how can you tell a person is operating in the sphere of truth Paul lays out his verses 1-2? "Do you know how you can tell it? The way you can tell it is not by the hardships he has to go through. No sir, that's akin to all of us. But it's by the way he handles them and by the godly response that he has to them. Christ in him, this person who works together with God, who has not received the grace of God in vain, who understands the season of opportunity that he's in, that it not only requires the words to reason with men, it requires a life that backs up those words. You can always tell."

MacArthur on the day of salvation is "when God will listen to repentant sinners. **Now**, when the fields are ripe for the harvest (John 4:35), is not the time to waste gospel opportunity, or to be feeble, vacillating, or deceived by false teachers. It is the time to hold fast to the truth and faithfully proclaim it. "We must work the works of Him who sent Me as long as it is day," Jesus admonished. "Night is

coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). Knowing the urgency of the times Paul, true to the urgency of his calling, passionately pleaded with the Corinthians not to let God's grace in their lives be in vain. ([See excerpt](#))

J Vernon McGee - A great many people say, "Well, I won't accept Christ now. I will do it some other time." They postpone it. Some people want to wait until a certain evangelist comes to town or until they can attend a great meeting. Now I don't know who you are or where you are right now, but if you are not saved, "now is the accepted time." Look at your clock. Whatever time it is right now is the time for you. Somebody will ask, "Can't I accept Him tomorrow?" Probably, but you have no promise of a tomorrow. The important thing is that God says the time is right now. (Borrow [Thru the Bible, page 114](#))

SPURGEON on **NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION** - I pray that you may feel something pressing you, something that makes you end your long delay, something that makes you feel, "I have no more time to waste; I cannot afford to loiter; I must be saved to-night; I must hear the distinct ticking of God's great clock, that stands in the hall of grace, and always says, 'Now; now; now; now; now;' and never utters any other sound." Oh, may the Lord make it to be so, by his own free grace!

Guzik - Now is the acceptable time ... now is the day of salvation By quoting and applying Isaiah 49:8, Paul wants to give the Corinthian Christians a sense of urgency. God has an acceptable time for us to work with His grace. God has a day of salvation that will not last forever. This is no time for Christian lives consumed with ease and comfort and self-focus. It is time to get busy for the Lord and to be workers together with Him. ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Pulpit Commentary on **now** - No doubt St. Paul meant that, as long as life lasts, the door of repentance is never absolutely closed; but it is probable that he had specially in view the nearness of the advent of Christ. ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Ray Stedman - There is only one word on God's clock. It is **now**. "**Now is the acceptable time.**" "**Now is the day of salvation.**" When are you going to start acting in love toward the people you live with? "Well," you say, "I've been planning to do it after the first of the year. I'm going to make a New Year's resolution." No, God says, "**Now is the accepted time.**" The devil's time is always tomorrow. That is why we never get around to it. God's time is always today, **now**. When are you going to reach out to your neighbors and become friends with them so that you might have an opportunity, hopefully, to share with them the change in your own life and heart? Well, **now** is the only time you have got. You do not have yesterday; it is gone. You may not get tomorrow. What you have is **now**; therefore, the Word of God always addresses us in this existential fashion. If you are going to act and you see something that needs to be done, do it **now**. Do not wait. Begin to live **now**. Enter into life now. That is God's time. Nothing else will avail. So, as Paul contemplates this great message of a beseeching God reaching out to a dying, despairing world with a cure for all its troubles, pleading with man, he sees us as involved in the process with him. And his appeal to us is, "Don't wait. Do it now." ([The Word for this Hour](#))

Acceptable (favorable) (1184) **dektos** from **dechomai** - to accept or receive favorably) means accepted (see Webster below), acceptable, welcome (willing permitted or admitted), pleasing (giving pleasure, agreeable, gratifying). **Dektos** describes one of whom there is or has been a favorable decision of the will. It conveys the picture of a "open" reception, much like when one puts the "welcome mat" on their front door step, something Jesus did not experience even in His own hometown! (Lk 4:24 - He was not "dektos" - not welcome) Thankfully, God puts out the "welcome (home) mat" for all who fear and obey Him. (Acts 10:35). As note below, the adjective is very common in the LXX in a sacrificial sense. **dektos** was "Used with elements of time such as **kairos**, **season** (Lk 4:19+), and **eniautós**, **year** (2Cor. 6:2), meaning a time in which God has pleasure, and which He Himself has chosen. **Dektos** has the basic meaning "what one can accept." **Dektos** - 5v in NT - Lk. 4:19+ = "to proclaim the **favorable** (acceptable) year of the Lord" (Isa 61:2a+); Lk. 4:24; Acts 10:35; 2 Co. 6:2; Phil. 4:18 = "you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an **acceptable** sacrifice, well-pleasing to God."

Time (opportunity, proper time) (2540) **kairos** means a point of time or period of time, time, period, frequently with the implication of being especially fit for something and without emphasis on precise chronology. It describes the period as especially appropriate and favorable (the right time). **Kairos** is something that lasts for a season and thus is temporary, enduring only for a specific period of time, a period which is especially appropriate, a favorable time, the right time. The implication of **kairos** is when the time or season is passed, so too has the opportunity. This reminds me of the phrase *Carpe Diem* (Seize the Day), [Redeem the Time](#).

Salvation (4991) **soteria** from **soter** = Savior in turn from **sozo** = save, rescue, deliver) ([Click here](#) or [here](#) for in depth discussion of the related terms **soter** and **sozo**) describes the rescue or deliverance from danger, destruction and peril, literally as with the ark that provided **salvation** (Heb 11:7+) from the flood (cf Acts 27:34+ "food...for your **preservation**"). Figuratively it refers to spiritual salvation as in 2Co 6:2 (cf Lk 1:77+). **Salvation** is a broader term in Greek than we often think of in English and includes ideas of restoration to a state of safety, soundness, health and well being as well as preservation from danger of destruction.

Helped (came to aid) (997) **boetheo** from **boe** = a cry, exclamation + **théō** = to run) means to run on hearing a cry, to give assistance (especially to those in danger) or meet an urgent distress call. To supply urgently needed help. To render assistance to someone in need, furnish aid. **TDNT** adds it means "to hasten to the help of the oppressed," and then "to help. **Boetheo** is often

used of the physician. **Boetheo** is used also the healings of Jesus (Mk. 9:22, 24; Mt. 15:25). Similarly in Ac. 16:9; Rev. 12:16. Of God as the One who helps it is used only at 2 Cor. 6:2, quoting Isa. 49:8. It is used of help in religious need at Mk. 9:24; Heb. 2:18. **Boethéo** means to **succor** (KJV reads "He is able to **succour** them that are tempted") which is a word you may not be too familiar with, but which means literally to run to or run to support hence, to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and deliver from suffering; as, to **succor** a besieged city; to **succor** prisoners. (**succor** is derived from Latin succurrere = to run up, run to help, from **sub-** = up + **currere** to run). Büchsel suggests it first meant "to run on a call to help," ("boëtheō," Kittel, 1:628). This meaning may be reflected in Acts 21:28 where some Asian Jews incited a mob to attack Paul in the temple. Remembering the military sense, it is interesting that the use of this word in the Gospels is related to appeals to Jesus to cast out demons (Matthew 15:25; Mark 9:22,24). **8v in NT** - come to...aid(1), come to the aid(1), help(4), helped(2). Mt. 15:25; Mk. 9:22; Mk. 9:24; Acts 16:9; Acts 21:28; 2 Co. 6:2; Heb. 2:18; Rev. 12:16

Behold (2400) (**idou** is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. **Idou** in the **middle voice** means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The **aorist imperative** is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

Acceptable (2144) (**euprosdektos** from **eu** = good + **prosdechomai** = accept) Acceptable, pleasant, well-received, approved. Pertaining to that which is particularly favorable or propitious—"truly favorable. . A strong affirmation of acceptability, favorably received,

This adjective is derived from **prosdechomai**, "to receive favorably." The **eu** prefix emphasizes the positive aspect of the reception; thus it means "pleasant, acceptable," and it is much like the term **dektos**, "acceptable." **Euprosdektos**, unlike its parent word **dektos**, does not occur in the Septuagint; nevertheless it would probably not be incorrect to assume that **euprosdektos** contains some of the same cultic significance that **dektos** has in the Septuagint ("to offer an acceptable sacrifice," e.g., Jeremiah 6:20; cf. Exodus 28:38; Leviticus 1:4).

Paul, directed by the Spirit, clearly associated **euprosdektos** with cultic imagery in Romans 15:16 (of the Gentiles as an "acceptable" offering to God) as does Peter in 1 Peter 2:5 (of believers' acceptable sacrifices to God). The cultic sense may be intended in 2 Corinthians 8:12 as well. The context totally allows for the image of "acceptable sacrificial giving" (cf. verses 1–7). However, Paul also regarded **euprosdektos** as a secular term. He hoped that his actions would be "acceptable" to those in Jerusalem (Romans 15:31). And from a different perspective, playing upon Isaiah 49:8 (**dektos**, Septuagint), Paul declared that now is indeed the "accepted time" of God's salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2; cf. verse 1).

Euprosdektos - 5x - acceptable (5x) - Ro 15:16 = "my offering of the Gentiles might be **acceptable**; sanctified by the Holy Spirit." Ro 15:31 = "my service for Jerusalem may prove **acceptable** to the saints;"; 2 Co. 6:2; 2 Co. 8:12 = "if the readiness is present, it is **acceptable** according to what a person has"; 1 Pet. 2:5 = "to offer up spiritual sacrifices **acceptable** to God through Jesus Christ."

Pastor Brian Bell - No

w is the acceptable time - When do you deal with insurance policies? - After you've had an accident? NO way! You don't wait until the copper water pipe breaks in your house, to get homeowners insurance. You don't wait until you get into an auto accident, before you invest in auto insurance. You don't wait until you're diagnosed with a fatal disease, before you think about medical insurance. And so, You shouldn't wait until it's too late...before you share the ministry of Reconciliation! **Illustration:** A Saxon king who put down a rebellion in the distant province of his kingdom, then placed a burning candle in the archway of the castle and announced that all who had rebelled would be spared if they put down their arms and took an oath of loyalty to the king. Clemency and mercy were offered, but the offer was limited to the life of the candle. [God's candle is burning!]

QUESTION - **What does it mean that today is the day of salvation?**

ANSWER -God has told the sinful world, in no uncertain terms, to repent (Mark 6:12; Luke 24:47; Acts 3:19; 17:30). To repent means to change your mind from embrace of sin and rejection of Christ to rejection of sin and embrace of Christ. Those who refuse to repent and turn to Christ in faith will suffer eternal consequences. Given the fact of hell, mankind in his sin is in a dire situation. Why would anyone delay repentance? Yet many do, even while admitting their sin and claiming to see their need for salvation.

There are several reasons not to delay repentance. First, the Bible's command to repent is accompanied by an urgent appeal to do it now: Paul quotes Isaiah 49:8, which speaks of "**the day of salvation**." Then he says not to delay: "I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Repentance should take place as soon as God the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins (see Jn 16:8). In other words, today is the day of salvation. "**Today**, if only you would hear his voice, Do not harden your hearts" (Ps 95:7-8).

Another problem with delaying repentance is that no one knows the day he will die. And after death comes the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). The rich fool in Jesus' parable (Luke 12:16-20) thought he had plenty of time to enjoy life, but God had news for him: "This very night your life will be demanded from you" (verse 20). We have today—we have the present moment—and we should use it wisely.

Another reason to not delay repentance is that, every time we refuse to repent, we continue to sin and our hearts get harder (see Hebrews 3:7-8). Every time a person says "no" to what's right, it becomes a little easier to say "no" the next time, too. There's a gradual hardening of the heart, a searing of the conscience (1 Timothy 4:2), that can numb an unsaved person to the point of being past feeling. This is a dangerous spiritual condition to be in.

Also, the harder a person's heart becomes, the more "force" God will have to apply to bring him to repentance. This is illustrated in the increasingly severe plagues in Egypt. As Pharaoh continued to harden his heart, the plagues continued and worsened until culminating in a loss of life in every Egyptian household (Exodus 7-11). "It is hard for you to kick against the goads" (Acts 26:14).

Tragically, there is a point of no return. God may eventually stop trying to bring the chronically rebellious to repentance and give them over to their own ways (Romans 1:28). We never know when this point of no return is, so the better part of wisdom is timely repentance.

By delaying repentance, we are delaying certain blessings from God. At least three verses bring this to light: "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord" (Acts 3:19). "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). "Your wrongdoings have kept these [showers of blessing] away; your sins have deprived you of good" (Jeremiah 5:25). So, in delaying repentance, we miss out on God's refreshment, we may not prosper (in God's eyes), and we may be deprived of God's goodness.

It is true that God is gracious to us and that a person may be able to repent up until the day he dies. But we should not live presumptuously. We are not guaranteed tomorrow. Commentator Charles John Ellicott put it rightly: "For each church and nation, for each individual soul, there is a golden present which may never again recur" (Commentary for English Readers, entry for 2 Corinthians 6:2).

James 4:17 says, "If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them." Once we know what is right, we are responsible to do it. And once we know something is sin, we are responsible to repent of it and forsake it. We dare not delay repentance. There was a time when the Lord shut the door of the ark, and the flood swept everyone outside the ark away (Genesis 7:16). There came a time when the wedding party began, and those who were not ready for the coming of the bridegroom were locked out (Matthew 25:1-13). GotQuestions.org

James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - SALVATION NOW 2 Corinthians 6:2

1. A Great Blessing,
 "Salvation."
2. A Gracious Offer,
 "Accepted time."
3. A Present Necessity,
 "Now, now."
4. A Pressing Call,
 "Behold! behold!"

Now Is the Day

I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6:2

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Corinthians 5:18-6:2

Our preschool-age granddaughter Maggie and her kindergarten-age sister Katie hauled several blankets to the backyard, where they

proceeded to build a blanket tent in which to play. They had been outside a while when their mom heard Maggie call for her.

"Mom, come here quick!" Maggie yelled. "I want to ask Jesus into my heart, and I need your help!" Apparently at that moment her need for Jesus became clear to her, and she was ready to put her faith in Him.

Maggie's urgent call for help in trusting Jesus brings to mind Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 6 about salvation. He was discussing the reality that Jesus Christ's coming—including His death and resurrection—instituted an era he called "the time of God's favor." We live in that time, and salvation is available to all right now. He said, "I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (v. 2). For all who have not yet trusted Jesus for forgiveness, the time to do so is now. It is urgent.

Perhaps the Holy Spirit has alerted you to your need to put your trust in Jesus. Like Maggie, don't put it off. Run to Jesus. Now is the day! By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Heavenly Father, I now understand my need to have my sins forgiven. I also realize that only Jesus—because of His sacrifice on the cross—can forgive my sin. I put my faith and trust in Jesus today. Please forgive me and become the Lord of my life.

There's no better day than today to enter into God's family.

ILLUSTRATION - Once a newly assigned demon was explaining his strategy to a veteran. "My plan," he said proudly, "is to convince the man that there is no God." "No," said the senior devil, "That will not work. All the man has to do is take a look beyond the earth and he will know that God exists." "Well, then," said the junior demon, "I will convince him that there is no devil." "That is more promising," replied the veteran tempter, "but, still, if he takes a close look around his own neighborhood, he will realize that the devil exists. Here's the best plan. Don't try to convince him that there is no God or that there is no devil. Just tell him there is no hurry." May I say to you this morning that you have no guarantee that you will see another Christmas, or even this one. I urge you this morning, I implore you to be reconciled to God today.

ANOTHER VARIATION OF THE DEMON ILLUSTRATION - There is an ancient story about three demons who were arguing over the best way to destroy the Christian mission in the world. The first demon says, "Let's tell all the Christians there is no heaven. Take away the reward incentive and the mission will collapse." The second demon says, "Let's tell all the Christians there is no hell. Take away the fear of punishment and the mission will collapse." The third demon says, "There is one better way. Let's tell all the Christians that there is no hurry" and all three immediately say, "That's it! All we have to do is tell them there's no hurry and the whole Christian enterprise will collapse."

Time And Eternity

In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.. —2 Corinthians 6:2

Today's Scripture: Revelation 20:11-15

My wife and I were visiting with some friends who had known my father, Dr. M. R. De Haan, when he was the pastor of their church. His ministry had left a deep and lasting impression on them. One woman told about an unforgettable experience that happened 50 years earlier.

She was listening as my father preached on God's judgment and the reality of hell. As he neared the end of his sermon, he stopped abruptly. For an entire minute he didn't say a word. All that could be heard was the ticking of a large clock on the wall. The sound seemed to grow louder with each passing second. In fact, the steady "tick-tock" became almost deafening to those under conviction by the Holy Spirit.

Then with his commanding voice my father reminded the audience, "You are now one minute nearer to eternity!" The woman who told me the story said that she was frightened. And even though she didn't receive Christ that evening, the experience of hearing that ticking was so vivid in her mind that it ultimately led to her conversion.

Are you headed for heaven? If not, may each passing second remind you that you are one tick of the clock closer to an eternity without Christ. Receive Him today! By: Richard DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How can you go another day?
Respond to Christ, do not delay;
Just trust in Him, His Word believe,
Eternal life you will receive.

To avoid being lost in eternity, receive Christ in time.

Sunrise In Heaven

Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. —2 Corinthians 6:2

Today's Scripture: Luke 12:16-21

"It's unsinkable!" That was the proud boast made by the builders of the Titanic, the magnificent ocean liner that on April 14, 1912, went down during its maiden voyage. Most of the 2,100 passengers were sent to their deaths.

In an article for the Danish magazine Evangelisten, Ingvald Andersen told about one of the passengers, John Harper, who was a fervent witness for Christ. According to a survivor, on the evening of the disaster John had led a young Englishman to faith in the Savior.

Soon afterward, John went for a walk on the deck with his daughter and a niece. As they were admiring the spectacular sunset, Harper said, "It is going to be beautiful in the morning."

For him and any other Christian who died that night, the next morning was beautiful. Theirs was sunrise on their first day in heaven. Andersen, as he related all of this, urged his readers to be certain of their own relationship to Jesus.

No matter how safe and serene your life may be, it can end in shipwreck at any moment. So if you have never done so, you need to do as that young Englishman did—accept Christ as your Savior now. Then, regardless of when or how you die, yours will be sunrise in heaven. By: Vernon Grounds ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Fuller - 2 COR. 6:2. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

A minister of the gospel determined on one occasion to preach on the text, "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Whilst in his study, thinking, he fell asleep, and dreamed that he was carried into hell, and set down in the midst of a conclave of lost spirits. They were assembled to devise means whereby they might get at the souls of men. One rose, and said, "I will go to the earth, and tell men that the Bible is all a fable, that it is not divinely appointed of God." No, that would not do. Another said, "Let me go: I will tell men that there is no God, no Saviour, no heaven, no hell"; and at the last words a fiendish smile lighted upon all their countenances. "No, that will not do: we cannot make men believe that" Suddenly one arose, and with a wise mien, like the serpent of old, suggested, "No: I will journey to the world of men, and tell them that there is a God, that there is a Saviour, that there is a heaven,—yes, and a hell too,—but I'll tell them there is no hurry; TO-MORROW will do, it will be 'even as to-day.' " And they sent him.

In Nebuchadnezzar's image, the lower the members, the coarser the metal; the farther off the time, the more unfit. To-day is the golden opportunity; to-morrow will be the silver season; next day but the brazen one; and so on, till at last I shall come but to the toes of clay, and be turned to dust.

The Transaction

Now is the day of salvation. —2 Corinthians 6:2

Today's Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10

Can more than half of the US adult population be wrong? A survey by the Barna Research Group recently revealed that 54 percent say that people who are generally good and do enough good things for others will earn a place in heaven. That is just one of many methods people suggest as ways to merit entrance into God's eternal kingdom.

Let's think about what has to happen for a person to get to heaven, and why the "good works" idea falls short.

First, we must recognize that we are all born spiritually dead. In Ephesians 2:1, we are taught that we "were dead in trespasses and sins." The spiritual aspect of our existence was dead on arrival when we were physically born into this world. That soul, however, can be made alive. Paul described it like this: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

To be made alive, a transaction must take place. Something specific has to happen to turn what was dead into something alive. It is not triggered by good works but happens only when, by faith, you accept God's gift of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2; Ephesians 2:8).

Is your soul alive today? If not, make the transaction and accept God's wonderful gift. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Choose now, just now; your soul's at stake;
What will your answer be?
'Tis life or death; the choice you make
Is for eternity.
—Anon.

Life's biggest decision is what you do with Jesus.

Are You Ready?

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. —2 Corinthians 6:2

Today's Scripture: Luke 16:19-31

My daughter Julie was home from college and working at her summer job at RBC Ministries. One day as she was cutting the lawn with a riding mower she noticed some movement in the grass. Hopping down, she discovered a couple of baby rabbits scampering away from her noisy machine. She shooed them out of the path of her tractor to what she thought was sure safety, then out of the sky swooped a hawk. In a second he had one of the bunnies in his talons and was gone.

Julie felt bad. While she was helping the little guys avoid one danger, she had made them vulnerable to another. Despite her efforts, that bunny met his demise. As she told me about it, she said, "It made me think of my own mortality."

That's not something college students think much about. But they should, and so should all of us. Many people do not want to admit that life tomorrow is not guaranteed. We don't know if we'll live until tomorrow, or for 50 more years.

So, why think about this? Simply because we must be prepared to meet the Lord. The Bible says, "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). If you have never done so, today by faith receive Christ as your Savior. Make sure you are ready. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Oh, why not turn while still you may;
Too late it soon will be—
A glorious life you can possess
Throughout eternity.
—Anon.

Death could come at any time—so we must be ready all the time.

ILLUSTRATION OF TODAY IS THE DAY

Dwight L. Moody, by his own admission, made a mistake on the eighth of October 1871 -- a mistake he determined never to repeat.

He had been preaching in the city of Chicago. That particular night drew his largest audience yet. His message was "What will you do then with Jesus who is called the Christ?"

By the end of the service, he was tired. He concluded his message with a presentation of the gospel and a concluding statement: **"Now I give you a week to think that over. And when we come together again, you will have opportunity to respond."**

A soloist began to sing. But before the final note, the music was drowned out by clanging bells and wailing sirens screaming through the streets. The great Chicago Fire was blazing. In the ashen aftermath, hundreds were dead and over a hundred thousand were homeless.

Without a doubt, some who heard Moody's message had died in the fire. He reflected remorsefully that he would have given his right arm before he would ever give an audience another week to think over the message of the gospel.

A Closing Door

Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. —2 Corinthians 6:2

Beep, beep, beep, beep. The warning sound and flashing lights alerted commuters that the train door was about to close. Yet a few tardy individuals still made a frenzied scramble across the platform and onto the train. The door closed on one of them. Thankfully, it rebounded and the passenger boarded the train safely. I wondered why people took such risks when the next train would arrive in a mere 4 minutes.

There is a far more important door that we must enter before it closes. It is the door of God's mercy. The apostle Paul tells us, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). Christ has come, died for our sins, and has risen from the grave. He has opened the way for us to be reconciled to God and has proclaimed for us the day of salvation.

Today is that day. But one day the door of mercy will close. To those who received and served Christ, He will say, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you" (Matt. 25:34). But those who don't know Him will be turned away (v.46).

Our response to Jesus Christ determines our destiny. Today Jesus invites, "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (John 10:9). By: Poh Fang Chia ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Today Thy gate is open,
And all who enter in
Shall find a Father's welcome,
And pardon for their sin.
—Allen

There's no better day than today to enter into God's family.

2 Corinthians 6:3 giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited,

The Living Bible We try to live in such a way that no one will ever be offended or kept back from finding the Lord by the way we act, so that no one can find fault with us and blame it on the Lord.

NET 2 Corinthians 6:3 We do not give anyone an occasion for taking an offense in anything, so that no fault may be found with our ministry.

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:3 Μηδεμ αν ν μηθεν διδ ντες προσκοπ ν, να μ μωμηθ διακον α,

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:3 We live in such a way that no one will stumble because of us, and no one will find fault with our ministry.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:3 We put no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry,

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:3 We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:3 in nothing giving any cause of offence, that the ministration may be not blamed,

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:3 giving no occasion of stumbling in anything, that our ministration be not blamed;

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:3 We give no opportunity for stumbling to anyone, so that the ministry will not be blamed.

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:3 Do nothing that trips up anyone in any way, lest your service be found unacceptable.

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:3 We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry,

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:3 We cause no one to stumble in anything, in order that no fault may be found with our ministry;

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:3 We avoid putting obstacles in anyone's way, so that no blame may attach to our work of service;

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:3 We don't give people any opportunity to find fault with how we serve.

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:3 Giving no cause for trouble in anything, so that no one may be able to say anything against our work;

- 2Co 1:12 2Co 8:20 Mt 17:27 18:6 Ro 14:13 1Co 8:9-13 1Co 9:12,22 1Co 10:23,24,32,33
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 8:9-13+ But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 10 For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? 11 For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. 12 And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

1 Corinthians 9:12; 22+ If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that **we will cause no hindrance** to the gospel of Christ.22 To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some.

1 Corinthians 10:32-33+ Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; 33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved.

"NO FAULT" MINISTRY

Wick Boomall feels that all of the participles from 2Co 6:3-10 are attached to "we also urge you..." in 2Co 6:1. He adds that "The negative thought of 6:3 is stated affirmatively in 6:4a, and then, in 6:4b-10, expanded antithetically and ascensively by the use (in ASV) of in (eighteen times), by (three times), and as (seven times). Here is a multicolored rainbow glowing with the graces of Paul's ministry. Cf. 2:14ff.; 4:8-10; 11:16-23." ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Ray Stedman summarizes the reason for this next section and ties it with the previous discussion of receipt of the grace of God in vain - an understanding of the new covenant that does not drastically alter the way of life is a useless thing. Paul's primary concern in this final section is to address the problem of communication with others who do not yet know this great secret of godlikeness, whether they are new Christians or still unregenerate. The new covenant cannot be lived in isolation but must bring us into contact with others, both Christians and non-Christians, because authentic Christianity is designed for the world as it is. Therefore, the apostle says: "We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way" (2 Corinthians 6:3,4). There follows then a most remarkable list of very practical ways by which the new covenant may be commended to others. ([2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Sensible Fanaticism](#))

Murray Harris entitles 2Co 6:3-10 "The hardships of apostolic service." (ED: I would add these would be applicable to most ministries of most pastors.)

Kruse - Paul has exhorted his readers 'not to accept the grace of God in vain', and here insists that his own conduct as God's messenger does not constitute a stumbling-block which might hinder the proper acceptance of God's grace by others. ([Full text of the Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians](#))

Giving (present tense - continually) **no cause for offense in anything** - The Greek literally reads "**no one in not anything**" -- this repetition of negatives emphasizes Paul's desire that none of their lives should ever bring reproach to the ministry of the Gospel. Ambassadors of Christ need to live and act like Christ. Is this not a worthy goal for EVERY ministry of the Gospel (whether lay or professional, all believers are ministers/ambassadors of the Gospel and the "ministry of reconciliation." 2Co 5:18-20+) **NIV** = "We put no stumbling block in anyone's path." **CSB** = "We give no opportunity for stumbling to anyone." **MIT** = "Do nothing that trips up anyone in any way" Paul is saying they did not give anyone an occasion to take offense at their ministry. That is to say, their ministry did not cause others to stumble or be tripped up (which is the meaning of [prokope](#)).

J Vernon McGee - We need to be very careful about personal behavior. We are to give no offense in anything. An offense here doesn't mean hurting people's feelings. I don't think anyone can serve in the church today without hurting the feelings of someone. My wife and I got up early one morning and drove two hundred miles before breakfast. We were really hungry and we stopped in a dumpy little place where they served a good Texas breakfast with grits and hot biscuits. When I went to pay the bill, I noticed a sign up by the cash register. "We can't please everybody but we try." That may be a familiar sign to you, but it was new to me that morning and it made my day. "Giving no offence" means that you are so to live that no one can point to you and say, "Because of that man's life I have no confidence in the salvation he professes." Now Paul lists things that should characterize the ministry. They are quite interesting.

MacDonald - Conscious that that he was a servant of the Most High, he always sought to behave in a manner worthy of such a calling. Verses 4 and 5 describe the physical sufferings which Paul endured and which attested him as a sincere, faithful servant of the Lord. The next two verses have to do with the Christian graces which he exhibited. Then in verses 8 through 10 he lists the contrasting experiences which are so typical of the Christian ministry. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Paul used the related word [proskomma](#), stumbling, in his first letter warning the Corinthians to "take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a **stumbling block** to the weak." (1Co 8:9+).

Guzik - Paul was willing to do most anything to make sure he gave no offense in anything. He was willing to forego his salary as a minister of the gospel (1 Corinthians 9:3–15). He was willing to allow others to be more prominent. He was willing to work hard and endure hardship. Paul was not afraid to offend anyone over the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18–25), but he would not allow his style of ministry to offend anyone. ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

So that ([hina](#) - purpose clause - What purpose?) **the ministry** ([diakonia](#)) **will not be discredited** - The implication is that Paul's adversaries (apparently including some of the believers in Corinth) were vigorously, actively seeking to discredit his ministry. **So that** expresses the purpose of their not living in such a way as to cause anyone to stumble. And the purpose of such a ministry of integrity is that no one could find fault with their ministry (a "no fault ministry!"). Paul had taken great precaution to avoid causing anyone to stumble at the gospel so that his ministry might not be "blamed" ("criticized" or "discredited"). Paul is saying that he behaves himself in such a way that no one will ever reject the gospel because of its poor showing in his personal life. He will go on in 2Co 6:4-10 to describe his extraordinary personal labor and self-sacrifice to achieve these aims.

Dan Mitchell makes an excellent point on 2Co 6:4-10 writing that "entire section together demonstrates, from the experience of Paul, that he did not receive "the grace of God in vain" (2Co 6:1)." ([2 Cor - Grace Under Siege](#))

Pulpit Commentary notes that Paul knew "When any just blame can be attached to the minister, the force of the ministry of reconciliation is fatally weakened." ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Ray Stedman applies 2Co 6:3-10 to our ministries writing "The apostles were pattern Christians, chosen to experience the full range of pressures and possibilities in order that we might have in them (and supremely in the Lord Jesus) an example to follow. It is not likely that we will be called upon to endure all these experiences, but we will surely be asked to endure some of them. Let us remember that the world around is watching us and only the manifestation of what Paul lists here will commend us to those who are watching our lives." ([2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Sensible Fanaticis](#))

Kruse - If fault could be found in his ministry, and there were in Corinth those only too prepared to find it, then presumably that could be used as an excuse to reject his message. ([Full text of the Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians](#))

Paul called for all who would be leaders in the church **to be above reproach** writing "It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, then, **must be above reproach**, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach." (1 Timothy 3:1-2)

THOUGHT - Every believer is in ministry whether formally or informally and so like Paul we all need to be careful that our lives match what we say. We could list plenty of examples today of how a ministry has been **discredited** because of the lives of the people in it (the saddest example in the last several decades is [Ravi Zacharias](#)).

Offense ([4349](#))([proskope](#) from [proskopto](#) - to stumble from **prós** = to, against + **kópto** = cut, strike) means an occasion for stumbling. "the occasion or cause of offense" or "the reason for making a misstep." Not found in Lxx.

Discredited ([3469](#))([momaomai](#) from [momos](#) = blame, disgrace, blemish) means to find fault with, to discredit by implying blame. It includes the ideas of criticize or censure. To attribute blame to someone. Only twice - 2Co 6:3 and 2Co 8:20. One use in Lxx = Pr 9:7.

2 Corinthians 6:4 but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses,

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

NET 2 Corinthians 6:4 But as God's servants, we have commended ourselves in every way, with great

endurance, in persecutions, in difficulties, in distresses,

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:4 ἅλ ὡς πᾶντ συνιστ ντες αὐτο ς ς θεο δι κονοι, ὡς πομον πολλ , ὡς θλ ψεσιν, ὡς ὡς γκαῖς, ὡς στενοχω ρ αις,

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:4 In everything we do, we show that we are true ministers of God. We patiently endure troubles and hardships and calamities of every kind.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:4 but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: by great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities,

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses;

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:4 but in everything recommending ourselves as God's ministrants; in much patience, in tribulations, in necessities, in distresses,

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:4 but in everything commending ourselves, as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:4 But as God's ministers, we commend ourselves in everything: by great endurance, by afflictions, by hardship, by difficulties,

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:4 But in everything demonstrate yourselves to be God's servants by having much patience: in troubling situations, in times of necessity, in calamities,

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:4 But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses,

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:4 but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities,

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:4 on the contrary, in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, through much endurance, in afflictions, hardships, constraints,

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:4 but in everything we prove ourselves authentic servants of God; by resolute perseverance in times of hardships, difficulties and distress;

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:4 Instead, our lives demonstrate that we are God's servants. We have endured many things: suffering, distress, anxiety,

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:4 But in everything making it clear that we are the servants of God, in quiet strength, in troubles, in need, in sorrow,

- **but in everything:** 2Co 2:17 2Co 7:11 Ac 2:22 Ro 14:18 Ro 16:10 1Co 9:11 1Th 2:3-11 1Ti 2:15
- **commending,** 2Co 4:2 Ro 5:8
- **as servants of God:** 2Co 3:6 11:23 Isa 61:6 Joe 1:9 2:17 1Co 3:5 4:1 1Th 3:2 1Ti 4:6
- **in much endurance** 2Co 12:12 Lu 21:19 Ro 5:3,4 Col 1:11 1Th 5:14 1Ti 6:11 2Ti 3:10 Heb 12:1 Jas 5:7-10 Rev 1:9 3:10
- **in afflictions:** 2Co 4:17 Ac 20:23-24 Col 1:24 1Th 3:3 2Ti 1:8, 3:11-12, 4:5
- **in hardships:** 2Co 11:9,27 12:10 Ac 20:34 1Co 4:11-12 Php 4:11-12
- **in distresses,:** 2Co 4:8 Ro 8:35-36 1Th 3:7
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 3:1-3+ Are we beginning to **commend ourselves** again? Or do we need, as some, **letters of commendation** to you or from you? 2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

2 Corinthians 4:2+ but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

2 Corinthians 4:8+ we are **afflicted** in every way, but not crushed; **perplexed**, but not despairing;

Colossians 1:24+ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His

body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's **afflictions**.

Romans 5:3-4+ (**ENDURANCE**) And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about **perseverance** ([hupomone](#)); 4 and **perseverance** ([hupomone](#)), proven character; and proven character, hope;

Romans 15:5+ (**ENDURANCE**) Now may the God who gives **perseverance** ([hupomone](#)); and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

2 Corinthians 12:12+ (**ENDURANCE**) The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all **perseverance** ([hupomone](#)), by signs and wonders and miracles.

1 Thessalonians 3:3+ (**DIVINELY DESTINED DIFFICULTIES**) so that no one would be disturbed by these **afflictions**; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this.

1 Corinthians 4:11-12+ To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless; 12 and we toil, working with our own hands; when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure;

PAUL RECOUNTS HIS COMMENDABLE RESUME

Commend [from Latin *commendare*: *com-*, intensive prefix + *mandare*, to entrust] means to praise as worthy; to entrust, to acclaim, to laud, to express approval of; to praise, to represent as worthy, qualified, or desirable, to cause to be worthy of recommendation, to present or represent as being worthy of regard, confidence, kindness, etc;

Recall that in 2Co 5:12 Paul had stated "We are not again **commending ourselves** to you but are giving you an occasion to be proud of us." **Ray Stedman** explains "it may seem a contradiction for Paul to say here: "as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way," after he has said in 2Co 5:12, "We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again." The commendation he speaks of in chapter 5 is that of words: boastful self-commendation which seeks to impress others. Here in chapter 6 it is the commendation of deeds and attitudes which speak for themselves."

But - Term of contrast. What is Paul contrasting? In this case what follows is more of an authentication of a no fault ministry.

In everything (present tense - continually) **commending ourselves as servants of God** (cf servants of Christ - 1Co 4:1+) - **NLT** = "In everything we do we show that we are true ministers of God." Ministry is not about being "great" or exercising authority over others, telling them what to do. Ministry is all about being a servant of others. Paul now elaborates on just what "ministry" is all about.

Kruse - What is involved here is not primarily personal commendation, something which the apostle eschewed (2Co 3:1; 2Co 5:12), but the commendation of a ministry. ([Full text of the Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians](#))

Pulpit Commentary on **commending ourselves** - He is again referring to the insinuation, which had evidently caused him deep pain, that he was not authorized to preach, as his Judaic opponents were, by "**letters of commendation**" (2Co 3:1-3+) from James or from the elders at Jerusalem. His credentials came from God, who had enabled him to be so faithful. ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

John MacArthur writes, "A minister is not commended by his seminary degree, theology, popularity, personality, or success. His life is the only letter of commendation that matters, the only one that people will read."

Commending (demonstrate) ([4921](#)) **sunistemi/sunistao** from **sún** = together with + **hístemi** = set, place, stand) means literally to set, place or put together. To set in the same place, this literal meaning being found in [Luke 9:32](#) (below). To bring together. When one brings together a person with another person, it is a way of presenting or introducing them. This gives **sunistemi** the meaning of **commend**, which means to recommend as worthy of confidence (the implication being that others adopt a similar attitude) or to present to one's acquaintance for favorable notice. (9/16 NT uses) **BDAG** says the idea is "to provide evidence of a personal characteristic or claim through action".

Henry Morris on everything ("all things") - The "all things" which Paul enumerates in these verses as characteristic of true ministers (that is, "servants") of Christ comprise a remarkable complex of three ninefold descriptors. First (2 Corinthians 6:4-5) are listed nine "negative" experiences which the servant must be willing to endure graciously. Then there are nine "positive" attributes which he should exhibit (2 Corinthians 6:6-7). Finally, there are nine paradoxes that characterize such a minister (2 Corinthians 6:8-10), displaying simultaneously the joys of life in Christ and the exigencies of living in the world as His servant. ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

Arthur on 2Co 6:4-10 - These were the marks of Paul's covenant relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, whose followers he once persecuted. (Our Covenant God).

In much endurance ([hupomone](#) - patience, great endurance), **in afflictions** ([thlipsis](#) troubling, pressing situations, tribulations - fate of all saints = Acts 14:22+), **in hardships** ([anagke](#)), **in distresses** ([stenochoria](#) - difficulties, extreme pressure, literally "narrowness of space") - Note the repeated preposition "in" (Greek - [en](#)) which functions as a locative of sphere, as if Paul is surrounded by, immersed in each of these negative circumstances. Note also the last three circumstance are in the plural so that these were not "[one and done](#)" situations for Paul but were an integral, intimate component of his ministry experiences! The first, **endurance** is about remaining steadfast under adverse circumstances compared to **patience** (see [makrothumia](#) below) which is more about putting up with "adverse" people.

Stedman makes the important observation that "The key word to the first group is **endurance** ([hupomone](#)). It means far more than simply toughing it out. Even a non-Christian can endure hardness in that sense and some take great pride in their ability to do so. Athletes, marines, commandos, frontiersmen, and others often glory in their ability to confront hardship with fortitude and endurance. **But this is not merely a reference to passive resignation which is content to wait with bowed head till the troubles have run their course. The Greek word used here, [hupomone](#), goes far beyond that. Rather, it is the courageous triumph which takes all the pressure and emerges with a cheer! It not only refuses to be broken by the pressure but is actually grateful for the opportunity to endure, knowing it will bring glory to God.** (ED: PONDER THAT DESCRIPTION - CLEARLY THAT IS SUPERNATURALLY ENABLED BY THE SPIRIT AND IS NOT A MANIFESTATION OF "NATURAL" STRENGTH) "The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name" (Acts 5:41+). Paul endured triumphantly everything on his list, and often many times over. There were "**afflictions**" or, literally, "distresses." There were pressures that bore heavily upon his spirit--cares and intense anxieties that seldom let up in his life. There were "**hardships**"--the inescapable discomforts of life. And there were "**calamities**," or to be more exact, "strictures," narrow places which seem to close one in on every side, offering no escape. In each of these circumstances the triumphant endurance produced by the new covenant commends Paul to those who are watching his life. ([2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Sensible Fanaticis](#))

Paul appeals to these manifold hardships to commend his ministry in recognition that he was a follower of the perfect Servant of God, the Suffering Servant, and as a follower of Christ, would share his fate for "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master." (Mt. 10:24+; cf. Acts 20:19+). Christ had forewarned (forewarned is forearmed) His followers that they would have much to endure, and fortified them with truth (cf. Pr 30:5) "You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has **endured** ([hupomeno](#)) to the end who will be saved (THEY WOULD ENDURE BECAUSE THE SPIRIT WOULD ENABLE THEM!)." (Mt. 10:22+).

Paul had already alluded to **afflictions** ([thlipsis](#)) 4 times in this letter - 2Co. 1:4; 2Co. 1:8; 2Co. 2:4; 2Co. 4:17 (see below). In 2Co 4:8 he said they were "**afflicted** (related verb [thlibo](#)) but not crushed."

Paul was enabled (supernaturally) to experience **afflictions** because he viewed them with a 20/20 eternal perspective (aka "vertical vision") firmly believing the trials and afflictions were producing for him an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison (*hyperbole eis hyperbole!* - see 2Co 4:17-18+). Not only was he looking to the future but was looking back (so to speak), having been forewarned making him "forearmed" (so to speak), Dr Luke recording "that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions ([thlipsis](#)) await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:23-24+, cf. Acts 9:15+ and Paul's testimony with his last words - 2Ti 4:7+ "I have finished the course")

Paul had a similar attitude toward **hardships** and **distresses**, later writing in this same letter "I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with **distresses** ([anagke](#)), with persecutions, with **difficulties** ([stenochoria](#)), for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong." (2Co. 12:10+) Paul came to understand God's higher purpose for his hardships in ministry. Paul also knew that none of his manifold **difficulties** (distresses) could "separate (him) from the love of Christ." (Ro 8:35+).

Regarding **distresses** Paul used the verb form of [stenochoria](#) earlier writing that they were "afflicted ([thlibo](#)) in every way, but not **crushed** ([stenochoreo](#)); perplexed, but not despairing." (2Co 4:8)

Endurance (5281) [hupomone](#) from **hupo** = under + **meno** = stay, remain, abide; related verb [hupomeno](#)) literally means abiding under. The root idea of **hupomone** is to remain under some discipline, subjecting one's self to something which demands the submission of one's will to something against which one naturally would rebel. It portrays a picture of steadfastly and unflinchingly bearing up under a heavy load and describes that quality of character which does not allow one to surrender to circumstances or succumb under trial. The picture is that of steadfastness, constancy and endurance. It has in it a forward look, the ability to focus on what is beyond the current pressures (eg Jesus "Who for the joy set before Him **endured** [verb form

hupomeno] the Cross despising the shame" see notes on [Hebrews 12:2](#)).

And so **hupomone** does not describe a grim resignation or a passive "grin and bear" attitude but a triumphant facing of difficult circumstances knowing that even out of evil God guarantees good. It is courageous gallantry which accepts suffering and hardship and turns them into grace and glory. For believers, it is a steadfastness, especially as God enables us to "remain under" (or endure) whatever challenges, trials, tests, afflictions, etc, He providentially allows in our life.

Guzik - We often think of endurance as a passive thing—the ability to sit around and wait for something to happen. That is not the idea of the word Paul used here. It is an active endurance instead of a passive waiting. The ancient Greek word hupomone “does not describe the frame of mind which can sit down with folded hands and bowed head and let a torrent of troubles sweep over it in passive resignation. It describes the ability to bear things in such a triumphant way that it transfigures them.” (Barclay)

THOUGHT - How are you doing beloved? If you are like me (and most saints), you are experiencing manifold trials (1 Peter 1:6+)! Are you bearing up under them, leaning hard on the strengthening of the Spirit (the only way we can supernaturally remain under the "load.")?

Afflictions (2347) **thlipsis** from **thlibo** = to crush, press together, squash, hem in, compress, squeeze in turn derived from **thláo** = to break) originally expressed sheer, physical pressure on a man. Thlipsis is a strong term which does not refer to minor inconveniences, but to real hardships. Medically **thlipsis** was used of the pulse (pressure). It is a pressing together as of grapes. It conveys the idea of being squeezed or placed under pressure or crushed beneath a weight. When, according to the ancient law of England, those who willfully refused to plead guilty, had heavy weights placed on their breasts, and were pressed and crushed to death, this was literally **thlipsis**. The iron cage was **stenochoria** (see below). **Thlipsis** thus refers not to mild discomfort but to great difficulty. **Morris** rightly notes that "No one likes troubles of this kind, but they may be seen as difficulties to be overcome, as ways of opening up new possibilities. One who sees them in this light glories in them (Ibid) **Martin Luther** wrote that "Whatever virtues tribulation finds us in, it develops more fully. If anyone is carnal, weak, blind, wicked, irascible, haughty, and so forth, tribulation will make him more carnal, weak, blind, wicked and irritable. On the other hand, if one is spiritual, strong, wise, pious, gentle and humble, he will become more spiritual, powerful, wise, pious, gentle and humble." **Thlipsis in Corinthian letters** - 1Co. 7:28; 2Co. 1:4; 2Co. 1:8; 2Co. 2:4; 2Co. 4:17; 2Co. 6:4; 2Co. 7:4; 2Co. 8:2; 2Co. 8:13

Hardships (318) **anagke** {also transliterated as **ananke**} from **ana** = up, again, back, renewal, repetition, intensity, reversal + **agkale** = arm when bent) refers to any necessity or compulsion, outer or inner, brought on by a variety of circumstances. It can mean necessity imposed either by external conditions or by the law of duty. The idea of **trouble**, distress or hardship is dominant in Luke 21:23; 1Co 7:26; 2Co 6:4; 2Co 12:10. This is the predominant sense here in 1 Th 3:7 where **anagke** refers to difficult circumstances that come on one with compelling force. It refers to that which is necessary due to the pressure of circumstances and so refers to that which is inevitable. It refers to a necessity (an indispensable thing, something needed for a desired result) or constraint as inherent in the nature of things. **Anagke** is used of outward calamities or distresses as in Luke 21:23. Matt. 18:7; Lk. 14:18; Lk. 21:23; Lk. 23:17; Ro 13:5; 1Co. 7:26; 1Co. 7:37; 1Co. 9:16; 2Co. 6:4; 2Co. 9:7; 2Co. 12:10; 1Th 3:7; Phil 1:14; Heb. 7:12; Heb. 7:27; Heb. 9:16; Heb. 9:23; Jude 1:3

Distresses (4730) **stenochoria** from **stenos** = narrow + **chora** = place) is literally a narrow place, a confined space and then the painfulness of associated with this condition. Vincent comments that the “dominant idea is constraint.” **Stenochoria** pictures finding oneself in a "tight corner", hemmed in with no way out, in a narrow strait without the possibility of escape. **Stenochoria** might be used of an army caught in a narrow, rocky defile with space neither to maneuver nor to escape. It might be used of a ship caught in a storm with no room either to ride it or to run before it. There are moments when a man seems to be in a situation in which the walls of life are closing round him -- that is the picture inherent in stenochoria. The opposite state, of being in a large place, was metaphorically used to describe a state of joy as in [Ps 118:5](#) ([Spurgeon's note](#)) where the psalmist writes "From my distress I called upon the LORD. The LORD answered me and set me in a large place." Only 4x in NT - Rom. 2:9; Ro 8:35; 2 Co. 6:4; 2 Co. 12:10

Illustration The Perfect Preacher

After hundreds of years, one has been found! A model preacher preaches 20 minutes and sits down. He condemns sin but never hurts anyone's feelings. He works from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. in every type of work from preaching to custodial service. He makes \$60 a week, wears good clothes, buys good books regularly, has a nice family, drives a good car and gives \$100 a week to the church.

He also stands ready to contribute to every good work that comes along. He is 26 years old and has been preaching for 30 years. He is tall and short, thin and heavy-set. He has one brown eye, and one blue, and hair parted down the middle, left side dark and straight and the right brown and wavy. He has a burning desire to work with the teenagers, and spends all his time with the older folks. He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his work. He makes 15 calls a day on church members, spends all of his time evangelizing the unchurched, and is never out of his office.

Amid A Crowd Of Paltry Things- Oswald Chambers

...in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses. — 2 Corinthians 6:4

It takes Almighty grace to take the next step when there is no vision and no spectator – the next step in devotion, the next step in your study, in your reading, in your kitchen; the next step in your duty, when there is no vision from God, no enthusiasm and no spectator. It takes far more of the grace of God, far more conscious drawing upon God to take that step, than it does to preach the Gospel.

Every Christian has to partake of what was the essence of the Incarnation, he must bring the thing down into flesh-and-blood actualities and work it out through the finger-tips. We flag when there is no vision, no uplift, but just the common round, the trivial task. The thing that tells in the long run for God and for men is the steady persevering work in the unseen, and the only way to keep the life uncrushed is to live looking to God. Ask God to keep the eyes of your spirit open to the Risen Christ, and it will be impossible for drudgery to damp you. Continually get away from pettiness and paltriness of mind and thought out into the thirteenth chapter of St. John's Gospel.

Oswald Chambers - Approved Unto God - Always Now 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6:2

"We . . . intreat also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (rv). The grace we had yesterday won't do for to-day. "The grace of God"—the overflowing favour of God; we can always reckon it is there to draw on if we don't trust our own merits (see 2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

Conditions of Saintliness in Private Trials

But in everything commending ourselves as ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, (2 Corinthians 6:4 rv)

Our private life is disciplined by the interference of people in our own matters; the people who do not mean to be a trial are a trial; that is where the test for patience comes. Have we failed the grace of God there? Are we saying, "Oh, well, I won't count this time"? It is not feeling the grace of God, it is drawing on it now. Whatever is our particular condition we are sure to have one of these things Paul mentions—afflictions, necessities, distresses. It is not praying to God and asking Him to help us in these things, it is taking the grace of God now. Many of us make prayer the preparation for work, it is never that in the Bible. Christianity is drawing on the overflowing favour of God in the second of trial.

Conditions of Saintliness in Public Tribulations

In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings. (2 Corinthians 6:5)

These verses are Paul's spiritual diary, they describe the outward hardships which proved the hotbed for the graces of the Spirit—the working together of outward hardships and inward grace. Imprisonments, tumults, labours—these are all things in the external life. "In tumults"—watch a porridge pot boiling and you will know what tumult means; in that condition draw on the grace of God now. Don't say "I will endure it till I can get away and pray"; draw now, it is the most practical thing on earth. Whenever you are going through any tribulation that tears, don't pray about it, but draw on the grace of God now. The exercise of prayer is the work of drawing now.

Conditions of Saintliness in Pure Temperance

In pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Ghost, in love unfeigned. (2 Corinthians 6:6 rv)

These are the inner characteristics of the temperate life—pureness, knowledge, long-suffering, kindness, love unfeigned. There is no room for extravagant impulse there; you cannot be pure and impulsive, you can be innocent and impulsive, because that is the nature of a child. Purity is something that has been tried and found unspotted. We are always inclined to be intemperate about our religion, it is the last thing for which we learn to draw on the grace of God. In our praying we draw on our memories, on our past experiences, on our present desires. We only learn to draw on the grace of God by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering. How many of us have to learn that temperance is knowledge? We want to get short cuts to knowledge and because we cannot take them we rush off into intemperate work. Notice the disproportion between the modern disease called Christian work and the one characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit. The craze in everyone's blood nowadays is a disease of intemperate work, external activities.

“In long-suffering”—long-suffering is being drawn out until you can be drawn out no more, and not snapping. God puts His saints into places where they have to exhibit long-suffering. Let circumstances pull and don’t give way to any intemperance whatever, but in all these things manifest a drawing on the grace of God that will make you a marvel to yourself and to others.

“In kindness”—be perfectly clear and emphatic with regard to your preaching of God’s truth, but amazingly kind in your treatment of people. Some of us have a hard, metallic way of dealing with people which never has the stamp of the Holy Ghost on it. The word of God is “sharper than any two-edged sword” but when you deal with people, deal with them in kindness; remember yourself that you are where you are by the grace of God. Don’t make God’s word what it is not.

“In the Holy Ghost”—it is not the tones of a man’s speech or the passion of a man’s personality, it is the pleading power of the Holy Ghost coming through him. “. . . as though God were intreating by us” (rv): this is the entreaty that is learned at Calvary and made real in the worker by the Holy Ghost.

“In love unfeigned.” Love feigned is this: “I love you very much, but . . .” Love unfeigned never thinks or looks at things like that. If love has to give stern rebuke it never prefaces it with remarks like that; the one great thing that moves us is the love of God which has been shed abroad in our hearts, and that love is described in 1 Corinthians 13.

Proclaiming Testimony

In the word of truth, in the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left. (2 Corinthians 6:7 rv)
“In the word of truth”—draw on the grace of God for testimony. Not, “Oh, Lord, I am going to give testimony, please help me”: draw on the grace of God while you testify, proclaiming the truth in the presence of God. The first motive of testimony is not for the sake of other people but for our own sake; we realise that we have no one but God to stand by us. Always give your testimony in the presence of God, and ever remember God’s honour is at stake. “In the word of truth” in our testimony; “in the power of God” working in us, and “by the armour of in-the-rightness” of our public and private life shielding us. You cannot draw on the grace of God for testimony if these three things are not there—the word of God, the power of God, and the consciousness that you are walking in the integrity of that testimony in private, if they are there, then there is an unflinching certainty. Am I “in the rightness” all round? Testimony frequently stops short because the armour of righteousness is not on the right hand and on the left. Keep drawing on the grace of God, then there will be the power of the proclaimed testimony.

Personal Temperament

By glory and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true. (2 Corinthians 6:8 rv)
Each of these contrasts puts our natural temperament “out of it.” Let circumstances bring you where they will, keep drawing on the grace of God. Our temperament is not our disposition, temperament is the tone our nature has taken from the ruling disposition. When we had the disposition of sin our temperament took its tone from that disposition; when God alters the disposition the temperament begins to take its tone from the disposition He puts in, and that disposition is like Jesus Christ’s.

Perfect Trustfulness

As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed. (2 Corinthians 6:9)
“I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Philippians 4:12)—drawing on the grace of God in every conceivable condition. One of the greatest proofs that we are drawing on the grace of God is that we can be humiliated without the slightest trace of anything but the grace of God in us. Draw on the grace of God now, not presently. The one word in the spiritual vocabulary is “NOW.”

Poverty Triumphant

As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. (2 Corinthians 6:10)

As we draw on the grace of God He increases voluntary poverty all along the line. Always give the best you have got every time; never think about who you are giving it to, let other people take it or leave it as they choose. Pour out the best you have, and always be poor. Never reserve anything, never be diplomatic and careful about the treasure God gives.

Always now is the secret of the Christian life.

Being Real

In all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses. —2 Corinthians 6:4

Today’s Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:3-11

An antique dealer thought the wrinkled old baseball card she found might be worth \$10. After posting it on eBay, she began to wonder if it might be more valuable than she had thought. She removed the posting and consulted a professional evaluator who confirmed that the photo on the 1869 card showed the Cincinnati Red Stockings, the first professional baseball team in the US. The card sold for more than \$75,000.

Mike Osegueda's article in The Fresno Bee said that even though the card was creased and discolored, the most important thing was its authenticity—it was real.

Paul and his companions suffered greatly while spreading the gospel. In 2 Corinthians 6, he listed their outward trials, their inward traits, and their spiritual resources (vv.4-7). Try to imagine the circumstances in which all these things interacted—beatings, patience, prison, kindness, distresses, love. Although broken physically, depleted emotionally, and tested spiritually, the authenticity of their faith in Christ clearly shone through. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (v.10).

In our walk with Christ, there's no substitute for spiritual authenticity—being real. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee,
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art;
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness;
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.
—Chisholm

There's no substitute for being real.

The Teacher's Legacy

We commend ourselves as ministers of God . . . by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love. —2
Corinthians 6:4,6

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Pastor Paul Walker shared this story of his salvation experience: "During my lifetime I was instructed by many different Sunday school teachers, but only one stands out in my memory. He was a big, red-faced ex-Marine, who probably broke every rule and technique of good teaching. The thing I remember best about him is how much he loved us. . . .

"At the end of each session he would say, 'Boys, let's take time to kneel and talk to the Lord.' Then he would try to put his big arms around all nine of us as we huddled together, and he would pray for each of us by name. Are you surprised that seven of those boys are now in the ministry, and that I am one of them?"

If you have a Sunday school class, small group, or some other teaching responsibility, do you take a warm, personal interest in your students? The apostle Paul said he commended himself as a minister of God "by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love" (2 Corinthians 6:6).

The exact methods employed by the one who taught Paul Walker do not need to be duplicated, but the earnest attention he gave and the spiritual concern he showed toward each pupil is a beautiful example of the importance of teaching by love. By: Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A Sunday school teacher, I don't know his name,
Was a wonderful person who never found fame;
Yet he shaped my whole life far more than he knew,
For his loving example has helped me be true.
—Anon.

To love to teach is one thing—to love those you teach is quite another.

Ordinary Days

In all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses. —2 Corinthians 6:4

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Have you ever received an annual holiday letter from an acquaintance that recounts the ordinary events of the past year? Has anyone told you about cleaning the carpet or taking out the trash? Not likely.

An online publication called the Journal Of Mundane Behavior says these routine events fill most of our time. The managing editor, a sociologist, says everyday life is valuable, since we spend nearly 60 percent of our lives doing things like commuting to work and

shopping for groceries.

We don't often consider the apostle Paul's ordinary days, but he wrote, "In all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God" (2 Corinthians 6:4). "All things" included not only harsh persecution but also "needs, sleeplessness, purity, kindness, love" and other everyday experiences (vv.4-10).

Oswald Chambers said that we tend to lose our enthusiasm "when there is no vision, no uplift, but just the common round, the trivial task. The thing that tells in the long run for God and for men is the steady persevering work in the unseen, and the only way to keep the life uncrushed is to live looking to God" (My Utmost For His Highest, March 6).

So let's live today to the fullest for the Lord, because it's such an important, ordinary day. By: David C. McCasland [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)

If we commit ourselves to Christ
And follow in His way,
He'll give us life that satisfies
With purpose for each day.
—Sper

To get the most out of life, make every moment count for Christ.

Work Opportunity

In all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses. —2 Corinthians 6:4

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:1-10

Imagine an 18-year-old searching the want ads for a summer job. Because he likes the outdoors, his interest is drawn to an ad about a national wildlife and fish refuge. It lists several job openings, but instead of promising attractive benefits and lucrative pay, the ad warns that the work will include "exposure to heat, humidity, rain, mud, millions of biting mosquitoes, poisonous plants, barbed wire, and hard work." The pay is minimum wage.

Now imagine that the 18-year-old is a Christian looking for meaningful spiritual service. His eyes rest on the 6th chapter of 2 Corinthians. There he finds the apostle Paul describing the highest calling of all, an opportunity to work for the Lord. But again the job description is very candid about some of the stresses that go with the work. Although Paul's experiences as an apostle were unique, his words remind all readers that serving the Lord is not one big vacation. It requires great care and effort, and it takes the highest commitment.

Yes, the challenge of serving Christ is without parallel and will require sacrifice. But we are not in it alone, and that makes all the difference. No price is too great to pay for the privilege of working for the Lord! By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Be not weary in well-doing,
Though your labors cause you pain;
There will always be a harvest
From the sowing of the grain.
—Anon.

We can never sacrifice too much for the One who sacrificed His all.

2 Corinthians 6:5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings;

NET 2 Corinthians 6:5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in troubles, in sleepless nights, in hunger,

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:5 ὡς πληγαῖς, ὡς φυλακαῖς, ὡς καταστάσιν, ὡς κποις, ὡς γρυπναις, ὡς νηστεαῖς,

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:5 We have been beaten, been put in prison, faced angry mobs, worked to exhaustion, endured sleepless nights, and gone without food.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger;

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger;

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in insurrections, in labours, in watchings, in fastings,

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings;

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:5 by beatings, by imprisonments, by riots, by labors, by sleepless nights, by times of hunger,

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in mob violence, in hard labors, in deprivations of sleep, in fastings;

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:5 in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger;

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, vigils, fasts;

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:5 when we are flogged or sent to prison or mobbed; labouring, sleepless, starving;

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:5 beatings, imprisonments, riots, hard work, sleepless nights, and lack of food.

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:5 In blows, in prisons, in attacks, in hard work, in watchings, in going without food;

- **in beatings:** 2Co 11:23-25 De 25:3 Isa 53:5 Ac 16:23
- **imprisonments:** 1Ki 22:27 2Ch 16:10 Jer 33:1 37:15,16 38:6 Mt 14:3,10 Ac 5:18 Ac 12:4,5 Acts 16:24 Acts 22:24 Acts 23:35 Acts 24:27 Acts 26:10,29 Acts 28:16,17,30 Eph 3:1 Php 1:13 2Ti 1:8 2:9 Heb 11:36 13:23 Rev 2:10
- **in tumults** 2Co 1:8-10 Ac 14:19 Acts 17:5 Acts 18:12-17 Acts 19:23-34 Acts 21:27-35 Acts 22:23 Acts 23:10
- **labors:** 2Co 11:23 1Co 15:10 1Th 2:9 1Ti 4:10
- **in sleeplessness,** ,: 2Co 11:27 Eze 3:17 Mk 13:34-37 Ac 20:31 2Ti 4:5 Heb 13:17
- **in hunger:** Mt 9:15 Ac 13:3 14:23 1Co 7:5
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Acts 16:23-24+ (**PAUL AND SILAS**) When they had struck them with many **blows** ([plege](#)), they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely. 24 and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner **prison** and fastened their feet in the stocks.

2 Corinthians 11:24-25+ Five times I received from the Jews **thirty-nine lashes**. 25 Three times I was **beaten with rods**, once I was **stoned**, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.

1 Thessalonians 2:9+ For you recall, brethren, our **labor** ([kopos](#)) and hardship, how working ([ergazomai](#)) night and day so as not to be a burden to any of you, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God.

1 Timothy 4:10+ For it is for this (see 1Ti 4:8+) we **labor** (related verb [kopiao](#)) and strive ([agonizomai](#)), because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers.

A CALL TO SUFFER FOR THE GOSPEL

The list in this verse would in effect be specific examples of the **afflictions, hardships, distresses**, just mentioned. It is notable that throughout this section we hear not even a suggestion of complaining or grumbling! Paul is a Spirit filled man (cf Php 2:13-14+).

In beatings ([plege](#)) - Literally refers to blows to Paul's body as he amplifies later asking "Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep." (2Co 11:23-25+).

Writing to the Galatians Paul described the effects of his beatings writing "From now on let no one cause **trouble** ([kopos](#)) for me, for **I bear on my body the brand-marks** ([stigma](#)) of Jesus." (Galatians 6:17+)

Pulpit Commentary - The stripes were of two kinds—from Jewish whips and Roman rods. But of the five scourgings with Jewish whips not one is mentioned in the Acts, and only one of the three scourgings with Roman rods (Acts 16:23). Nothing, therefore, is

more clear than that the Acts only furnishes us with a fragmentary and incomplete record, in which, as we gather from the Epistles, either the agonies of St. Paul's lifelong martyrdom are for some reason intentionally minimized, or else (which is, perhaps, more probable) St. Paul was, as his rule and habit, so reticent about his own sufferings in the cause of Christ that St. Luke was only vaguely, if at all, aware of many scenes of trial through which he had passed. ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

In imprisonments ([phulake](#) - jailed) - This is the story of Paul's life after completing the three missionary journeys - see Acts 22:24 Acts 23:35 Acts 24:27 Acts 26:10,29 Acts 28:16,17,30. Paul was frequently in prison at Philippi; the Roman imprisonment and that at Cæsarea.

Stedman - Clement of Rome tells us the apostle was put into prison seven times, though only four of these are recorded in the Scriptures. At least two imprisonments were for more than two years, so Paul spent at least five years in prison and perhaps much more. ([2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Sensible Fanaticis](#))

In his last communication Paul testifies how the imprisonments were not impediment writing "for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but **the word of God** is not imprisoned." (2Ti 2:9+) In fact he wrote the "[prison epistles](#)" ([Ephesians](#), [Philippians](#), [Colossians](#), [Philemon](#)) during this time showing us how we can always **redeem the time**, regardless of our circumstances or situation.

In tumults ([akatastasis](#) - riots, civil disorders) - Describes situations of confusion, times of "rebellions" or uprisings, sometimes in open defiance of civil authority. See Luke's descriptions of numerous **tumults** in Paul's ministry - Acts 13:50, Acts 14:19 Acts 16:19-23, Acts 17:5 Acts 18:12-17 Acts 19:23-34 Acts 21:27-35 Acts 22:23 Acts 23:10.

Stedman notes that **tumults** "is a reference to the riots and mob violence which he sometimes provoked by the sweeping social changes his preaching produced. Perhaps nothing is more frightening than an angry mob, out of control, bent upon venting its rage upon some hapless victim. But Paul was enabled by God to endure all of these encounters and trials with triumphant courage." ([2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Sensible Fanaticis](#))

MacDonald says "The message that Gentiles could be saved in the same way as Jews caused some of the most violent outbursts." ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Barclay is probably correct when he says that "Nowadays it is not the violence but the mockery or the amused contempt of the crowd against which the Christian must stand fast." ([2 Corinthians 6 Commentary](#))

The following triad contrasts with the former triad in that the following are largely self-inflicted hardships. Do we ever read of Paul taking a furlough or a sabbatical? I don't think so. He continually had supernatural energy from the indwelling Spirit! We in minister would be wise to imitate this aspect of his pattern of ministry.

In labors ([kopos](#)) (cf 1Co 4:12) - Speaks of hard, unrelenting toil, to the point of exhaustion. Paul knew creditable ministry involved some serious work (he was also a tent-maker - Acts 18:3+), but he also knew that their "**toil** ([kopos](#)) (was) not in vain in the Lord." (1Co 15:58+). Later in this letter Paul contrasts himself with those who said they were "servants of Christ" testifying he had been "in far more **labors** ([kopos](#))" (2Co 11:23, cf [kopos](#) again in 2Co 11:27) then these so-called servants of Christ. How could Paul sustain such difficult labor as a natural man. In a word supernaturally. In another word "grace" Paul explaining that "by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I **labored** (related verb [kopiao](#)) even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. (1Co 15:10+) In 1Th 2:9 Paul explains they were working to earn money so that they would not burden the church at Thessalonica. While **labors** often refers to hard work in Paul's use in Gal 6:17+ **kopos** means "trouble"; "distress" and so it likely Paul intends this sense in at least some of his **labors**.

In sleeplessness ([agrupnia](#)), **in hunger** ([nesteria](#)) - Paul describes labor, sleeplessness and hunger in 2 Corinthians 11:27 writing he had been "in **labor** ([kopos](#)) and hardship, through many **sleepless nights** ([agrupnia](#)), in hunger ([limos](#) not [nesteria](#)) and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Why would Paul need to be a "light sleeper"? Recall that he was continually in danger of death and had to remain alert to possible attempts to assassinate him. **Sleeplessness** is in the plural which more literally is "sleepless nights" which implies that he had cares and concerns which typically cause sleeplessness, which Paul endured for the sake of the Church. While **hunger** ([nesteria](#)) might refer to fastings by Paul (spiritual discipline), in this context it seems more likely to refer to Paul's experience of "going to bed hungry" with "his stomach growling" (so to speak) in view of his financial poverty.

Pulpit Commentary - The nine forms of suffering hitherto mentioned—three general, three specific, and three voluntary—are all physical sufferings borne with "much endurance." ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Beatings (blows, wounds) ([4127](#)) **plege** from **plesso** = to strike) means a literal blow as from some instrument like a whip (in plural = beating in Lk 12:48; cf Acts 16:23; 2 Cor 11:23). **Plege** described the result of the blows, and so referred to wound, bruise (Acts 16:33, Rev 13:14). The third sense of **plege** was to describe a sudden

calamity causing severe distress such as a "blow" or "stroke" of judgment sent by God (plague, misfortune, calamity - Rev 9:18, 20; 18:4, 8; 22:18). In the Septuagint *pege* is used to describe the 10 plagues in Egypt (Ex 11:1) and the protection of the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintels of the Jewish homes that saved them from the "plague."

Imprisonments (5438) **phulake** to guard, watch) means a guarding (the act of guarding or keeping watch - Lk 2:8, Nu 1:53, 3:7, 28) or guard (the person doing the watching - Acts 12:10) , a prison as a place where someone is guarded (Mt 5:25, 14:3, 10, 18:30, 25:36, 39, 43, etc). **Phulake** can refer to the period during which a watch is kept (Mt 14:25, 24:43, Mk 6:48, Lk 12:38 - a watch of the night = Ancient Jews had 3 divisions of 4 hours each but under the Romans changed to 4 watches of 3 hours each, the 4th watch being between 3-6 in the morning). It has the root meaning of being kept under guard or on hold and is distinct from *desmoterion*, a place of bondage. **Phulake** can have a penal connotation but not in every use. **Phulake** is used of a holding cell pending trial. Some uses of **phulake** simply mean "a watch" as in watching over (Mt 14:25, Lk 2:8) The last use of *Phulake* describes Satan's holding tank before he is released, fully defeated and cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:7+). Thus, this speaks of a place of *involuntary confinement*, not merely a "haunt, den, [or] refuge." Paul used *phulake* to describe his imprisonments (2 Cor 6:5). In Revelation 18:2+ Babylon is described figuratively the final refuge, the place of banishment for unclean spirits, "a dwelling place of demons and a **prison** of every unclean spirit."

Tumults (disturbances, disorders, contusions)(181) **akatastasia** from **akatastatos** = unstable from **a** = negative + **kathistemi** = set in order) means literally without order or stability and thus has a basic meaning of instability = to an unsettled state of affairs, an upheaval, a state of violent group disturbance, a tumult, or unrest, especially in a political or social setting (riots, revolutions). In 1Co 14:33 Paul says "God is not a *God* of **confusion** (*akatastasia*)."
In 2 Cor. 12:20 and James 3:16 the context suggests that **akatastasia** is used of the disruption of the Christian community by worldly disputes among the brethren and in both of these passages jealousy and selfish ambition (**eritheia**) are listed prior to **akatastasia** as factors which predispose to social instability. basic meaning of instability, and hence came to be used of a state of confusion, disturbance, disarray, or tumult, sometimes even of rebellion or anarchy.

Labors (2873) **kopos** from **kopto** = chop, hew, cut down, strike; figuratively to lament which apparently came from the idea of striking one's breast) (See also study of related verb **kopiaō**) is strictly a smiting as a sign of sorrow, then sorrow itself. **Kopos** thus describes a state of discomfort or distress, trouble, difficulty, transferring the sense of the primary meaning which is beating. **Kopos** referring to labor conveys the sense that the labor involves toil, fatigue, suffering, weariness and sorrow. It thus speaks of an intense effort which can be united with trouble. In short **kopos** conveys the idea of arduous toil involving sweat and fatigue and emphasizes the weariness which follows as a result of the straining of all of one's powers to the utmost.

Sleeplessness (70)(**agrupnia**) describes state of remaining awake because one is unable to go to sleep. Total abstinence from sleep, watchfulness (2 Cor. 6:5; 11:27). Metaphorically it could describe state of being alertly concerned (but in Paul's uses certainly includes literal sleeplessness). In classical Greek *agrupnia* is used to refer to sleeplessness, waking, and figuratively of watching, or a time of watching. This noun form occurs 10 times in the Apocrypha, but it is not found in the canonical writings or the papyri. However, the verb **agrupneo**, which is akin to *agrupnia*, is found both in the Septuagint and the papyri where it is chiefly used for *shāqadh*, which means "to be awake," or "to be watchful of or intent upon something." Only in 2Co 6:5 and 2Co 11:27 both uses in the plural ("sleepless nights").

Hunger (fastings)(3521) **nesteria** from **nesteuo** = to fast) describes fasting, fast, abstinence from eating, generally for want of food (2Co 6:5; 11:27).

2 Corinthians 6:6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love,

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,

NET 2 Corinthians 6:6 by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by benevolence, by the Holy Spirit, by genuine love,

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:6 ν γν τητι, ν γν σει, ν μακροθυμ , ν χρηστ τητι, ν πνε ματι γ , ν γ π νυποκρ τ ,

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:6 We prove ourselves by our purity, our understanding, our patience, our kindness, by the

Holy Spirit within us, and by our sincere love.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love;

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love;

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:6 in pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned,

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:6 in pureness, in knowledge, in long suffering, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned,

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:6 by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:6 by purity, by knowledge, by prolonged endurance, by kindness, by holy spirit, by genuine love,

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love,

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:6 by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love,

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:6 in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness; in the Holy Spirit, in a love free of affectation;

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:6 People can see our purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives, our sincere love,

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:6 In a clean heart, in knowledge, in long waiting, in being kind, in the Holy Spirit, in true love,

- **in purity:** 2Co 7:2 1Th 2:10 1Ti 4:12 5:2 Tit 2:7
- **in knowledge:** 2Co 4:6 11:6 1Co 2:1,2,16 Eph 3:4 Col 1:9,10,27 2:3, long suffering, 1Co 13:4 Ga 5:22 Eph 4:2,32 Col 1:11 3:12 2Ti 3:10 4:2
- **in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit:** 2Co 3:3 2Co 11:4 Ro 15:19 1Co 2:4 Ga 3:2,5 1Th 1:5,6 1Pe 1:12
- **in genuine love:** 2Co 2:4 11:11 12:15 Jud 16:15 Eze 33:31 Ro 12:9 1Pe 1:22 1Jn 3:18
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 2:10+ (**SPIRITUAL GNOSIS REVEALED BY THE SPIRIT**) For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God.

2 Corinthians 3:3+ being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but **with the Spirit of the living God**, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

MORAL INTEGRITY OF MINISTRY

Pulpit Commentary - He now gives six instances of special gifts and virtues. [2 Corinthians 6](#))

Ray Stedman - What was the secret of such endurance? It was never by a clenching of his fists, a jutting of his jaw, and a determination of his will to show the world how much he could take for Christ. Such an approach would soon have left even Paul broken and defeated, as he actually was in the early days of his Christian life. No, the secret of triumphant endurance was the new covenant--"everything coming from God, nothing coming from me"! There was a certain kind of character he possessed which saw him through his troubles. It had to be invariable, or nearly so, for he never knew when it would be required. It consisted of four elements. ([2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Sensible Fanaticism](#))

In purity ([hagnotes](#)) - Paul's (moral) **purity** to the church at Corinth reflects his dedication to them and his blamelessness before God. He served God as a vessel of honor, leaving us all his example to imitate (2Ti 2:21+, 1Cor 11:1+). Paul could never be accused of immorality (recall Corinth was a hotbed of immorality).

J Vernon McGee - Believe me, it is important that a minister be pure in his life. Lack of pureness is one thing that hits and hurts the ministry today. It is always tragic when a minister turns up as a bad egg and is found guilty of immorality and impurity. Pureness is important—and it is important to God.

Stedman on purity - This refers to the careful avoidance of all sin which defiles or stains the flesh or spirit. Paul never allowed himself to be found in a compromising relationship with anyone. He carefully guarded not only his behavior, but his thought life, for he knew that is where defilement begins. Whenever he found himself toying with impurity, he immediately brought it to the Lord Jesus and obtained His cleansing and forgiveness. ([2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Sensible Fanaticism](#))

Dan Mitchell on purity - This "may have a moral sense or a constitutional sense. That is, it may refer to freedom from immorality or singleness of motive and purpose. It is not unlikely that Paul has both in view." ([2 Cor - Grace Under Siege](#))

Michael Andrus - When Jan and I visited the city of Ephesus in Turkey we marveled at the truly breath-taking ancient ruins there. One of the best preserved buildings is the library that stood there when Paul walked those streets. But in the corner of the library there was a room where only men were allowed, and out of that room there was a secret tunnel to the brothel across the street. A lot of men in Ephesus were going to the library but not to read books! Paul, however, rejected such behavior and kept his own life pure before God.

In knowledge (gnosis) - "[Biblical world view](#)." **Knowledge** was spiritual knowledge, which was revealed to Him by the Spirit (cf 1Co 2:10, cf Eph 3:4) and imparted to the church, not his own natural knowledge or his vast knowledge as a former Pharisee. Others think the context suggests the thought is that Paul had knowledge and insight which allowed him to cope with the manifold difficulties.

Stedman on knowledge - His mind was deliberately set upon truth, as he had learned it from the Scriptures and revelations of the Lord. He judged all persons and events, not from a human point of view, but from the divine viewpoint as revealed by the Spirit. The doctrine of Scripture was always his guide. ([2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Sensible Fanaticism](#))

Pulpit Commentary - The word **gnosis** had not yet acquired the fatal connotations which afterwards discredited it. ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

In patience (makrothumia) - **Patience** describes Paul's "long fuse" (**makrothumia**) with difficult, adversarial people. This is one component of the fruit of the Spirit in Gal 5:22+, underscoring that Paul was a man continually filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18+), a man who continually walked by the Spirit's power (Gal 5:16+). **Stedman** is probably correct when he writes "By nature Paul was impatient and hard driving. But he learned by the Spirit to wait for others to catch up, to be understanding about their weaknesses, and to wait quietly for the Lord to do the work of correction that was needed, for "to his own master he stands or falls" (Romans 14:4+)."

Pulpit Commentary - (2Ti 3:10; 4:2). The patient endurance of insults, of which St. Paul shows a practical specimen in this Epistle, and still more in Phil. 1:15–18. ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

So how does Paul commend his ministry (instead of putting an obstacle in the way)? Instead of grumbling, complaining, seeking to avenge himself, etc, he is patient (long fuse) and kind (goodness in action) and under the Spirit's control (does not grieve or quench the Spirit by sinful attitudes) and dispensing unconditional love, this latter reminding me of Jesus "impossible" (but "Him-possible") command to "love your enemies." (Mt 5:44)

In kindness (chrestotes) refers to a gracious attitude with the idea of furnishing what is useful, profitable and needed, something Paul practiced with the Corinthians. It is goodness in action. In short Paul's mindset was always to do good to others in need. **Kindness** is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22+) Who enabled Paul to manifest this attribute. This recalls Paul's words of 1Co 13:4 "love is **kind** (**chresteuomai** in present tense)."

In the Holy (hagios) Spirit (pneuma) - **In the Holy Spirit** is locative of sphere indicating that **all** of Paul's ministerial activities were carried out in the "atmosphere" of, the enabling power of, the Holy Spirit. This list of commendations would fall apart without the enabling power of the Spirit, in Whose power Paul continually walked (Gal 5:16+)

Andrus - The Spirit is ultimately the source of all the spiritual qualities Paul has just mentioned. Though those qualities are evident, he does not take any credit for them. He knows good and well that they are the fruit of the Spirit—qualities that only God can produce in a person's life

J Vernon McGee - God have mercy on any preacher who tries to preach without the Spirit of God leading and guiding. I am more concerned about that than any other thing. I was pastor in downtown Los Angeles for twenty-one years, and I had followed many great men. I often thought about Dr. R. A. Torrey, the great evangelist of the past, who had been the first pastor of the church. When

I would go out to preach, the last thing I would say was, "O Lord, help me to preach in the power of the Holy Spirit!" Vernon McGee in himself is not very much in comparison to those men who went before him. An effective ministry can only be by the Holy Ghost. (AMEN!)

Stedman - Behind everything else and at the root of it all was **'the Holy Spirit.'** The Third Person of the Godhead is the gift of both the Father and the Son, serving as the guarantee of all else to come, dwelling permanently in Paul's heart, was the uncreated source of all that sustained Paul. It was the Spirit's constant delight to release to Paul at all times "the life of Jesus." Jesus Himself, by the Spirit, lived in Paul and upheld and empowered him, just as He lives in us and upholds us and empowers us through all our trials and tribulations. That "life of Jesus" invariably consists of three elements: love, truth, and power. This "life of Jesus" was continually supplied to Paul through the Spirit, explaining all that He was and did. This was the "sincere love," "truthful speech," and "the power of God" Paul talked about. No wonder he could handle life the way he did! ([2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Sensible Fanaticism](#))

Pulpit Commentary - To the special gift of the Spirit Paul attributed all his success (1Th 1:5; Ro 15:18, 19). ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

In **genuine** ([anupokritos](#)), **love** ([agape](#)) - Paul's Spirit enabled supernatural **love** ([agape](#)) for the Corinthians was sincere, authentic, **genuine** ([anupokritos](#)), without pretense or "mask." It was also a component of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-)

Pulpit Commentary - **Love** is the surest fruit of the Spirit, and the best of all spiritual gifts (2Co 12:15; 1Cor. 8:1-13; Ro 12:9, etc.) ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Purity (54) (**hagnotes** from [hagnos](#) - chaste, In religious language it is primarily an attribute of deity; then it refers to things having some relation to the deity) means purity, sincerity, a quality of behavior that is morally clean, blamelessness.

Knowledge (1108) **gnosis** from [ginosko](#) = to know especially experientially) in simple terms is the possession of information of what is known. **Gnosis** describes the comprehension or intellectual grasp of something. **Gnosis** refers to knowledge gained by experience in contrast to intuitive knowledge. In the present context given the fact that Paul had the mind of Christ (1Co 2:16+), this knowledge was not like the experiential knowledge of a natural (fleshly, unregenerate) man.

Patience (3115) **makrothumia** from **makros** = long, distant, far off, large + **thumos** = temper, **passion**, emotion or **thumoomai** = to be furious or burn with intense anger) is literally long-temper (as opposed to "short tempered"), a long holding out of the mind before it gives room to action or passion ("a long fuse!"). It describes a state of emotional calm or quietness in the face of provocation, misfortune or unfavorable circumstances. **Makrothumia** is the capacity to be wronged and not retaliate. It is the ability to hold one's feeling in restraint or bear up under the oversights and wrongs afflicted by others without retaliating. It is manifest by the quality of forbearance under provocation. It is used of God's patience toward sinful men (see note Romans 2:4) and of the attitude which Christians are to display.

Kindness (5544) **chrestotes** from adjective **chrestos** = useful, profitable in turn from **chraomai** = to furnish what is needed in turn from **chráo** = lend, furnish as a loan) is a gracious attitude, and thus describes the quality of being helpful and beneficial. It connotes genuine goodness and generosity of heart. **Kindness** is an attribute of God and a quality desirable but not consistently found in men

Genuine (sincere) (505) [anupokritos](#) from **a** = negative prefix meaning without + **hupokrinomai** [see below] = to pretend, this Greek verb being a combination of **hupó** = under, indicating secrecy + **krino** = to judge) is literally without play acting, without playing the part or without hypocrisy. **Anupokritos** describes that which is unhypocritical, genuine (faith, love and wisdom in Scripture) and without show or pretense (pretense = a claim made or implied and especially one not supported by fact).

Love (26) [agape](#) is unconditional, sacrificial love and Biblically refers to a love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that God shows (Jn 3:16, 1Jn 4:9) and that God enables in His children (fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22+).

2 Corinthians 6:7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

NET 2 Corinthians 6:7 by truthful teaching, by the power of God, with weapons of righteousness both for the

right hand and for the left,

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:7 ν λ γ ληθε ας, ν δυν μει θεο · δι τ ν πλων τ ς δικαιοσ νης τ ν δεξι ν κα ριστερ ν,

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:7 We faithfully preach the truth. God's power is working in us. We use the weapons of righteousness in the right hand for attack and the left hand for defense.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:7 by truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:7 in the word of truth, in the power of God, through the armour of the righteousness, on the right and on the left,

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:7 in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:7 by the message of truth, by the power of God; through weapons of righteousness on the right hand and the left,

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:7 by truthful speech, by God's power, through using the weapons of righteousness for offense and defense,

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:7 by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left;

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:7 in truthful speech, in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness at the right and at the left;

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:7 in the word of truth and in the power of God; by using the weapons of uprightness for attack and for defence:

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:7 truthfulness, and the presence of God's power. We demonstrate that we are God's servants

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:7 In the true word, in the power of God; with the arms of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

- **in the word of truth:** 2Co 1:18-20 4:2 7:14 Ps 119:43 Eph 1:13 4:21 Col 1:5 2Ti 2:15 Jas 1:18
- **in the power of God:** 2Co 10:4,5 13:4 Mk 16:20 Ac 11:21 1Co 1:24 2:4,5 Eph 1:19,20 3:20 Heb 2:4
- **by the weapons of righteousness:** Isa 11:5 59:17 Ro 13:12,13 Eph 6:11-20 1Th 5:8 2Ti 4:7
- **for the right hand and the left:** Ex 14:22 Pr 3:16 1Chr 12:1,2
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 4:2+ (**THE WORD OF TRUTH**) we have renounced the things hidden because of shame (TRUTH IS BY DEFINITION ESSENTIALLY THAT WHICH IS NOT HIDDEN, THAT WHICH IS UNCONCEALED AND SPEAKS OF INTEGRITY AND HONESTY), not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

1 Corinthians 1:18+ (**THE POWER OF GOD**) For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the **power** ([dunamis](#)) of God.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5+ (**THE POWER OF GOD**) And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. 3 I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, 4 and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the **power** ([dunamis](#)) of God.

2 Corinthians 4:7+ (**THE POWER OF GOD**) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the **power** ([dunamis](#)) will be of God and not from ourselves

1 Corinthians 4:20+ (**THE POWER OF GOD**) For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in **power** ([dunamis](#)).

Romans 1:16+ (**THE POWER OF GOD**) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the **power** ([dunamis](#)) of **God** for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

The triad in this passage provides Paul the supernatural enablement (Word, Spirit) to fight (weapons) the good fight of faith.

In the word ([logos](#)) **of truth** ([aletheia](#)) - (cf 2Co 4:7; 1Co 2:4; 1Co 4:20) - **NET** renders it in "truthful teaching." In Colossians 1:5+ Paul refers to the Gospel as the **word of truth** and that could certainly be Paul's meaning in this context of commending his ministry, the foundation of which was the Gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24+, cf also "message [logos] of truth" in Eph 1:13).

[J Vernon McGee](#) - The "word of truth" means that a preacher should know his Bible. He should preach "by the power of God," which is possible only as a pastor spends time alone with God before he steps into the pulpit.

George Brooks - Here Paul was suggesting that his life and work were not guided by human wisdom and the philosophies of his day. His life and work were guided by truthful speech. He lived and worked in obedience to the word of God. He endured life's experiences by preaching and living the truth of the word of God. In his ministry, there was no flattery in Paul's words. He made no effort to sweet-talk his hearers. He did not attempt to tickle the ears of his hearers. His goal as a preacher was to share God's word as God revealed it to him. Paul endured in sharing the word of truth despite the attitudes of others and the possible suffering he may encounter because of sharing the truth. He did not allow himself to be guided by the trends of his day. He was only concerned about sharing the truth.

In the power ([dunamis](#)) **of God** - Paul did not minister in his power but HIS power. It is notable that the Gospel Paul preached was the **power of God**. (Ro 1:16+) Paul had just mentioned his ministry was **in the Holy** ([hagios](#)) **Spirit** ([pneuma](#)). Paul ministered not in his power but in the supernatural power of the Spirit (cf 2Co 2:17+, 2Co 3:5-6+). Jesus described this **power** for ministry in Acts 1:8+ "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." Paul was fulfilling this prophecy. Remember that [dunamis](#) in this context (and most of Paul's uses - e.g., Eph 3:16+) refers to the Spirit's enabling power to accomplish supernaturally what is impossible to accomplish naturally (relying on our "human potential").

Phrase **power of God** - 14x in 13v - Job 27:11; Mt. 22:29; Mk. 12:24; Lk. 22:69; Acts 8:10; Ro 1:16; 1Co. 1:18; 1Co. 1:24; 1Co. 2:5; 2Co. 6:7; 2Co. 13:4; 2 Ti 1:8 = "join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the **power of God**"; 1 Pet. 1:5

By the weapons ([hoplon](#)) **of righteousness** ([dikaiosune](#)) **for the right hand and the left** - The exact meaning of this verse is not certain, but one point Paul wants to convey is that we are in a fierce spiritual struggle often against an enemy that is invisible. Our supernatural enemy the [devil](#) opposes all we do and all we stand for and works in concert with our other inveterate enemies the godless [world system](#), and the [fallen flesh](#) (the enemy within the Temple of our body!). Paul reference to **weapons** of course does not refer to literal weapons but figurative, albeit very real spiritual weapons. Typically, the offensive weapons (like spears and swords) were held in the right hand, the defensive weapons (like shields) were held in the left. We are in a spiritual battle. Spiritual battles require spiritual weapons. **Righteousness** is positional (justification) and experiential or practical (sanctification) and in this context is speaking of Paul's "right" behavior before God which functions as breastplate (? guarding the heart) in spiritual warfare (Eph 6:14+).

[Guzik](#) - The idea of **on the right hand and the left** is of holding both offensive and defensive weapons. It probably has in mind "both advancing and being attacked." "Particularly, the shield and the sword; the former on the left arm, the latter on the right hand. We have the doctrine of truth, and the power of God, as an armour to protect us on all sides, every where, and on all occasions." (Clarke)

[Michael Andrus](#) - We are in a spiritual battle, friends, and we have a supernatural enemy who opposes all we do and all we stand for. What weapons will we use in this battle? We have a choice, you know. We can use natural weapons—reason, debate, facts, knowledge, exclusively, or we can rely on supernatural weapons. In 2Co 10:4 Paul says, "The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds."

Kruse on weapons - Ministry with the **weapons** ([hoplon](#)) **of righteousness for the right hand and for the left** has been variously interpreted: a ministry that is (a) ready for an attack from any quarter, (b) armed with weapons of offence (a sword for the right hand) and defence (a shield for the left), (c) carried out both in prosperity (the right hand) and adversity (the left hand). This sort of military metaphor is used in other passages in Paul's writings, and a consideration of these throws light on its use here. In 2Co 10:3–5 Paul

speaks of 'the weapons (hopla) of our warfare' which are not worldly but 'have divine power to destroy strongholds'. These strongholds are 'arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God', and the purpose of their destruction is to 'take every thought captive to obey Christ'. What we see here is the offensive weapon of gospel presentation and argumentation (cf. e.g. Acts 19:8–10) whereby the power of God is released to bring about the overthrow of false arguments and folly and bring people to the obedience of faith. ([Full text of Tyndale NT Commentary on 2 Corinthians](#) - Text format is awkward but material is present)

Right hand and the left hand (see 1Chr 12:1-2NLT) This might be talking about having skill with spiritual weapons. These mighty men of David could fight with either their right or their left hands. They were well trained, valuable men. How skillful are you with God's weapons?

Power (Miracles) ([1411](#)) **dunamis** from **dunamai** = to be able, to have power) power especially achieving power. It refers to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function, the potential for functioning in some way (power, might, strength, ability, capability), the power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature. **Dunamis** is the implied ability or capacity to perform. It conveys the idea of effective, productive energy, rather than that which is raw and unbridled. **Dunamis** is the word generally used by Paul of divine energy. Scripture uses **dunamis** to describe deeds that exhibit the ability to function powerfully (deeds of power, miracles, wonders) (eg, see Mt 11:20, 23, 13:54, 58, etc) **Vine** - In 2Ti 1:7 **dunamis** denotes the ability requisite for meeting difficulties and for the fulfillment of the service committed to us. **Dunamis** is frequently used by Paul in the Corinthians letters - 1 Co. 1:18; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 2:4; 1 Co. 2:5; 1 Co. 4:19; 1 Co. 4:20; 1 Co. 5:4; 1 Co. 6:14; 1 Co. 12:10; 1 Co. 12:28; 1 Co. 12:29; 1 Co. 14:11; 1 Co. 15:24; 1 Co. 15:43; 1 Co. 15:56; 2 Co. 1:8; 2 Co. 4:7; 2 Co. 6:7; 2 Co. 8:3; 2 Co. 12:9; 2 Co. 12:12; 2 Co. 13:4

Weapons ([3696](#)) **hoplon** originally described any tool or implement for preparing a thing and then became specialized to refer to items such as a ship's tackling, a cable, a rope or a tool of any kind (blacksmith tools, sickle, staff) and then in the plural was used for weapons of the Greek soldier. Paul thinks of the members of the Christian's body as weapons to be used in the Christian warfare against evil. The saint, counting upon the fact that he has been disengaged from the evil nature, does two things, he refuses to allow it to reign as king in his life, and he stops putting his members at its disposal to be used as weapons of unrighteousness. **Hoplon** is used once in the NT to describe literal physical weapons (Jn 18:3) but more often is used figuratively to describe

- **members** of the body = can be presented to [Sin = Principle](#) or to God, for unrighteousness or righteousness (Ro 6:13+)
- **armor** of light (Ro 13:12+),
- **weapons** of righteousness (2Cor 6:7)
- **weapons** of the Christian's warfare (2Co 10:4+).

Illustration

In The Encourager, Charles Mylander writes: "Sunrise was dawning when Los Angeles motorcycle police officer Bob Vernon saw a red pickup truck speed through a stop sign. This guy must be late to work, he thought to himself. He turned on his emergency lights and radioed that he was in pursuit. The pickup pulled over, and the officer approached.

"Meanwhile in the truck, the driver thought, The cops already know! He was scared. He rested his hand on the same gun he had used a few moments before to rob a twenty-four-hour market. The sack of stolen money was beside him on the seat.

"The officer said, 'Good morning, sir, may I see your—'

"He never finished the sentence. The driver shoved his gun toward the policeman's chest and fired from just inches away. The cop was knocked flat seven feet away.

"A few seconds later, to the shock of the criminal, the officer stood up, pulled his service revolver, and fired twice. The first bullet went through the open window and smashed the windshield. The second tore through the door and ripped into the driver's left leg.

"Don't shoot!' the thief screamed, throwing the gun and sack of money out the pickup window.

"What saved the policeman's life was dozens of layers of Kevlar, the super strong fabric used for bulletproof vests. Only three-eighths of an inch thick, Kevlar can stop bullets cold." In Ephesians 6, the Bible instructs every Christian to put on the full armor of God. Simple qualities like righteousness and faith can deflect what the Enemy of souls may fire at us

QUESTION - [What are the weapons of righteousness in 2 Corinthians 6:7?](#)

ANSWER - As Paul was listing some of the trials he faced in the ministry, he wrote, "As servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; . . . in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left" (2 Corinthians 6:4, 7). In the [spiritual battle](#), it's nice to have weapons of righteousness.

All people are born into a world war of good against evil. The good side's battle plan, God's Word, reveals that, while this war is fought in many arenas, our fight is ultimately "not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12). Normal, physical weapons are of no avail in such a battle. We need weapons of righteousness.

Christians, by God's grace, have the privilege of fighting on the winning side (Revelation 20:7–14). As we know, "it is not by sword or spear that the Lord saves; for the battle is the Lord's" (1 Samuel 17:47). We are trained and equipped by God to complete our assigned missions in that battle (Psalm 144:1; Ephesians 6:10). Paul refers to the instruments God equips us with as "weapons of righteousness."

In what way are the weapons linked to "righteousness"? God told the Israelites that their power to defeat the evil nations in Canaan was not due to their own righteousness (Deuteronomy 9:4–6), and in a similar way we Christians are issued our spiritual weapons due entirely to Christ's righteousness, not our own (Philippians 3:9). "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). To enter a battle without God's righteousness assures defeat (see Numbers 14:42).

There is no "neutral" side in the spiritual war. All people must choose to join one side or the other, for "no one can serve two masters" (Luke 16:13). Jesus told His disciples, "Whoever is not against you is for you" (Luke 9:50), but He also declared, "Whoever is not with Me is against Me, and whoever does not gather with Me scatters" (Luke 11:23). Those statements leave no middle ground—you're either on one side or the other. So Paul commands, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God" (2 Corinthians 6:14–16).

2 Corinthians 6:3–10 provides the context of Paul's reference to weapons of righteousness. Here Paul describes the tough life of a devoted warrior for Christ. The hardships he faces are of every kind—spiritual, emotional, and physical—and they are continuous. That's why he must always carry his "weapons of righteousness" in both hands—right and left are equally occupied.

God has equipped us for the battles we face. "For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:3–5).

Any gift from God that has power to destroy evil can be described as a "weapon of righteousness." Here are a few things that can be called a weapon of righteousness:

The Bible. All God's words are true and righteous (Psalm 119:160, 172) and useful for "training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). That makes the Bible an effective weapon for Christians. "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). Jesus used God's Word to defeat Satan's temptations (Matthew 4:1–11). The word of the Lord is pictured as a [sword](#) coming out of His mouth, having power to strike down the nations (Revelation 19:15, 21). God's Word is one of the "weapons of righteousness" against the forces of hell.

Faith. The Old Testament tells of heroes "who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies" (Hebrews 11:33–34). This should not surprise us, since Jesus revealed that even a small amount of [faith](#) has enough power to move mountains (Matthew 17:20). "Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Prayer. "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). Scripture is full of examples of the [power of prayer](#). Summarizing the time of the judges, Nehemiah 9:27 says, "When they were oppressed

they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compassion you gave them deliverers, who rescued them from the hand of their enemies.” By prayer the drought was begun and ended during Elijah’s day (James 5:17–18). By prayer the enemies of Elisha were struck blind (2 Kings 6:18). By prayer Samson achieved victory over the Philistines (Judges 16:28–30).

Goodness. [Goodness](#) is another weapon of righteousness. We are instructed to “overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21). Sometimes it seems that evil is more powerful, or at least more prevalent, but it is only temporary. One believer, taking a stand on the side of goodness, can turn back much evil. It is important that we “add to our faith goodness,” which empowers us to defeat the evil of the world and the evil within our own sin nature (2 Peter 1:4–5).

Love. All our other weapons of righteousness are worthless without this one, the greatest commandment (Mark 12:30–31); it is even greater than faith (1 Corinthians 13:1–3). It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). “For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline” (2 Timothy 1:7). [Love](#) empowers Christians by uniting us, giving us understanding, encouragement, and joy (Colossians 2:2–3; Philemon 1:4–7). We are to trust in God’s love, and it will protect us from evil (Psalm 17:7; 52:8; 61:7) just as surely as it cleansed us from sin and defeated Satan’s plans against us (Psalm 103:10–12; John 3:16; Revelation 12:10).

In addition to the weapons of righteousness, Christians are supplied with the [‘full armor of God’](#) to empower us mere humans to stand against Satan himself and all the forces of hell (Ephesians 6:10–17). Our protective gear includes the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, and the shield of faith, plus one offensive weapon, our sword, the Word of God (verse 17). We, the church, are to be on the offense, God’s army against whom the gates of hell cannot prevail (Matthew 16:18).

War is marked by death. Our Savior conquered death, then gave to us that same power over death and all other threats. Therefore, we “we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 8:37–39). [GotQuestions.org](#)

2 Corinthians 6:8 by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true;

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;

NET 2 Corinthians 6:8 through glory and dishonor, through slander and praise; regarded as impostors, and yet true;

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:8 δι̅ ὃ̅ ξ̅η̅ς̅ κα̅ τι̅μ̅ α̅ς̅, δι̅ ὁ̅υ̅σ̅φ̅η̅μ̅ α̅ς̅ κα̅ ε̅φ̅η̅μ̅ α̅ς̅· ὅ̅ς̅ π̅λ̅ νο̅ι̅ κα̅ λ̅η̅θ̅ε̅ς̅,

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:8 We serve God whether people honor us or despise us, whether they slander us or praise us. We are honest, but they call us impostors.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:8 through honor and dishonor, through slander and praise. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:8 through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors;

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:8 through glory and dishonour, through evil report and good report, as leading astray, and true;

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:8 by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:8 through glory and dishonor, through slander and good report; as deceivers yet true;

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:8 through glory and dishonor, through defamation and commendation; as deceivers, yet honest people,

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true;

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:8 through glory and dishonor, insult and praise. We are treated as deceivers and yet are truthful;

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:8 in times of honour or disgrace, blame or praise; taken for impostors and yet we are genuine;

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:8 as we are praised and dishonored, as we are slandered and honored, and as we use what is right to attack what is wrong and to defend the truth. We are treated as dishonest although we are honest,

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:8 By glory and by shame, by an evil name and a good name; as untrue, and still true;

- **by glory and dishonor:** Ac 4:21 5:13,40,41 14:11-20 16:20-22,39 28:4-10 1Co 4:10-13
- **by evil report and good report:** Mt 5:11,12 10:25 Ac 6:3 10:22 22:12 24:5 28:22 Ro 3:8 1Ti 3:7 1Ti 4:10 Heb 13:13 1Pe 4:14 3Jn 1:12 Rev 3:9
- **regarded as deceivers:** Mt 27:63 Joh 7:12,17
- **and yet true:** Mt 22:16 Mk 12:14 Joh 7:18
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

John 7:18 (**GLORY - YET TRUE**) "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the **glory** of the One who sent Him, He is **true**, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

PAUL'S SERVICE IN FACE OF VARIOUS ACCUSATIONS

Paul now commends his ministry by presenting 3 antitheses (opposites). In this triad Paul is in essence describing the three ways people will react to the ministry that Paul describes 2Co 6:6-7 (yes they will even react this way when the minister speaks or carries out **kindness** and unconditional **love**!)

THOUGHT - Some hearers will honor you and some will dishonor you; some will slander you and some will praise you; and some will call you an imposter while others defend your character and integrity as the "real deal." If you have been in a Word centered, Spirit enabled, Christ exalting ministry for more than a few months (maybe even as quick as a few weeks!) then you have almost certainly encountered these diametrically opposed reactions to the same message! If your conscience is clear, then do not be discouraged for you have just fulfilled Jesus' prophecy "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers used to treat the false prophets in the same way." (Lk 6:26+)

Kruse comments that in each antithesis "one part of the antithesis represents an evaluation of his ministry 'from a human point of view', and the other part, the true view of one 'in Christ'." ([Full text of TNTC 2 Corinthians](#))

MacDonald adds that in 2Co 6:8-10 "Paul describes some of the sharp contrasts that are found in service for the Lord Jesus. The true disciple experiences the mountain tops and the valleys, as well as all the territory that lies between." ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

By glory (honor - [doxa](#)) **and dishonor** - **NLT** = "We serve God whether people honor us or despise us." In God's eyes his ministry is honored but in men's eyes it is dishonored. "It is a life of honor and dishonor, of victory and seeming defeat, of commendation and criticism." (MacDonald)

Michael Andrus - Whether praised or blamed, loved or despised, flattered or criticized, it ultimately didn't matter to Paul; he was doing what God called him to do.

Pulpit Commentary says **glory** and **dishonor** are both "means which contribute to the commendation of the ministry." ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Dishonor (Shame) ([819](#)) **atimia** from **átimos** = without honor from **a** = negative + **time** = Honor, respect, reverence, esteem) is a noun which describes that which is literally not honorable, not worthy of respect, reverence or esteem.

By evil report and good report - **NET** = "through slander and praise." "We serve God...whether they slander us or praise us." (NLT) The **evil report** is from men, presumably Paul's adversaries/critics in Corinth. While some spoke well of him, others were critical and condemning.

Michael Andrus - Some people slandered him; others told the truth; again it didn't matter. I don't think I could honestly say this. I

care very much whether I am treated fairly. I'm getting better at accepting responsibility when I do wrong, but I can hardly stand it when I'm accused of something I didn't do. But Paul takes the perspective that it ultimately doesn't make any difference when you know your life is pleasing to God.

THOUGHT - If you are in the ministry you have to be encouraged for surely you have experienced similar mountain tops and valley lows like Paul -- "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1Cor 15:58+) because you are following in the footsteps of the great apostle Paul and the Suffering Servant Jesus Christ (Mk 10:45+, 1Co 11:1+).

Evil report (1426) (**disphemism** from **dis-** = nullifies good sense of a word + **pheme** - a saying or report) is literally evil speaking, ill-report, slander, ill repute, reproach, defamation, ill language, words of ill omen, insult. **BDAG** = "the act of detracting from or damaging another's reputation." Only here in NT and not in Lxx.

Good report (1426) (**euphemism** from **eu-** = good + **pheme** - a saying or report) is a favorable expression about someone, , the utterance of good or auspicious words; commendation, praise, good report, good repute In secular Greek the use of words of good omen. Only here in NT and not in Lxx.

Regarded as deceivers and yet true - "We are honest, but they call us impostors." (**NLT**) "regarded as impostors, and yet true" (2Co 6:8 **NET**) Paul is in good company for they accused Jesus of being a "deceiver" because He said "After three days I am to rise again." (Mt 27:63, cf Jn 7:12). Recall also that some in Corinth questioned Paul's credentials (2Co 3:1+) and presumably some even considered him to be a faker, a sham, a pretender, a fraud. Regardless of the reputation or report that preceded him, Paul remained true (the root idea of this word is not hidden or concealed) and he never compromised on the truth and integrity of the Gospel message from God.

Michael Andrus - Paul was accused of being a false apostle, while in fact he was the greatest of the apostles. Perhaps you have read recently that the President of Venezuela has decreed that New Tribes Mission leave his country. New Tribes is one of the finest mission organizations ever, and having been to the jungles of Venezuela with their missionaries, I can tell you that they have done nothing but good for the Indians there— medically, socially, economically, and, of course, spiritually. But Chavez accuses them of being CIA agents, impostors. The most genuine of Christians or Christian organizations will sometimes be regarded as phony.

Pulpit Commentary says there "is an illustration of the "evil report," and in the Clementine homilies, a century later, St. Paul, under the disgraceful pseudonym of "Simon Magus," is still defamed as a deceiver." ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Deceivers (4108) **planos** wandering, leading astray (adj.), a deceiver (subst.). It is used metaphorically for deliberately and deceptively leading people away from the right path, lying to people about God or about the reality of life and thus getting them off course. 1 Ti 4:1 = "paying attention to **deceitful** spirits" Mt. 27:63 = "that Deceiver" referring to Jesus Who is The Truth!; 2 Jn. 1:7 = "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist." Only 4v in NT - Mt. 27:63; 2 Co. 6:8; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Jn. 1:7

True (227) **alethes** from **a** = negates + **letho** [from **lanthano**] = to escape notice, be hid; See related word **aletheia**) is an adjective which literally describes that which does not escape notice. Thus **alethes** describes that which is manifest, that which is unconcealed, that which conforms to reality (and thus is genuine), that which is in accordance with facts, that which is real (authentic, not imaginary). **Alethes** is used to describe **Jesus** several times in the Gospels - Mt 22:16; Mk 12:14; Jn 7:18.

Illustration One pastor writes,

While I conducted my usual Tuesday evening prison ministry, my wife decided to attend a local home sales party. Our fifteen-year-old daughter, Faith, was at home and later told us about a call she had taken from one of our church members. It went like this:

"Hello, is your father home?"

"No, he's in jail," Faith said.

"Well, then, is your mother home?"

"No, she's at a party."

The church member still reminds us of that call.

-- Richard R. Smith of Cottonwood Falls, Kansas, Christian Reader, January/February, 1997, p. 13.

As the apostle Paul traveled throughout the Roman Empire, we learn from Scripture that he was frequently accused of being crazy. People heard his testimony of his remarkable experience on the Damascus road. They saw his dedication and his commitment to life, which took him away from comforts and pleasures, and they said he was crazy. In fact, Festus, a Roman governor in the book of Acts, said to Paul's face one day, You are out of your mind, Paul! . . . Your great learning is driving you insane (Acts 26:24). But the apostle did not seem to mind this.

We seem generously supplied today with a variety of steely-eyed fanatics who are quick to point their fingers and are full of passionate speeches. Since many of them claim to be Christians, it raises the question of whether the early Christians really were like that. Do you have to be a fanatic to be a Christian? Listen to the apostle Paul's description of his own life and how he describes his own sense of dedication:

Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships, and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on (2 Corinthians 6:4-8a).

Is that fanaticism? If it is, I feel like the great English preacher Charles Spurgeon, who, when he was told that Paul's conversion on the Damascus road was really caused by a fit of epilepsy, said, Oh, blessed epilepsy! Would that every man in London could experience epilepsy like that! So if this is fanaticism, then I say, Would that every one of us were fanatics like this! What a magnificent description of a God-honoring life! What a marvelous pattern is held before us. Here is what the ministry of reconciliation will really look like when it is lived out to the full. You and I may fall far short of a description like this. I feel I do. But though we may not equal in degree the way the apostle lived, we are all called to be like this in kind.

Thank You, Heavenly Father, for the witness of this record of the great apostle as he lived through the pressures and the calamities of his own time. Grant to me, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the same sensible fanaticism as Paul.

Life Application - Following Jesus is a radical, other-worldly calling. If we were accused of being truly Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict us?

F B Meyer - 2 Corinthians 6:8 As deceivers, and yet true.

This is the first clause in one of the most wonderful series of paradoxes in all literature. Let us class together these different conceptions of the apostle, as held by those who judged him by his outward and inward life respectively.

Judged from the view point of this age he was a deceiver, intent on some purpose of his own, misleading and hoodwinking his converts. In the annals of this world he was utterly unknown, and there was no attempt to chronicle his doings or record his words. His life seemed to the gay and worldly a prolonged death, whilst to his close associates and friends it was a perpetual chastening. Very sorrowful, very poor, very destitute — such was his appearance as seen from the outside. And many must have turned from it and felt thankful that the lines had fallen to them in pleasanter places.

Judged from the view point of eternity he was known to be true, and building the temple of truth. By every new dying to the world around, his inner life was being recruited, deepened, and purified. His sufferings were chastening and pruning him, that he might bear more fruit. Amid his outward griefs he was ever drinking at the wells of purest joy; amid his poverty he was enriching the world with the most precious wealth; amid his utter destitution he was handling the imperishable riches of eternity.

The monks of Chartreux, when they first erected their monastery, made all their windows look in on the small inner court, but had none commanding the sublime mountains and glaciers around. So, too, many lives are always contemplating the trifles of earth's court-yard! Oh that such would take into their view the unseen and eternal!

2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death,

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

NET 2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown, and yet well-known; as dying and yet— see!— we continue to live; as those who are scourged and yet not executed;

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:9 ς γνοοι μενοι κα π ιγινωσκ μενοι, ς ποθν σκοντες κα δ ο ζ μεν, ς παιδευ μενοι κα μ θ ανατο μενοι,

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:9 We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and yet not killed;

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed;

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown, and recognized; as dying, and lo, we live; as chastened, and not put to death;

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown yet recognized; as dying and look-- we live; as being disciplined yet not killed;

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:9 as ignoramuses, yet knowledgeable, as dying out, yet look—we live— as being punished, but not put to death,

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed;

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see-- we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed;

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:9 as unrecognized and yet acknowledged; as dying and behold we live; as chastised and yet not put to death;

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:9 unknown and yet we are acknowledged; dying, and yet here we are, alive; scourged but not executed;

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:9 as unknown although we are well-known, as dying although, as you see, we go on living. We are punished, but we are not killed.

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:9 Unnoted, but still kept fully in mind; as near to death, but still living; as undergoing punishment, but not put to death;

- **unknown:** Ac 17:18 21:37,38 25:14,15,19,26 1Co 4:9
- **yet well-known:** 2Co 4:2 5:11 11:6 Ac 19:26 Ro 15:19 Ga 1:22-24
- **behold:** 2Co 1:8-10 2Co 4:10-11 Ro 8:36 1Co 4:9 1Co 15:31
- **as punished yet not put to death:** Ps 118:17,18 1Co 11:32
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 1:8-10+ For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, **so that we despaired even of life**; 9 indeed, **we had the sentence of death** within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; 10 **Who delivered us from so great a peril of death**, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us,

2 Corinthians 4:10-11+ **always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus**, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For **we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake**, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

1 Corinthians 4:9+ For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, **as men condemned to death**; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.

1 Corinthians 15:31+ I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, **I die daily**.

Romans 8:36+ Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE **WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG**; WE WERE CONSIDERED **AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED**."

A PASSEL OF PAULINE PARADOXES

Passel refers to a large quantity of something, in this case opposites and/or paradoxes.

As unknown yet well-known ([epiginosko](#)) - **NLT** = " We are ignored, even though we are well known." **Amplified** = " [We are treated] as unknown and ignored [by the world], and [yet we are] well-known and recognized [by God and His people]" Both verbs in the present tense speaking of continually.

Unknown on earth, well known in heaven

Michael Andrus - I can't help but think of the list of obscure names found in such passages as Romans 16, a chapter where Paul greets his many friends and coworkers in Christ. In their day they were nobodies compared to powerful businessmen and politicians, but their names have been preserved for posterity because God knew them.

Piper comments "Yes, we are nobodies in the Roman empire, a tiny movement following a crucified and risen king. But oh we are known by God, and that is what counts (1 Co 8:3; Gal 4:9)."

MacDonald points out that "As unknown and yet well known" is fittingly inscribed on the tombstone of [John Nelson Darby](#) (1800–1882), who had a worldwide ministry not unlike that of Paul." ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Unknown (not understood) ([50](#)) [agnoeo](#) from a = not + noéo = perceive, understand) not have information about, to not know, to not understand (Mk 9:32, Lk 9:45), to be unaware of, to not recognize (Ac 13:27), to be ignorant of (to lack information concerning something). Lacking capacity or ability to understand.

As dying ([apothnesko](#)) **yet behold** ([idou](#)), **we live** ([zao](#)) - **NLT** = "We live close to death, but we are still alive" **Amplified** = "[We are treated]...as dying, and yet here we are alive." Both verbs in the present tense speaking of continually. **Behold** is used to get the Corinthians attention that even though he had come close to death and was constantly being delivered over to death ([see passages above](#)), he was still "[alive and kicking](#)" (so to speak)!

Michael Andrus - For the believer death ushers us into a whole new experience of living. "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

Piper comments - Yes, we die every day. We are crucified with Christ. Some of us are imprisoned and killed. But oh we live because Christ is our life now, and he will raise us from the dead.

Dying physically, living spiritually!

As punished ([paideuo](#)) **yet not put to death** ([thanatoo](#)) - **Amplified** = "[We are treated]...as chastened by suffering and [yet] not killed." Both verbs in the present tense speaking of continually. **Punished** ([paideuo](#)) often is used of training (as in child rearing - Heb 12:6ff+), but in the present context has a more serious sense, possibly even the idea of flogging or scourging the meaning [paideuo](#) conveys in Lk 23:16+ referring to Jesus.

Piper - Yes, we endure many human punishments and many divine chastenings, but over and over God has spared us from death. And he will spare us till our work is done.

Michael Andrus - Paul was beaten within an inch of his life many times, but he was immortal until his work on earth was done. The same is true of us

Ray Stedman - The paradoxical Christian - In his book [That Incredible Christian](#), **A.W. Tozer** describes some of the many paradoxes one finds in authentic Christianity--and in authentic Christians:

At the heart of the Christian system lies the cross of Christ with its divine paradox. The power of Christianity appears in its antipathy toward, never in its agreement with, the ways of fallen men. The truth of the cross is revealed in its contradictions. ... Simply observe the true Christian as he puts into practice the teachings of Christ and His apostles. Note the contradictions:

The Christian believes that in Christ he has died, yet he is more alive than before and he fully expects to live forever. He walks on earth while seated in heaven and though born on earth he finds that after his conversion he is not at home here. ... He loses his life to save it and is in danger of losing it if he attempts to preserve it.

He goes down to get up. If he refuses to go down he is already down, but when he starts down he is on his way up.

He is strongest when he is weakest and weakest when he is strong. Though poor he has the power to make others rich, but when he becomes rich his ability to enrich others vanishes. He has most after he has given most away and has least when he possesses most.

He may be and often is highest when he feels lowest and most sinless when he is most conscious of sin. He is wisest when he knows that he knows not and knows least when he has acquired the greatest amount of knowledge. He sometimes does most by doing nothing and goes furthest when standing still. In heaviness he manages to rejoice and keeps his heart glad even in sorrow.

He fears God but is not afraid of Him. In God's presence he feels overwhelmed and undone, yet there is nowhere he would rather be than in that presence. He knows that he has been cleansed from his sin, yet he is painfully conscious that in his flesh dwells no good thing.

He loves supremely One whom he has never seen, and though himself poor and lowly he talks familiarly with One who is King of all kings and Lord of all lords, and is aware of no incongruity in so doing. He feels that he is in his own right altogether less than nothing, yet he believes without question that he is the apple of God's eye and that for him the Eternal Son became flesh and died on the cross of shame. ...Incredible Christian! [A. W. Tozer, *That Incredible Christian* (Wheaton IL: Tyndale House, special edition, undated), pp. 11-13.]

These words of **A. W. Tozer** echo and expand upon the series of magnificent paradoxes Paul describes in his depiction of the authentic Christian in 2 Corinthians 6:8-10. He says that he and his fellow authentic Christians are genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

Clearly, authentic Christians present an enigma to the world, because their lives consist of a series of paradoxes. Only the man or woman who stands poised between two worlds can qualify for such a description. The authentic Christian is in a highly vulnerable position, stretched between God and man. We must be content to be called imposters by some, to be thought of as unknown, to be threatened and punished, to be poor and have nothing--all the while knowing that, before God, the very reverse is true! As God sees us, we are his true children, known to all heaven, living and rejoicing in the spirit when the flesh is perishing, ever imparting the unsearchable riches of Christ to many, and being heirs of all creation when time trembles into eternity ([2 Corinthians 6:3-10 Sensible Fanaticism](#))

J C Philpot - Though we die, and die daily, yet, behold, we live; and in a sense, the more we die, the more we live. The more we die to self, the more we die to sin; the more we die to pride and self-righteousness, the more we die to creature strength; and the more we die to nature, the more we live to grace. And this runs all the way through the life and experience of a Christian. Nature must die, that grace may live. The weeds must be plucked up, that the crop may grow; the flesh be starved, that the spirit may be fed; the old man put off, that the new man may be put on; the deeds of the body be mortified, that the soul may live unto God. As then we die, we live. The more we die to our own strength, the more we live to Christ's strength; the more we die to creature hope, the more we live to a good hope through grace; the more we die to our own righteousness; and the more we die to the world, the more we live to and for heaven. This is the grand mystery, that the Christian is always dying, yet always living; and the more he dies, the more he lives. The death of the flesh is the life of the spirit; the death of sin is the life of righteousness; and the death of the creature is the very life of God in the soul. (Ears from Harvested Sheaves)

Streams in the Desert - "As dying and behold we live." (2 Cor. 6:9.)

I HAD a bed of asters last summer, that reached clear across my garden in the country. Oh, how gaily they bloomed. They were planted late. On the sides were yet fresh blossoming flowers, while the tops had gone to seed. Early frosts came, and I found one day that that long line of radiant beauty was seared, and I said, "Ah! the season is too much for them; they have perished"; and I bade them farewell.

I disliked to go and look at the bed, it looked so like a graveyard of flowers. But, four or five weeks ago one of my men called my attention to the fact that along the whole line of that bed there were asters coming up in the greatest abundance; and I looked, and behold, for every plant that I thought the winter had destroyed there were fifty plants that it had planted. What did those frosts and surly winds do ?

They caught my flowers, they slew them, they cast them to the ground, they trod with snowy feet upon them, and they said, leaving their work, "This is the end of you." And the next spring there were for every root, fifty witnesses to rise up and say, "By death we

live.”

And as it is in the floral tribe, so it is in God’s kingdom. By death came everlasting life. By crucifixion and the sepulchre came the throne and the palace of the Eternal God. By overthrow came victory.

Do not be afraid to suffer. Do not be afraid to be overthrown.

It is by being cast down and not destroyed; it is by being shaken to pieces, and the pieces torn to shreds, that men become men of might, and that one a host; whereas men that yield to the appearance of things, and go with the world, have their quick blossoming, their momentary prosperity and then their end, which is an end forever.—Beecher.

“Measure thy life by loss and not by gain, Not by the wine drunk, but by the wine poured forth. For love’s strength standeth in love’s sacrifice, And he who suffers most has most to give.”

2 Corinthians 6:10 as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:10 As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

NET 2 Corinthians 6:10 as sorrowful, but always rejoicing, as poor, but making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:10 ς λυπο μενοι ε δ χα ροντες, ς πτωχο πολλο ς δ πλουτ ζοντες, ς μηδ ν χοντες κα π ντα κατ χοντες.

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:10 Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:10 as sorrowful, and always rejoicing; as poor, and making many rich; as having nothing, and possessing all things.

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:10 as grieving yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing yet possessing everything.

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:10 as being grieved continually, but rejoicing, as poor, but making many wealthy, as holding nothing, yet having everything.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:10 as sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:10 in pain yet always full of joy; poor and yet making many people rich; having nothing, and yet owning everything.

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:10 People think we are sad although we're always glad, that we're beggars although we make many people spiritually rich, that we have nothing although we possess everything.

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:10 As full of sorrow, but ever glad; as poor, but giving wealth to others; as having nothing, but still having all things.

- **sorrowful**: 2Co 2:4 2Co 7:3-10 Mt 5:4,12 Lu 6:21 Joh 16:22 Ac 5:41 16:25 Ro 5:2,3 Ro 9:2 12:15 15:13 Php 4:4 1Th 3:7-10 5:16 Heb 10:34 Jas 1:2-4 1Pe 1:6-8 4:13
- **poor**: 2Co 6:4
- **making**: 2Co 4:7 2Co 8:9 Ro 11:12 Eph 3:8,16 Col 3:16 1Ti 6:18 Jas 2:5 Rev 2:9
- **and**: 2Co 4:15 Ps 84:11 Pr 16:16 Mt 6:19,20 Lu 16:11,12 1Co 3:21-23 1Ti 4:8 Rev 21:7
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 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.

2 Corinthians 8:9+ For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was **rich**, yet for your sake He became **poor**, so that you through His poverty might become **rich**.

Psalms 84:11 (**POSSESSING ALL THINGS**) For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD gives grace and glory; **No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.**

Proverbs 16:16 (**POSSESSING WHAT IS OF TRUE LASTING VALUE**) How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.

1 Timothy 4:8+ (**TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL PROFIT**) for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is **profitable for all things**, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

John 16:21-22 "Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain **SORROW** - [lupe](#)), because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the **joy** that a child has been born into the world. "Therefore you too have grief now (JESUS' CRUCIFIXION); but I will see you again (RESURRECTION), and your heart will rejoice, and **no one will take your joy away from you.**

Acts 5:41+ (**HERE IS A KEY TO REJOICING EVEN IN SORROW OR PAIN**) So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that **they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.**

SAD MAN, JOYFUL MAN POOR MAN, RICH MAN

A T Robertson says "In these climactic sentences, Paul lets his imagination loose and it plays like lightning on the clouds."

As (present tense continually) **sorrowful** ([lupeo](#)) **yet always** ([aei](#)) (present tense continually) **rejoicing** ([chairo](#)) - "Our hearts ache, but we always have joy" (2Co 6:10NLT) Both verbs in the present tense speaking of continually. He was sorrowful over the rejection of the Gospel by most of his fellow Jews, but rejoiced in the souls that did receive the Gospel of their salvation. Joy in the midst of sorrow. Only the Spirit indwelling a sorrowful man, could make him joyful at the same time!

Writing from a dank, dark prison cell Paul exhort the saints at Philippi **Rejoice** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in the Lord always; again I say **rejoice** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#))." (Php 4:4+)

One is also reminded of the saints at Thessalonica "You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in **much tribulation** with the **joy of the Holy Spirit**," (1Th 1:6+) It is interesting that even though they had experienced joy in tribulation Paul still commanded them to keep on keeping on and to **Rejoice** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) always. (1Th 5:16+)

Piper - Yes, we are sorrowful. There are countless reasons for our hearts to break. But in them all we do not cease to rejoice, one of the greatest paradoxes of the Christian life!...Joy in the midst of health? Joy in the midst of wealth and ease? And when everyone speaks well of you? Why would that mean anything to the world? The world has that already. But indomitable joy in the midst of sorrow that they do not have. That is what Jesus came to give in this fallen, pain-filled, sin-wracked world.

Warren Wiersbe - "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" is a challenging paradox as well as a comforting truth. We know that in this life we will experience hours and perhaps days of grief and pain, but we also know that our heavenly Father is "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. 1:3). Jesus the Son of God is "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isa. 53:3) and is our interceding High Priest at the throne of grace (Heb. 4:14-16). The Holy Spirit is the Comforter who dwells in us and ministers to us (John 14:16, 20). We are comforted that we may be able to comfort others (2 Cor. 1:3-7). In the school of sorrow, God's people can learn many valuable lessons that cannot be learned any other way.....Joy is not something we manufacture ourselves; it is one of the

fruits of the Spirit that we cultivate as we walk in the Spirit and are led by the Spirit (Gal. 5:16–18, 22–23). No matter what sorrows invade our lives, we can be joyful in the Lord. This does not mean that we bury our sorrows and pretend they do not exist, for that approach only makes things worse. When we talk to the Lord, we tell Him how we feel, and we acknowledge that we need His grace and wisdom. We thank Him for the blessings He sends that give us joy, and we trust Him to do it again — and again....But our joy must be “in the Lord” and not be an act we put on to fool people. If it comes from the heart, it is real; if it comes only from the lips, it is phony. If we turn our joy on and off like a light switch, we are only hurting ourselves. The(Truth on Its Head)

Michael Andrus - He was filled with sorrow for the unbelief of his fellow-countrymen, the Israelites, and for the lost in general. He was also sorrowful over disobedient, immature believers, and over the threats false teaching posed to the church....we can at the same time rejoice because a sovereign God is in control, and His plans and purposes are perfect.

No Christian can ever know what is meant by those two little words, “always rejoicing,”
but the Christian who takes up his cross and follows Jesus.

-- W. Hay Aitken

As poor (ptochos) yet making many rich - Poor is “dirt poor,” like a pauper or beggar. **Poor** by the world's definition but not God's (cf Eph 1:3)! Once again we see the striking paradox of earthly poverty but heavenly wealth. Recall 2Co 4:7 “we have this **treasure** in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves.”

Michael Andrus - Paul's financial resources were minimal and at times non-existent, but his spiritual resources were limitless. And his Gospel message provided many with an eternal inheritance.

Piper - Yes, we are poor in this world's wealth. But we don't live to get rich on things, we live to make people rich on Jesus.

Making many rich (4148)(ploutizo) speaks of literally making someone rich, enrich. In the NT used only figuratively, of spiritual enrichment cause to have an abundance. In the passive voice (as in 1Co 1:5) it means be made rich in, be caused to have an abundance. The first enrichment came at the time of their being evangelized; the result was that from the early days of their Christian lives, they had known the riches of spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 1:4–7). Then, enrichment from God was to be given as a reward if they would be faithful in the sharing of their material goods (2 Corinthians 9:11, God will enrich “in everything,” NASB; cf. verses 6–10). In 2 Corinthians 6:10 Paul said that he and those with him were poor (materially?), but they were “making many rich” (spiritually) 3x - 1 Co. 1:5; 2 Co. 6:10; 2 Co. 9:11

As having nothing yet (present tense - continually) **possessing (katecho) all things** - Paul and his associates in ministry did not own anything of substance related to this world and yet continually had everything in the next world and even in this world had “everything necessary for life and godliness” - 2Pe 1:3+). So they possessed all things necessary for this life and the life to come!

Michael Andrus - Paul personally owned nothing, which was true of Jesus as well. No real estate, no home, no vehicles, no savings, nothing. Yet he knew that God had blessed him “in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). Friends, when we examine these contrasts, these paradoxes about the Christian life, we cannot help but admit that the Christian life is a life of fanaticism; but it is reasonable fanaticism . In conclusion let me illustrate the difference this way: Crazy fanaticism is when a Muslim jihadist blows himself up, along with dozens of innocent people, expecting 72 virgins in the afterlife. Reasonable fanaticism is when a Chinese evangelist gives up what he cannot keep for the sake of that which he cannot lose. Crazy fanaticism is when people stand on the street corner holding signs that “God Hates Faggots.” Reasonable fanaticism is when Christians express the love of God to those caught up in homosexual behavior and endure persecution (like Exodus Ministries) in order to help them escape that destructive lifestyle. Crazy fanaticism, in my opinion, is killing abortion doctors and getting arrested for illegal protests. Reasonable fanaticism is building Pregnancy Crisis Centers and witnessing the love of Christ to women who are at the end of their rope. Crazy fanaticism is King Herod killing all the little boys under two in Bethlehem. Reasonable fanaticism is the Magi, traveling great distances for months to find the one who is born King of the Jews. Friends, let's be fanatics for Jesus, but let's be reasonable fanatics.

Piper - You see us “as having nothing, yet [we are] possessing everything.” In one sense, we have counted everything as loss or the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:8). But, in fact, we are children of God, and if children, then heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ (Ro 8:17). To every Christian, Paul says, “**all things** belong to you, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; **all things** belong to you, and you belong to Christ; and Christ belongs to God.” (1Co 3:21–23+).

Kruse - It was a commonplace in Paul's day, e.g. among Cynic and Stoic philosophers, to speak of having nothing materially, but possessing everything in a higher sense. Paul's having nothing would be the result in part of his refusing either to accept support from the Corinthians (2Co 11:7–9), or to ‘peddle’ the gospel for financial gain (2Co 2:17). Nevertheless he regarded himself as truly rich because he was already experiencing as a sort of first-fruits the spiritual blessings of the age to come. And further, he rejoiced

that, though materially poor, he could make many rich by enabling them to share in the spiritual blessings through Christ. ([Full text of TNTC 2 Corinthians](#))

Remember that Paul is listing his ministry credentials because he wants to make absolutely certain not to put an obstacle in anyone's way. **John Piper** explains it this way...

He has been removing obstacles to faith and commending the truth and value of his ministry—his life, his message, his Lord. And he has done it in exactly the opposite way that “the prosperity gospel” does it. What obstacle has he removed? He has removed the obstacle that someone might think Paul is in the ministry for money, or for earthly comfort and ease. He has given every evidence he could to show that he is not a Christian—and he is not in the ministry—for the worldly benefits it can bring. But there are many pastors today who think just the opposite about this. They think that having a lavish house and a lavish car and lavish clothes commend their ministry. That’s simply not the way Paul thought. He thought that such things were obstacles. Why? Because if they would entice anyone to Christ, it would be for the wrong reason. It would be because they think Jesus makes people rich and makes life comfortable and easy. No one should come to Christ for that reason. Enticing people to Christ with prosperous lifestyles and with chipper, bouncy, light-hearted, playful, superficial banter, posing as joy in Christ, will attract certain people, but not because Christ is seen in his glory and the Christian life is presented as the Calvary Road. Many false conversions happen this way. So how is Paul commending his ministry, his life, his message, his Lord? 2Cor 6:4: “As servants of God we commend ourselves in every way.” How? By showing that knowing Christ, being known by Christ, having eternal life with Christ is better than all earthly wealth and prosperity and comfort. We commend our life and ministry by afflictions. We commend our life and ministry by calamities. We commend our life and ministry by sleepless nights. What does that mean? It means Christ is real to us, and Christ is infinitely precious, more to be desired than any wealth or comfort in this world. This is our commendation: *When all around our soul gives way he then is all our hope and stay.* ([Sorrowful Yet Always Rejoicing](#))

ILLUSTRATION - SORROWFUL - “I am burning with a fever, and have a violent cold; but Christ’s presence makes me smile at pain; and the fire of his love burns up all fevers whatsoever.”-- George Whitefield. Christian History, Issue 38.

Robert Hawker - Poor Man's Morning Portion

As having nothing, and yet possessing all things.—2 Cor. 6:10.

MY soul, hast thou learnt this holy science?

There are three blessed lessons the Holy Ghost teacheth on this ground.

(1) As, first, The believer is thoroughly emptied of himself.

Art thou thus taught of God? **Hast thou been led to see, to feel, to know, to be convinced that, after all thine attainments, after all thy long standing in the school of Jesus, thou hast nothing, canst do nothing, art worse than nothing; and, literally, hast no more in thyself now to recommend thee to Jesus, than the first moment thou didst hear of his name? This is to have nothing.** This is to be poor in spirit.

(2) Secondly, Dost thou possess all things in Jesus?

Yes! (cf Col 2:3) if so be thou art living out of thyself wholly upon Him. And how is this known? Nothing more evident. When a sense of...

- my emptiness endears to me his fullness;
- my poverty, his riches;
- my weakness, his strength;
- my sins, his righteousness;
- my guilt, his blood;

I truly possess all things, as far as I approve what Jesus is to his people, and rest upon Him and the blessed fruits of his salvation, as God the Father designed him, who hath made him wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, to his people.

(3) And there is a third precious lesson the Holy Ghost teacheth to the poor that have nothing, and yet possess all things; namely, so to possess Jesus himself, that he may not only make his poor ones rich in his riches, but be himself their treasure; so to supply

them not only with what they need, but to be himself their fullness; not only to open to them light and life, but to be himself both their light and life; so to impart to them salvation, as to show them that he is himself their salvation: and, in short, so to give them present peace, and the assurance of everlasting happiness in his blood and righteousness, as to give them the perfect enjoyment that he is himself both their present and everlasting happiness, and their portion for ever!

My soul! hast thou learnt, and art thou every day more and more learning these precious truths? Oh! then, look up to thy Jesus, and say with one of old, "Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." (Ps 73:25)

Beecher - As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.

A Christian man's life is laid in the loom of time to a pattern which he does not see, but God does; and his heart is a shuttle. On one side of the loom is sorrow, and on the other is joy; and the shuttle, struck alternately by each, flies back and forth, carrying the thread, which is white or black as the pattern needs. And in the end, when God shall lift up the finished garment, and all its changing hues shall glance out, it will then appear that the deep and dark colors were as needful to beauty as the bright and high colors.

Illustration - While on a short-term missions trip, Pastor Jack Hinton was leading worship at a leper colony on the island of Tobago. A woman who had been facing away from the pulpit turned around.

"It was the most hideous face I had ever seen," Hinton said. "The woman's nose and ears were entirely gone. She lifted a fingerless hand in the air and asked, 'Can we sing Count Your Many Blessings?' "

Overcome with emotion, Hinton left the service. He was followed by a team member who said, "I guess you'll never be able to sing that song again."

"Yes I will," he replied, "but I'll never sing it the same way." -- The Pastor's Update (5/96). Fresh Illustrations for Preaching & Teaching (Baker), from the editors of Leadership.

Streams in the Desert - "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." (2 Cor. 6:10.)

SORROW was beautiful, but her beauty was the beauty of the moonlight shining through the leafy branches of the trees in the wood, and making little pools of silver here and there on the soft green moss below.

When Sorrow sang, her notes were like the low sweet call of nightingale, and in her eyes was the unexpectant gaze of one who has ceased to look for coming gladness. She could weep in tender sympathy with those who weep, but to rejoice with those who rejoice was unknown to her.

Joy was beautiful, too, but his was the radiant beauty of the summer morning. His eyes still held the glad laughter of childhood, and his hair had the glint of the sunshine's kiss. When Joy sang his voice soared upward as the lark's, and his step was the step of a conqueror who has never known defeat. He could rejoice with all who rejoice, but to weep with those who weep was unknown to him.

"But we can never be united," said Sorrow wistfully.

"No, never." And Joy's eyes shadowed as he spoke. "My path lies through the sunlit meadows, the sweetest roses bloom for my gathering, and the blackbirds and thrushes await my coming to pour forth their most joyous lays."

"My path," said Sorrow, turning slowly away, "leads through the darkening woods, with moon-flowers only shall my hands be filled. Yet the sweetest of all earth-songs—the love song of the night—shall be mine; farewell, Joy, farewell."

Even as she spoke they became conscious of a form standing beside them; dimly seen, but of a Kingly Presence, and a great and holy awe stole over them as they sank on their knees before Him.

"I see Him as the King of Joy," whispered Sorrow, "for on His Head are many crowns, and the nailprints in His hands and feet are the scars of a great victory. Before Him all my sorrow is melting away into deathless love and gladness, and I give myself to Him forever."

"Nay, Sorrow," said Joy softly, "but I see Him as the King of Sorrow, and the crown on His head is a crown of thorns, and the nailprints in His hands and feet are the scars of a great agony. I, too, give myself to Him forever, for sorrow with Him must be sweeter than any joy that I have known."

"Then we are one in Him," they cried in gladness, "for none but He could unite Joy and Sorrow."

Hand in hand they passed out into the world to follow Him through storm and sunshine, in the bleakness of winter cold and the warmth of summer gladness, “as sorrowful yet always rejoicing.”

“Should Sorrow lay her hand upon thy shoulder,
And walk with thee in silence on life’s way,
While Joy, thy bright companion once, grown colder,
Becomes to thee more distant day by day?
Shrink not from the companionship of Sorrow,
She is the messenger of God to thee;
And thou wilt thank Him in His great tomorrow—
For what thou knowest not now, thou then shalt see;
She is God’s angel, clad in weeds of night,
With ‘whom we walk by faith and not by sight.’ ”

J C Philpot - Though the Christian in himself is sorrowful, and has reason to be so all the day long, yet so far as he has any views by faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, any good hope through grace, or any manifestation of His Person, work, blood, and love, he may be always rejoicing. Nay, his very sorrow opens up a way for joy. There is no room in a worldly heart for spiritual joy, for the Lord gives joy in sorrow. When the heart is sunk in gloom and fear, and doubt and distress take possession of the mind, when family afflictions, or painful bereavements, or trying circumstances fill the heart with grief and dismay, that is the very time for the Lord to pour joy into the soul. As afflictions abound, so do consolations. Sorrow and joy are linked together as night and day, as sun and moon, as heaven and earth. Without sorrow there can be no joy, for joy is its counterpoise. If you had everything your heart could desire, what room would there be for spiritual joy? But when all sources of earthly joy dry up, and there is nothing but sorrow and trouble before you in this world, as long as life remains; when you are afflicted in body, poor in circumstances, tried in your family, distressed in your mind, and there is nothing but grief and misery,—then you have room made in your heart to receive the sweet consolations of God’s grace. (Ears from Harvested Sheaves)

J C Philpot - How do we possess all things? In possessing Christ who is heir of all things. If we possess Christ, what have we not in Him? We have wisdom to teach us, righteousness to justify us, sanctification to make us holy, and redemption to deliver us from sin, death, and hell. If we have Him, we have the favour and love of God; we have the pardon of our sins, the reconciliation of our persons, the casting behind God’s back of all our backslidings, and a title to a heavenly crown. If we have Him, we have everything in Him, for Christ is ours, and Christ is God’s. Therefore in Him we possess all things. We shall have in providence things sufficient to carry us to the grave. He will give us everything that is for our good, and keep back nothing that is for our benefit. If we possess Him, what have we not in Him? Now the world, when death comes, what has it? Nothing to look to but the anger of God, and a fearful judgment. But the saint of God, when death comes to him, what has he to look to? A crown of life, a mansion in the skies, a smiling God, and a blessed assurance that he shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Thus though the saints of God have nothing, yet they possess all things; and possessing a heavenly crown, what can God give them more? (Ears from Harvested Sheaves)

Streams in the Desert - “As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.” (2 Cor. 6:10)

THE stoic scorns to shed a tear; the Christian is not forbidden to weep. The soul may be dumb with excessive grief, as the shearer’s scissors pass over the quivering flesh; or, when the heart is on the point of breaking beneath the meeting surges of trial, the sufferer may seek relief by crying out with a loud voice. But there is something even better.

They say that springs of sweet fresh water well up amid the brine of salt seas; that the fairest Alpine flowers bloom in the wildest and most rugged mountain passes; that the noblest psalms were the outcome of the profoundest agony of soul.

Be it so. And thus amid manifold trials, souls which love God will find reasons for bounding, leaping joy. Though deep call to deep, yet the Lord’s song will be heard in silver cadence through the night. And it is possible in the darkest hour that ever swept a human life to bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Have you learned this lesson yet? Not simply to endure God’s will, nor only to choose it; but to rejoice in it with joy unspeakable and full of glory.—Tried us by Fire.

I will be still, my bruised heart faintly murmured,
As o’er me rolled a crushing load of woe;
The cry, the call, e’en the low moan was stifled;
I pressed my lips; I barred the tear drop’s flow.

I will be still, although I cannot see it,
The love that bares a soul and fans pain’s fire;

That takes away the last sweet drop of solace,
Breaks the lone harp string, hides Thy precious lyre.

But God is love, so I will bide me, bide me—
We'll doubt not, Soul, we will be very still;
We'll wait till after while, when He shall lift us—
Yes, after while, when it shall be His will.

And I did listen to my heart's brave promise;
And I did quiver, struggling to be still;
And I did lift my tearless eyes to Heaven,
Repeating ever, "Yea, Christ, have Thy will."

But soon my heart upspoke from 'neath our burden,
Reproved my tight-drawn lips, my visage sad:
"We can do more than this, O Soul," it whispered.
"We can be more than still, we can be glad!"

And now my heart and I are sweetly singing—
Singing without the sound of tuneful strings;
Drinking abundant waters in the desert;
Crushed, and yet soaring as on eagle's wings.

—S. P. W.

Source Of Gladness

As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. —2 Corinthians 6:10

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:3-10

Paul Gerhardt, a pastor in Germany during the 17th century, had every reason not to be glad. His wife and four of his children died; the Thirty Years' War brought death and devastation across Germany; church conflict and political interference filled his life with distress. Yet despite great personal suffering, he wrote more than 130 hymns, many of them characterized by joy and devotion to Jesus Christ.

One of Gerhardt's hymns, "Holy Spirit, Source Of Gladness," contains this verse:

Let that love which knows no measure
Now in quickening showers descend,
Bringing us the richest treasures
Man can wish or God can send;
Hear our earnest supplication,
Every struggling heart release;
Rest upon this congregation,
Spirit of untroubled peace.

Because God's abounding love is poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), is there any situation in which we cannot experience the joy He gives?

During a time of great personal hardship, the apostle Paul described his experience as being "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:10).

Pain and sorrow are inescapable facts of life. Yet the Holy Spirit is our source of gladness, "bringing us the richest treasures man can wish or God can send." David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Happiness depends on happenings, but joy depends on Jesus.

2 Corinthians 6:11 Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide.

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.

NET 2 Corinthians 6:11 We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart has been opened wide to you.

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:11 Τ σ τ μ α μ ν ν γ εν π ρ ς μ ς, Κο ρ ν θ ι ο ι, καρδ α μ ν πε π λ τυ ν τ α ι.

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:11 Oh, dear Corinthian friends! We have spoken honestly with you, and our hearts are open to you.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:11 We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide open.

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:11 We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you.

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:11 Our mouth hath been open unto you, O Corinthians, our heart hath been enlarged!

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:11 Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians, our heart is enlarged.

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:11 We have spoken openly to you, Corinthians; our heart has been opened wide.

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:11 Our communications with you are straightforward, Corinthians, with our heart wide open.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:11 O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:11 We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you.

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:11 We have spoken frankly to you, Corinthians; our heart is open wide.

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:11 People of Corinth, we have spoken frankly and opened our heart to you.

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:11 We have been very open in speaking to you Corinthians. We have a place for you in our hearts.

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:11 Our mouth is open to you, O Corinthians, our heart is wide.

- **O Corinthians:** Ga 3:1 Php 4:15
- **our mouth:** 2Co 7:3,4 1Sa 2:1 Job 32:20 33:2,3 Ps 51:15
- **our heart:** 2Co 2:4 12:15 Ps 119:32 Hab 2:5 Eph 6:8 Php 1:8 Rev 22:12
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

"OPENED" MOUTH AND OPENED HEART

Paul was an "[open book](#)" to the Corinthians. He is treating them as close friends, and telling them what he would never have told to any except those in whom he had complete confidence.

[J Vernon McGee](#) - Paul just seems to cry out here. Oh, how ye yearned for those converts of his in Corinth. They are little baby Christians, babes in Christ, carnal Christians, but his heart went out to them. It seems his heart almost breaks in this chapter and the next one.

Paul now bursts into an impassioned plea for the Corinthians to show their affection for him. The Moffatt translation catches the idea of 2Co 6:11-13:

O Corinthians, I am keeping nothing back from you; my heart is wide open for you. "Restraint?"—that lies with you, not me. A fair exchange now, as the children say! Open your hearts wide to me.

Ray Stedman - Love, truth, and power all require response to be fully operative. Each will grow to infinite expansion if it is met by faith, though it be as small as a grain of mustard seed. The Corinthians were not being held back by Paul. He had opened his heart to them and told them everything he had learned from the Lord. Their present weakness was due to only one thing: a failure to respond to the truth they knew--a reluctance to act on what they had been told. So his appeal comes as a father to his children: **"Widen your hearts!"** The present low state of the church in the world is surely due to the same cause. Christians do not really believe what they sing about and profess. They have lost the consciousness of the greatness of God and his ability to act today. Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, noted pastor of Westminster Chapel in London, England, has made an appeal similar to that of Paul's:

I speak especially to those of us who are Evangelicals. We must not continue with our religious life and methods precisely as if nothing were happening round and about us, and as if we were still living in the spacious days of peace. We have loved certain methods. And how delightful they were! What could be more

enjoyable than to have and to enjoy our religion in the form with which we have for so long been familiar? How enjoyable just to sit and listen. What an intellectual and perhaps also emotional and artistic treat. But alas! How entirely unrelated to the world in which we live it has often been! How little has it had to offer to men and women who have never known our background and our kind of life, who are entirely ignorant of our very idiom and even our presuppositions. But in any case how detached and self-contained, how removed from a world that is seething in trouble with the foundations of everything that has been most highly prized rocking and shaking. [D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Plight of Man and the Power of God*, p. 11.] [2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1 Watch Out for These](#)

Tozer said "Paul was a little man with a vast interior life; his great heart was often wounded by the narrowness of his disciples. The sight of their shrunken souls hurt him much."

Kruse - The purpose of Paul's long commendation (vv. 3–10) is to show that no fault was to be found in his ministry, and thereby to clear the ground for an appeal to the Corinthians for a full reconciliation with their apostle. Having done this, Paul proceeds immediately to his appeal (vv. 11–13). ([Full text of TNTC 2 Corinthians](#))

Our mouth has spoken freely ([anoigo](#) - openly, honestly, frankly) **to you, O Corinthians** (hear Paul's deep passion, his loving appeal) **our heart** ([kardia](#)) **is opened wide** - **Phillips Paraphrase** = "Oh, our dear friends in Corinth, we are hiding nothing from you and our hearts are absolutely open to you." **Spoken freely** is in the perfect tense describing this as the state of his speech (still open, honest, straightforward, frank) toward the Corinthians. Paul is simply saying that "he communicated with them; he told them what was going on in his own life; he shared with them his feelings, his struggles, his failures, his pressures, his problems, and he let them know where he was. That is always a mark of love. To open up to someone is to love him. Contrariwise, to close up and not communicate is to violate love. As I travel around the country, I find this is probably the number one problem in churches today. Christians actually think it is right for them to be closed in on themselves, to be private persons, unwilling to communicate who they are and how they feel and where they are in their lives. That, of course, is the way of the world. The world teaches us to be private, to let no one see who we are. But we need to understand that when we become Christians that is the one thing we must not do. We must learn to open up to one another." ([Stedman](#))

Heart refers to the center of Paul's being (his "control center" - center of one's emotions) and **opened wide** is in the perfect tense describing this as the state of his heart toward the Corinthian believers (he was not "[waffling](#)" toward them). The picture of his **heart opened** refers to his great affection and love for them. If you [open your heart](#) you are willing to share your deepest emotions and thoughts. Calling them by name (**O Corinthians**) was rare for Paul but here emphasizing how freely he spoke with them and how he had widened or opened his heart to them.

Kruse on opened wide - The similar expression, 'he opened his mouth [and taught them]' is often used of Jesus in the Gospels (e.g. Matt. 5:2; 13:35) and reflects a common Hebraic idiom meaning simply 'he spoke'. However, Paul's expression, Our mouth is open to you, is a Greek idiom denoting candour, or straightforward speech. By adding, our heart is wide, Paul affirms that there is plenty of room for the Corinthians in his affections. ([Full text of TNTC 2 Corinthians](#))

Ray Stedman - "Our heart is wide," he says. What does he mean? Well, he means there is no favoritism; he included the whole congregation. He was not merely loving the nice people among them. He loved them all, the difficult ones, the ones who were struggling, the hard to get along with ones as well. There were no pre-conditions that he demanded before he would love somebody in the congregation, either. He accepted them as people. Though he knew their struggles, their weaknesses, their heartaches, their failures and their resistance, still he loved them. The problem was that they were not loving him in return. This is the problem in churches, in individual lives, in homes, in families and in marriages today. It is a failure to understand the reciprocal nature of love. Love is a two-way street. It always is; it is inherently so. Love requires a response. Paul was loving them, but they were not loving him back. They were closed; they were unresponsive; they were coldly self-contained toward him. And the result? Paul puts it in one word: They were "restricted." What does that mean? It means they were limited; they were bound; they were tied up by themselves; they were imprisoned within the narrow boundaries of their own selfish lives. As a result, they could not experience the richness of life.....This is what concerns Paul here. So he urges the Corinthians, "Open up, communicate, show acceptance. It is basic to all else." That is Problem #1. If you do not respond to love, then do not wonder if your life remains cold, barren, lonely, empty and meaningless. When you are loved, deliberately love back and life will begin to expand. ([2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1 Watch Out for These](#) - read this sermon for great teaching the dynamics of love in a congregation!)

Mouth ([4750](#))(**stoma**) refers to literal mouth, mouth opened for utterance (Mt 18:16, 2Cor 13:1), a fissure in the earth (Rev 12:16), the edge of something (sword - Lk 21:24, Heb 11:34). Friberg - (1) as the bodily organ for eating and speaking - mouth, jaws (Mt 15:11); (2) by synecdoche, of someone speaking - person, individual (Mt 12:34); idiomatically literally mouth to mouth, i.e. person to person (2Jn 12); (3) by metonymy, for what the mouth utters word, speech (Mt 18:16); Hebraistically = open the mouth, begin to speak (Mt

13.35); idiomatically literally with one mouth, i.e. with one voice, in unison (Ro 15.6); (4) figuratively, of a sword edge (Lk 21.24); of the earth large fissure (Rev 12.16).

Stoma - 70v - edge(2), face(4), lips(1), mouth(60), mouths(5), say*(1), testimony(1), utterance(1), voice(1), words(1). Matt. 4:4; Matt. 5:2; Matt. 12:34; Matt. 13:35; Matt. 15:11; Matt. 15:17; Matt. 15:18; Matt. 17:27; Matt. 18:16; Matt. 21:16; Lk. 1:64; Lk. 1:70; Lk. 4:22; Lk. 6:45; Lk. 11:54; Lk. 19:22; Lk. 21:15; Lk. 21:24; Lk. 22:71; Jn. 19:29; Acts 1:16; Acts 3:18; Acts 3:21; Acts 4:25; Acts 8:32; Acts 8:35; Acts 10:34; Acts 11:8; Acts 15:7; Acts 18:14; Acts 22:14; Acts 23:2; Rom. 3:14; Rom. 3:19; Rom. 10:8; Rom. 10:9; Rom. 10:10; Rom. 15:6; 2 Co. 6:11; 2 Co. 13:1; Eph. 4:29; Eph. 6:19; Col. 3:8; 2 Thess. 2:8; 2 Tim. 4:17; Heb. 11:33; Heb. 11:34; Jas. 3:3; Jas. 3:10; 1 Pet. 2:22; 2 Jn. 1:12; 3 Jn. 1:14; Rev. 1:16; Rev. 2:16; Rev. 3:16; Rev. 9:17; Rev. 9:18; Rev. 9:19; Rev. 10:9; Rev. 10:10; Rev. 11:5; Rev. 12:15; Rev. 12:16; Rev. 13:2; Rev. 13:5; Rev. 13:6; Rev. 14:5; Rev. 16:13; Rev. 19:15; Rev. 19:21

Septuagint - Gen. 4:11; Gen. 8:11; Gen. 24:57; Gen. 29:2; Gen. 29:3; Gen. 29:8; Gen. 29:10; Gen. 34:26; Gen. 41:40; Gen. 42:27; Gen. 44:1; Gen. 45:12; Exod. 4:11; Exod. 4:12; Exod. 4:15; Exod. 4:16; Exod. 13:9; Exod. 23:13; Lev. 13:45; Num. 4:27; Num. 12:8; Num. 16:30; Num. 22:28; Num. 22:38; Num. 23:5; Num. 23:12; Num. 23:16; Num. 26:10; Num. 27:21; Num. 30:2; Num. 32:24; Num. 33:7; Deut. 8:3; Deut. 11:6; Deut. 18:18; Deut. 19:15; Deut. 21:5; Deut. 23:23; Deut. 30:14; Deut. 31:19; Deut. 32:1; Deut. 32:1; Jos. 1:8; Jos. 6:21; Jos. 8:24; Jos. 10:18; Jos. 10:28; Jos. 10:30; Jos. 10:32; Jos. 10:33; Jos. 10:35; Jos. 10:37; Jos. 10:39; Jos. 11:12; Jos. 11:14; Jos. 19:47; Jdg. 1:8; Jdg. 1:25; Jdg. 4:15; Jdg. 4:16; Jdg. 7:6; Jdg. 9:38; Jdg. 11:35; Jdg. 11:36; Jdg. 14:8; Jdg. 14:9; Jdg. 18:19; Jdg. 18:27; Jdg. 20:37; Jdg. 20:48; Jdg. 21:10; 1 Sam. 1:12; 1 Sam. 1:23; 1 Sam. 2:1; 1 Sam. 2:3; 1 Sam. 2:23; 1 Sam. 12:14; 1 Sam. 12:15; 1 Sam. 14:26; 1 Sam. 14:27; 1 Sam. 15:8; 1 Sam. 15:9; 1 Sam. 22:19; 2 Sam. 1:16; 2 Sam. 13:32; 2 Sam. 14:3; 2 Sam. 14:13; 2 Sam. 14:19; 2 Sam. 15:14; 2 Sam. 17:5; 2 Sam. 18:25; 2 Sam. 22:9; 1 Ki. 8:15; 1 Ki. 8:24; 1 Ki. 17:1; 1 Ki. 17:24; 1 Ki. 19:18; 1 Ki. 20:33; 1 Ki. 22:13; 1 Ki. 22:22; 1 Ki. 22:23; 2 Ki. 4:34; 2 Ki. 10:21; 2 Ki. 10:25; 2 Ki. 21:16; 2 Ki. 23:35; 1 Chr. 16:12; 2 Chr. 6:4; 2 Chr. 6:15; 2 Chr. 18:12; 2 Chr. 18:21; 2 Chr. 18:22; 2 Chr. 35:22; 2 Chr. 36:4; 2 Chr. 36:12; 2 Chr. 36:22; Ezr. 1:1; Ezr. 8:17; Ezr. 9:11; Neh. 2:13; Neh. 9:20; Est. 4:17; Job 3:1; Job 5:16; Job 7:11; Job 8:2; Job 8:21; Job 9:20; Job 13:6; Job 15:5; Job 15:6; Job 15:13; Job 16:5; Job 19:16; Job 20:12; Job 22:22; Job 23:4; Job 29:9; Job 29:13; Job 31:27; Job 32:5; Job 33:2; Job 35:16; Job 36:16; Job 37:2; Job 40:4; Job 40:23; Job 41:19; Job 41:21; Ps. 5:9; Ps. 8:2; Ps. 10:7; Ps. 14:3; Ps. 17:3; Ps. 17:10; Ps. 19:14; Ps. 22:13; Ps. 22:21; Ps. 32:2; Ps. 33:6; Ps. 34:1; Ps. 35:21; Ps. 36:3; Ps. 37:30; Ps. 38:13; Ps. 38:14; Ps. 39:1; Ps. 39:9; Ps. 40:3; Ps. 49:3; Ps. 49:13; Ps. 50:16; Ps. 50:19; Ps. 51:15; Ps. 54:2; Ps. 58:6; Ps. 59:7; Ps. 59:12; Ps. 62:4; Ps. 63:5; Ps. 63:11; Ps. 66:14; Ps. 66:17; Ps. 69:15; Ps. 71:8; Ps. 71:15; Ps. 73:9; Ps. 78:1; Ps. 78:2; Ps. 78:30; Ps. 78:36; Ps. 81:10; Ps. 89:1; Ps. 105:5; Ps. 107:42; Ps. 109:2; Ps. 109:30; Ps. 115:5; Ps. 119:13; Ps. 119:43; Ps. 119:72; Ps. 119:88; Ps. 119:103; Ps. 119:108; Ps. 119:131; Ps. 126:2; Ps. 135:16; Ps. 135:17; Ps. 138:1; Ps. 138:4; Ps. 141:3; Ps. 144:8; Ps. 144:11; Ps. 145:21; Prov. 3:16; Prov. 4:5; Prov. 4:24; Prov. 6:2; Prov. 7:24; Prov. 8:8; Prov. 10:6; Prov. 10:11; Prov. 10:14; Prov. 10:31; Prov. 10:32; Prov. 11:2; Prov. 11:9; Prov. 11:11; Prov. 12:6; Prov. 12:8; Prov. 12:14; Prov. 13:3; Prov. 14:3; Prov. 15:2; Prov. 15:14; Prov. 15:28; Prov. 16:10; Prov. 16:17; Prov. 16:23; Prov. 16:26; Prov. 18:6; Prov. 18:7; Prov. 18:20; Prov. 19:24; Prov. 19:28; Prov. 21:20; Prov. 21:23; Prov. 22:14; Prov. 23:33; Prov. 24:7; Prov. 26:7; Prov. 26:15; Prov. 26:28; Prov. 27:2; Prov. 27:21; Prov. 31:8; Prov. 31:9; Prov. 31:26; Eccl. 5:2; Eccl. 5:6; Eccl. 6:7; Eccl. 8:2; Eccl. 10:12; Eccl. 10:13; Cant. 1:2; Isa. 1:20; Isa. 5:14; Isa. 6:7; Isa. 9:12; Isa. 9:17; Isa. 11:4; Isa. 24:3; Isa. 25:8; Isa. 45:23; Isa. 48:3; Isa. 49:2; Isa. 51:16; Isa. 52:15; Isa. 53:7; Isa. 53:9; Isa. 55:11; Isa. 57:4; Isa. 58:13; Isa. 58:14; Isa. 59:21; Jer. 1:9; Jer. 4:1; Jer. 5:14; Jer. 7:27; Jer. 9:8; Jer. 9:12; Jer. 9:20; Jer. 12:2; Jer. 15:19; Jer. 21:7; Jer. 23:16; Jer. 32:4; Jer. 34:3; Jer. 36:4; Jer. 36:18; Jer. 36:27; Jer. 36:32; Jer. 44:17; Jer. 44:25; Jer. 44:26; Jer. 45:1; Jer. 48:28; Jer. 51:44; Lam. 1:18; Lam. 2:16; Lam. 3:38; Lam. 3:46; Ezek. 2:8; Ezek. 3:2; Ezek. 3:3; Ezek. 3:17; Ezek. 3:27; Ezek. 4:14; Ezek. 16:56; Ezek. 16:63; Ezek. 21:22; Ezek. 24:22; Ezek. 24:27; Ezek. 29:21; Ezek. 33:7; Ezek. 33:22; Ezek. 33:31; Ezek. 34:10; Ezek. 35:13; Dan. 4:31; Dan. 6:16; Dan. 6:17; Dan. 6:18; Dan. 6:19; Dan. 6:20; Dan. 6:22; Dan. 7:5; Dan. 7:8; Dan. 7:20; Dan. 10:3; Dan. 10:16; Hos. 2:17; Hos. 6:5; Joel 1:5; Amos 3:12; Mic. 3:5; Mic. 4:4; Mic. 6:12; Mic. 7:16; Nah. 3:12; Zeph. 3:13; Zech. 5:8; Zech. 8:9; Zech. 9:7; Zech. 14:12; Mal. 2:6; Mal. 2:7

Opened wide (4115)(**platuno** from **platus** = broad) means to make broad or large as the Pharisees did to their phylacteries. Paul uses it figuratively of his making it evident to the Corinthians of his affection for them. In classical Greek **platunō** is used literally in reference to widening streets, territories, or the like. It also can be used figuratively: “to become puffed up” or “to prosper.” Moses pictured Israel as a people who had grown fat on divine grace (Dt 32:15). More frequently, **platunō** is used figuratively in Scripture. Moses warned the Israelites not to get swelled-hearted (Dt 11:16), that is, puffed up, proud. The other references are positive—what we would call big heartedness. The Psalmist declared that he ran in the ways of the divine commands when God enlarged his heart (Ps 119:32). In the New Testament **platunō** is used with a variety of nuances. For example, Jesus referred scathingly to Pharisees who made wide their phylacteries to draw attention to their piety (Mt 23:5). To widen or enlarge one’s heart was equivalent for Paul to our expression open the heart, i.e., to be emotionally receptive. He used the word twice in his correspondence with the Corinthians. His openness indicated his strong affection for them. He exhorted them, in response, to replace their own narrow affections by widening their hearts toward him. They were urged to show him, as his spiritual children, a corresponding degree of affection (2 Corinthians 6:11–13). ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

Platuno - 3x in the NT - Matt. 23:5; 2 Co. 6:11; 2 Co. 6:13

Platuno in the Septuagint - Gen. 9:27; Gen. 26:22; Gen. 28:14; Exod. 34:24; Deut. 11:16; Deut. 32:15; 1 Sam. 2:1; Ps. 4:1; Ps. 18:36; Ps. 25:17; Ps. 35:21; Ps. 81:10; Ps. 119:32; Prov. 24:28; Isa. 5:14; Isa. 54:2; Jer. 2:24; Jer. 51:58; Ezek. 31:5; Hab. 2:5;

[Ray Stedman Devotional](#) on 2Co 6:11

Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide. 2 Corinthians 6-11RSV

Paul loved these people in Corinth, and he has manifested that love in various ways toward them. He has demonstrated it, as he says here, by two special things. Our mouth is open to you, he says. That means he communicated with them; he told them what was going on in his own life; he shared with them his feelings, struggles, failures, pressures, and problems, and he let them know how he coped with them. That is always a mark of love. To open up to others is to love them. Conversely, to close up and not communicate is to violate love.

This is a frequent problem in churches today. Christians actually think it is right for them to be closed in on themselves, to be private persons, unwilling to communicate who they are and how they feel and where they are in their lives. That, of course, is the way of

the world. The world teaches us to let no one see who we are. But we need to understand that when we become Christians, we must learn to open up to one another.

Our heart is wide, he says. He means there is no favoritism; he includes the whole congregation. He did not merely love the nice people among them. He loved them all: the difficult ones, the ones who were struggling, and the hard-to-get-along-with ones as well. There were no preconditions that he demanded before he would love somebody in the congregation either. He accepted them as people. Though he knew their struggles, their weaknesses, their heartaches, their failures, and their resistance, he loved them.

The problem was that they did not love him in return. This is the problem in churches, in individual lives, in homes, in families, and in marriages today. It is a failure to understand the reciprocal nature of love. Love is a two-way street. It always is; it is inherently so. Love requires a response. Paul was loving them, but they were not loving him back. They were closed; they were unresponsive; they were coldly self-contained toward him. And the result? Paul puts it in one word: They were restricted (2 Corinthians 6:12 RSV). What does that mean? It means they were limited; they were imprisoned within the narrow boundaries of their own selfish lives.

That is why Paul pleads here with these Corinthians: Oh! Corinthians, widen your hearts unto us. You are not restricted by us. You are restricted by yourselves, in your own affections. If you really want to experience the richness of love, then love back when you are loved. This is one of the most important lessons we can ever learn in life. Love must respond. When you are loved, what do you do? Do you love back, or do you say, What a wonderful feeling! I hope they will keep that up? Do you expect it all to come to you without a reciprocal response from you? No, that is impossible. Love must respond.

Father, help me to respond with open mouth and heart to those who have reached out to me in love. Thank You for the love You have shown me.

Life Application Transparent communication stretches us and makes us vulnerable. Are we learning to be open-hearted to all, and thereby loving, for Christ's sake and by His power?

Living Large

We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. —2 Corinthians 6:11

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:1-13

A boating magazine reports that Serenity, Time Out, Serendipity, and Reel Time are some of the most popular names for boats. Not long ago, I saw the name Living Large on a boat in a Grand Haven, Michigan, marina. I'm not sure what that meant to the boat owner, but to many people, "living large" means to own the best possessions, to take the most exotic vacations, to buy whatever you want, to live life extravagantly.

That kind of life, however, doesn't bring true purpose or satisfaction. Followers of Jesus Christ are to live large in a different way, as seen in the example of the apostle Paul and of his co-worker Timothy. Paul told the Corinthians, "Our heart is wide open" (2 Cor. 6:11). The King James Version puts it like this: "Our heart is enlarged." They had given their wholehearted affection to the people, just as a father does to his children as he wraps them in his arms. Now they wanted the same response. So Paul requested, "Now in return for the same . . . you also be open" (v.13).

A large-hearted person shows his affection with his words and actions—freely and generously. As believers, let's live large today and freely welcome and embrace others in love. By: Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Love through me, Love of God,
There is no Love in me;
O Fire of Love, light Thou the Love
That burns perpetually.
—Carmichael

They do not truly love who do not show their love.
—Shakespeare

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

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

NET 2 Corinthians 6:12 Our affection for you is not restricted, but you are restricted in your affections for us.

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:12 ο στενοχωρεσθε υμιν, στενοχωρεσθε δε υτοις σπληγχνοις υμων·

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:12 There is no lack of love on our part, but you have withheld your love from us.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections.

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:12 We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us.

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:12 ye are not straitened in us, and ye are straitened in your own bowels,

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own affections.

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:12 You are not limited by us, but you are limited by your own affections.

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:12 Limitations are not set on you by us, but constrictions are caused by your own deep feelings.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:12 There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours.

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:12 You are not constrained by us; you are constrained by your own affections.

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:12 Any distress you feel is not on our side; the distress is in your own selves.

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:12 We haven't cut you off. Your own emotions have cut you off from us.

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:12 It is not our feelings to you which are narrow, but yours to us.

- **are not:** Ec 6:9 Job 36:16 Pr 4:12 Mic 2:7
- **in your own affections:** Php 1:8 1Jn 3:17
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

WITHHOLDING OF AFFECTION!

What lack does he identify in this verse?

Paul had built no fences in his affection for the Corinthians, but sadly they had. This passage might be aptly subtitled "restricted affections."

You are not ([stenochoreo](#) in present tense continually) **restrained by us, but you are restrained** ([stenochoreo](#) in present tense continually) **in your own affections** - **Phillips Paraphrase** = "Any stiffness between us must be on your side, for we assure you there is none on ours." **Amplified** = "There is no lack of room for you in [our hearts], but you lack room in your own affections [for us]." **NET** = "Our affection for you is not restricted, but you are restricted in your affections for us." "There is no lack of love on our part, but you have withheld your love from us. (2Co 6:12NLT)" **Restrained** literally meant a narrow space, so here figuratively Paul is saying that the Corinthians are not restricted to a "narrow place" in his affections. To the contrary, the affections of the Corinthians were confined to a "narrow space" (so to speak as in their hearts). They were "tight" so to speak in their affections toward Paul. The implication is that the Corinthians have in part begun to believe the criticisms about Paul and his ministry and therefore were holding their affections back from him.

Ray Stedman - "Our heart is wide," he says. What does he mean? Well, he means there is no favoritism; he included the whole congregation. He was not merely loving the nice people among them. He loved them all, the difficult ones, the ones who were struggling, the hard to get along with ones as well. There were no pre-conditions that he demanded before he would love somebody in the congregation, either. He accepted them as people. Though he knew their struggles, their weaknesses, their heartaches, their failures and their resistance, still he loved them.

The problem was that they were not loving him in return. This is the problem in churches, in individual lives, in homes, in families and in marriages today. It is a failure to understand the reciprocal nature of love. Love is a two-way street. It always is; it is inherently so. Love requires a response. Paul was loving them, but they were not loving him back. They were closed; they were unresponsive; they were coldly self-contained toward him. And the result? Paul puts it in one word: They were "restricted." What does that mean? It means they were limited; they were bound; they were tied up by themselves; they were imprisoned within the narrow boundaries of their own selfish lives. As a result, they could not experience the richness of life.

Henry Morris - Paul assured the Corinthians that their failings had not lessened his love for them or concern for their spiritual welfare. He was concerned, however, that there still existed internal divisions and strained "affections" (the connotation intended by the reference to "bowels") among them. ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

Restrained (4729) (**stenochoreo** from **stenos** = narrow + **choreo** = to make room, contain, hold) literally to be made narrow, to compress, restrict to a narrow space, confine, squeeze into a narrow tight place, restrict. Figuratively and passive in the NT, as having a cramped or narrow feeling be restricted, be severely limited, to be constrained, reserved, be unable to express oneself (2Co 6:12). To be completely overwhelmed with difficulty, to be in a circumstance that seems to offer no way out (2Co 4:8). Severe limitations or restrictions.

[Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#) - Stenochōreō is a verb meaning "to cram or press into a narrow place" or "to compress into a confined space." Stenochōreō can be found used of pressing a ship through a narrow waterway, or traveling through a narrow ravine or gorge such as the Cilician Gates, the famous pass through the steep mountains near Paul's native Tarsus.

Septuagint Usage In the Septuagint the word is used of the topography of the boundary of Ephraim (Joshua 17:15), while in Judges it is figuratively used of Delilah's blandishing pressures upon Samson to force him to reveal the secret of his strength (Judges 16:16). The word is translated in Isaiah 28:20 (LXX 28:19) of a bed that is too narrow or too short to stretch oneself upon in a word of condemnation to the scoffers in Jerusalem.

New Testament Usage Stenochōreō finds figurative expression in Paul's writings to denote difficult circumstances he experienced in the course of his ministry. "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed" (2 Corinthians 4:8). The only other occurrences of stenochōreō are in 2 Corinthians 6:12: "Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels." Paul used stenochōreō in these verses to give the Corinthians a word picture. Paul was not shutting the Corinthians out by "squeezing" them out of his heart. But rather, if there was any shortage of space for affection, it was in their "bowels," meaning that their hearts had no room to respond with affection towards him

Stenochoreo - 2x in NT - crushed(1), restrained(2). = 2 Co. 4:8; 2 Co. 6:12 Uses in Septuagint - Jos. 17:15; Jdg. 16:16; Isa. 28:20; Isa. 49:19;

Affections (4698) **splagchnon** originally referred to the upper abdominal viscera especially the intestines, which the ancients regarded as the seat of affections and emotions, such as anger and love. This word is always in the plural in the NT. The phrase "I feel it in the pit of my stomach" is a modern parallel. And we all know how that feels! So **splagchnon** refers to that deep, internal caring comparable to the modern expressions of deep feeling such as "broken-hearted" or "gut-wrenching". **Splagchnon** - 11v in NT - Lk. 1:78; Acts 1:18; 2 Co. 6:12; 2 Co. 7:15; Phil. 1:8; Phil. 2:1; Col. 3:12; Phlm. 1:7; Phlm. 1:12; Phlm. 1:20; 1 Jn. 3:1

2 Corinthians 6:13 Now in a like exchange--I speak as to children--open wide to us also.

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.

NET 2 Corinthians 6:13 Now as a fair exchange— I speak as to my children— open wide your hearts to us also.

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:13 τ ν ὃ α τ ν ντιμισθ αν, ς τ κνοις λ γω, πλατ νθητε κα με ς.

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:13 I am asking you to respond as if you were my own children. Open your hearts to us!

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:13 In return (I speak as to children) widen your hearts also.

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:13 As a fair exchange--I speak as to my children--open wide your hearts also.

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:13 and as a recompense of the same kind, (as to children I say it,) be ye enlarged -- also ye!

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:13 Now for a recompense in like kind (I speak as unto my children), be ye also enlarged.

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:13 I speak as to my children. As a proper response, you should also be open to us.

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:13 In the same reciprocal manner—I speak as to children—you also should be candid.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:13 Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:13 In return-- I speak as to children-- open wide your hearts also.

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:13 As recompense in kind (I speak as to my children), be open yourselves.

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:13 In fair exchange -- I speak as though to children of mine -- you must open your hearts too.

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:13 I'm talking to you as I would talk to children. Treat us the same way we've treated you. Make a place for us in your hearts too.

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:13 Now to give me back payment of the same sort (I am talking as to my children), let your hearts be wide open to me.

- **I speak:** 1Co 4:14,15 Ga 4:19 1Th 2:11 Heb 12:5,6 1Jn 2:1,12-14 3:7,18 3Jn 1:4
- **open wide to us also:** 2Ki 13:14-19 Ps 81:10 Mt 9:28,29 17:19-21 Mk 6:4-6 11:24 Jas 1:6,7 1Jn 5:14,15
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A FATHERLY COMMAND FOR RECIPROCAL AFFECTION

What is Paul's appeal? What is his appeal based on?

Now in a like exchange (as a fair exchange)m -I (present tense continually) **speak as to children--open wide** (plutono) **to us also** - **Phillips Paraphrase** = "Do reward me (I talk to you as though you were my own children) with the same complete candour!" **NLT** = "I am asking you to respond as if you were my own children." Paul is speaking as their spiritual father (**children**) and is commanding them (in love) to **open wide** their hearts just as he had opened wide his heart (2Co 6:11). This is Paul's appeal for the Corinthians to respond to him with open hearts (just as he did to them).

Wick Broomall - Ill feeling against Paul had given the Corinthians a bad case of spiritual hardening of the heart.

Pulpit Commentary - He begs them to give him "a reward in kind;" in other words, he wishes them to be as frank with him as he has been to them. As unto my children. And therefore, as a spiritual father, I may surely ask for sympathy. St. Paul uses the same metaphor in 1 Cor. 4:14; 1 Thess. 2:11. Be ye also enlarged. Treat me as I have treated you (comp. "Be as I am," Gal. 4:12). ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Henry Morris - As their spiritual father, Paul urged the Corinthians to respond with appropriate filial love, which should be exhibited by the same largeness of heart which he himself showed for them. This was all he asked by way of recompense. ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

Exchange ([489](#)) (**antimisthia** from **anti-** = in return + **misthos** = a reward) emphasizes receiving what is due in an exchange. Positive sense = recompense, reward, fair exchange = 2Co 6:13, negative sense = Ro 1:27 = penalty, retribution, requital. **Louw-Nida** - a recompense based upon what one deserves, either positive or negative, but with special emphasis upon the reciprocal nature of the recompense." **BDAG** writes that **antimisthia** "expresses the reciprocal (**anti**) nature of a transaction as requital based upon what one deserves, recompense, exchange, either in the positive sense of reward or the negative sense penalty, depending on the context. ([A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament](#)) Only in Ro 1:27 and 2Co 6:13.

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

AMP Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers [do not make mismatched alliances with them or come under a different yoke with them, inconsistent with your faith]. For what partnership have right living and right standing with God with iniquity and lawlessness? Or how can light have fellowship with darkness?

The Living Bible Don't be teamed with those who do not love the Lord, for what do the people of God have in common with the people of sin? How can light live with darkness?

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

NET 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not become partners with those who do not believe, for what partnership is there

between righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship does light have with darkness?

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:14 Μὴ νεσθε τερῶζυγο ντες π στοίς· τς γ ρ μετοχ δικαιοσ ν κα νομ , τς κοινων α φωτ πρς σκ τος;

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:14 Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness?

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:14 Become not yoked with others -- unbelievers, for what partaking is there to righteousness and lawlessness?

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:14 Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness?

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness and lawlessness?

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship is there between light and darkness?

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be yoked with those who are different, with unbelievers. For what partnership do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness?

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not harness yourselves in an uneven team with unbelievers; how can uprightness and law-breaking be partners, or what can light and darkness have in common?

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:14 Stop forming inappropriate relationships with unbelievers. Can right and wrong be partners? Can light have anything in common with darkness?

B

- **Do not be bound together with unbelievers:** Ex 34:16 Lev 19:19 De 7:2,3 22:9-11 Ezr 9:1,2,11,12 10:19 Ne 13:1-3,23-26 Ps 106:35 Pr 22:24 Mal 2:11,15 1Co 5:9 7:39 1Co 15:33 Jas 4:4
- **for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness:** 1Sa 5:2,3 1Ki 18:21 2Ch 19:2 Ps 16:3 26:4,5,9,10 44:20,21 Ps 101:3-5 119:63 139:21,22 Pr 29:27 Joh 7:7 15:18,19 Ac 4:23 1Co 10:21 Eph 5:6-11 1Jn 3:12-14
- **what fellowship has light with darkness:** Pr 8:18,19 Ro 13:12-14 Eph 4:17-20 Eph 5:8-14 Php 2:15 1Th 5:4-8 1Pe 2:9,10 4:2-4 1Jn 1:5-7
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

Leviticus 19:19+ **(OT CONCEPT OF NOT INTERMIXING)** You are to keep My statutes. You shall not breed together two kinds of your cattle; you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed, nor wear a garment upon you of two kinds of material mixed together.

Deuteronomy 22:10+ **(OT CONCEPT OF NOT INTERMIXING)** You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

Ephesians 5:6-11+ **(LIGHT-DARK)** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore **do not be partakers** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) with them; 8 for you were formerly **darkness** (NOTE NOT "I N DARKNESS" BUT ACTUALLY THE PERSONIFICATION OR ESSENCE OF DARKNESS! cf Eph 4:18+), but now you are **Light** in (locative of sphere) the Lord; **walk** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) as children of Light 9 (for the fruit of the Light

consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), 10 trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 **Do not be participate** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them;

John 3:19+ (**LIGHT-DARK**) "This is the judgment, that the **Light** has come into the world, and men loved the **darkness** rather than the **Light**, for their deeds were evil.

James 4:4+ (**CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD**) You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

Romans 12:2+ (**NON-CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD**) And **do not be conformed** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.



**DO NOT BE "MISMATED"
OR UNEQUALLY YOKED**

What words does Paul use to identify unbelievers in 2Co 6:14-18?

2Co 6:14-18 almost seems like a new subject and is admittedly difficult to relate to Paul's defense of his ministry in the preceding passages (2Co 6:3-13). Paul had just called on the saints at Corinth open their hearts and their affection toward him. Recall he had even spoken to them as his spiritual children and so like a good father, he now charges them to separate from the corrupt world around them. ([2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1 Watch Out for These](#))

THOUGHT - Don't miss the 5 key "relationship" words Paul chooses in this important section on Biblical separation - **partnership, fellowship, harmony, common and agreement**. Couple this with the 4 commands - **do not be bound, come out, separate, do not touch**! A **proper understanding** of these terms in this unique section of Scripture is **vital** if believers are to enjoy the seven divine promises (2Co 6:16-18) of **full fellowship with our Father!**

James Denney heads the chapter in which he deals with this section, "New Testament Puritanism." Puritanism congers up in our mind a group of people who separated from the profane things of this present, passing world. ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

Ray Stedman offers an interesting explanation of this next section writing "Now, we are taking the obstacles that hinder the ministry of reconciliation (2Co 5:18+). One of them, as we have seen, is restricted affections, holding ourselves in to ourselves, keeping ourselves private people. The second is defiling comprises, getting involved with unbelievers in ways and associations that limit us and keep us from being what we ought to be.

F W Robertson says "He asked for the enlargement of their heart towards him: which was to be shown in separation from the world. This is the only true recompence of ministerial work."

F F Bruce asks "How can "receiving God's grace in vain" be avoided? 2 Corinthians 6:14 is a response to that question."

B B Warfield offers this background on 2Co 6:11-7:1 - IT is not easy to determine with exactitude the circumstances which gave occasion to this striking paragraph, which stands out so prominently on the pages of Second Corinthians as almost to separate itself from its context and form a whole of its own. Of two things, however, we may be reasonably sure. There was a party in the Corinthian Church which we may perhaps fairly describe as the party of the Libertines; and out of this party, too, there had arisen an opposition to the leadership of Paul, and a tendency to accuse him of insincerity and self-seeking in his work at Corinth. We must picture the Apostle, therefore, as compelled to defend himself and the purity of his ministry, in this Epistle, not only against a narrow Judaistic formalism, with its touch not, taste not, handle not, but also against a loose worldliness which was inclined to adapt its Christianity to the usages current in the heathen society about it. Differing in everything else, both parties agreed in unwillingness to subject themselves unreservedly to the guidance of Paul; and in defence of themselves represented him as acting towards the church from interested motives. Bearing this in mind, we may readily understand how, when in the course of his self-defence the Apostle has been led to dwell upon the hardships he had suffered in the prosecution of his mission, he should break off suddenly with an appeal to his Corinthians to separate themselves from heathen practices and points of view, and themselves to walk worthily of the Gospel they professed. "See, O Corinthians," he exclaims, "how freely I am speaking to you, how widely open my heart is to you. You find no constraint on my part with reference to you; the only constraint there is between us lies in your own hearts. Give me

what I give you—I am speaking as to my children; open wide your heart to me. Seek not your standards of life in the unbelievers about you. Remember who you are and what you should be as organs of the Holy Spirit; and be not content until you have attained that perfect holiness which becomes the children of God.” So the Apostle transforms his defence of his ministry into an exhortation to his readers, in which he again exercises his ministry of love in a disinterested plea to them to walk worthily of the Gospel of holiness....The Apostle is not here requiring of Christians a withdrawal from the world, considered as the social organism; and most certainly he is not asking of them to segregate themselves into a community apart, between which and the mass of men there shall be no, or only the least possible, intercourse. (Faith and Life, page 245).

MacDonald rightly says "This section of 2 Corinthians is one of the key passages in all the word of God on the **subject of separation**. It is clear instruction that the believer should separate himself from unbelievers, iniquity, darkness, Belial, idols. It certainly refers to the marriage relationship. A Christian should not marry an unsaved person. However, in cases where a believer is already married to an unbeliever, this passage does not justify separation or divorce. God's will in such a case is that the marriage relationship should be maintained with a view to the eventual salvation of the unsaved member (1 Cor. 7:12–16). In addition to this, it refers to business. A Christian should not go into partnership with one who does not know the Lord. It applies clearly to secret orders or fraternities: How could one who is faithful to Christ consistently go on in an association where the name of the Lord Jesus is unwelcome? Its application to social life would be as follows: A Christian should maintain contact with the unsaved in an effort to win them to Christ, but he should never engage in their sinful pleasures or in any of their activities in such a way as to lead them to think he is no different than they. Then this section would also apply to religious matters: A faithful follower of Christ would not want to hold membership in a church where unbelievers were knowingly admitted as members. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

Separation is not from men, but from evil.

Do not be bound (yoked) together with unbelievers - Paul issues a strong command which is a [present imperative with a negative](#) a command that calls for one's dependence on [the Holy Spirit to obey](#). The idea is stop doing being mismatched or intermixed, implying it is already transpiring. In one sense believers are already "yoked" for we have come to Christ and accepted His covenant yoke and are one with Him (Mt 11:28-30+) One could also render it to prohibit a habitual mixture (in intimate relationships, business, dating, marital) with **unbelievers**. Paul's command is then amplified by 5 rhetorical questions in 2Co 6:14-16a.

Wick Broomall - The command may be rendered: "Stop becoming heterogeneously yoked with unbelievers." The principle goes back to the Mosaic legislation (cf. Lev 19:19; Deut 22:10). Christians are "new creatures" (2Cor 5:17); they must not be united spiritually with dead unbelievers (cf. Eph 2:1).

Stedman - once when I was traveling in the Middle East I saw a farmer plowing his field with a camel and a donkey. It was almost ludicrous to watch. The camel was three times the height of the donkey, and his legs were three times as long. He was striding along at a rather slow pace for him, but the little donkey was running as fast as he could to keep up. The farmer kept beating him all the time trying to get him to keep up. It was cruel. Both animals obviously were miserable; they hated being tied together like that. This is what the Law reflects. It is a cruel thing to yoke together two things of incompatible natures. This is what Paul has in mind here. What he is saying, of course, is there are certain associations that Christians have with unbelievers that constitute a yoke, and these associations are a certain cause for misery and shame in a Christian's life. We are to avoid them. They will hinder us, limit us, bind us and keep us from enjoying the fullness God has in mind for us. They are like trying to mix oil and water. ([2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1 Watch Out for These](#))

B B Warfield - We see, then, that the Apostle's urgency here is against not association with the world, but **compromise** with the worldly. **Compromise!** In that one word is expressed a very large part of a Christian's danger in the world. We see it on all sides of us and in every sphere of life.

Kruse asks "what sort of partnerships did he have in mind? Were they marriage partnerships (cf. 1 Cor. 7:39), or was it the more general notion of partnership in pagan practices (cf. 1 Cor. 10:14–22)? In the light of what follows (2Co 6:15–16) the latter seems more likely. ([Full text of TNTC 2 Corinthians](#))

What a difference it is to be unequally yoked compared to taking the yoke offered by Jesus...

Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. (AN **UNEQUAL** YOKE GIVES ANYTHING BUT REST!) **Take** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) My yoke upon you and **learn** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Mt 11:28-30+)

Henry Morris - Paul is using a metaphor here based on Deuteronomy 22:10 and Leviticus 19:19, which forbade plowing with an ox and ass yoked together, or attempting to interbreed animals of different kinds. The clear inference is that believers and unbelievers

are so different in character and interests (as well as ultimate destiny) that they should never be "yoked" together in situations requiring strong agreement of attitudes and goals (e.g., marriage, churches, business partnerships, lodges or other organizations with religious overtones). The prohibition is not intended to require complete repudiation of all secular or charitable organizations (note 1 Corinthians 5:10) or friendships. When one's Christian faith is in jeopardy, or his Christian conduct and influence is endangered, then such connections should be severed. One can witness to unbelievers without partaking of their beliefs or sinful behavior. ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

Guzik has a good application of Paul's command to separate writing that "Paul means much more here than only marrying an unbeliever. It really applies to any environment where we let the world influence our thinking. When we are being conformed to this world and are not being transformed by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2+), we join together with unbelievers in an ungodly way. This speaks especially to the issue of influence. Paul is not suggesting that Christians never associate with unbelievers (he makes this clear in 1 Corinthians 5:9–13). The principle is that we are to be in the world, but not of the world, like a ship should be in the water, but water shouldn't be in the ship. If the world is influencing us, it is clear we are unequally yoked together with unbelievers. And this unequal yoke, or ungodly influence, may come through a book, a movie, a television show, a magazine, or even through worldly Christian friends. Most Christians are far too indiscriminate about the things they allow to influence their minds and lives."

Bound together (2086) (**heterozugeo** from **heteros** = different kind + **zugos** = yoke) means wrongly or poorly mismatched. Picture 2 different animals (cow and mule for example) who are yoked together in a mismatch that unbalanced and ineffective. To yoke w. a different yoke, to draft animals that need different kinds of yokes because they are of different species. The related adjective heterozugos is used in Lev 19:19 where it means coupled with an animal of diverse kind. The idea of "not belonging together" can be found as early as the Zenon Papyri in Hellenistic times. The concept of the yoke was used in relation to marriage and in relation to teachers who agreed in their doctrine. A mixed marriage or cooperation with one who had a different doctrine was considered to be unequally yoked.

Unbelievers (571) **apistos** (from **a** = without + **pistos** = believing, faithful) means lacking in faith, without faith, disbelieving, unbelieving - in this [context](#) **apistos** is one who does not believe the Good News about Jesus Christ (1Ti 5:8, Titus 1:15, Rev 21:8). It is used once to describe that which is incredible (Acts 26:8+), but most NT uses describe those without faith, not trusting, unfaithful. In secular Greek use **apistos** described reports, etc as *incredible*. **BDAG** gives an example of an ancient secular use of **apistos** in the description of "a patient (who) sneers in disbelief at healings recorded in a shrine of Asclepius and subsequently receives the sobriquet (a descriptive name) : "*Apistos*"

Related - [What exactly is an unbeliever? | GotQuestions.org](#)

For (**gar**) is a [term of explanation](#) which here gives the reason for not being unequally yoked.

What partnership ([metoche](#)) **have righteousness** ([dikaiosune](#)) **and lawlessness** ([anomia](#) - see 1Jn 3:4+ where "sin is lawlessness"), **or what fellowship** ([koinonia](#)) **has light** ([phos](#)) **with darkness** ([skotos](#))? - This is the first of five straightforward rhetorical questions all clearly calling for a resounding negative reply. **Righteousness** and **lawlessness** describe the whole sphere of moral behavior and are clear opposites!

The writer of Hebrews has the same contrast in his description of the Messiah writing "YOU HAVE LOVED **RIGHTEOUSNESS** AND HATED **LAWLESSNESS**; THEREFORE GOD, YOUR GOD, HAS ANOINTED YOU WITH THE OIL OF GLADNESS ABOVE YOUR COMPANIONS." (Heb 1:9+).

Stedman - What **partnership** can a right-loving person have with somebody who does not care anything about rightness? What **partnership** can a heart that loves fairness and justice have with someone who cares nothing for truth, who refuses all authority and does what he pleases? That is a certain formula for heartache. Then Paul says, "Or what fellowship has light with darkness?" Those are the two most opposite things we know anything about. Christians are said to be light. Unbelievers are in darkness. It is not anything superior about the Christian that gives him light. It is simply the fact that he, as an unbeliever himself once, living in darkness, has come to the light, and now he is "light in the Lord" (Ephesians 5:8), as Paul puts it in Ephesians. Light is ever, in Scripture, a symbol of understanding, of an awareness of true reality. Now imagine someone who sees life clearly, and understands what is happening, joining himself or herself to someone who lives in ignorance of life, who lives in an illusion and fantasy and blind selfishness? That is a formula for disaster, for much pain, suffering and heartache, isn't it? ([2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1 Watch Out for These](#))

Or what fellowship ([koinonia](#)) **has light** ([phos](#)) **with darkness** ([skotos](#))? - **Fellowship** involves a close relationship, the state of sharing mutual interests, experiences, activities, etc.; a relation in which parties hold something in common, as in marriage or in a spiritual relationship with God (2Cor 13:14+ = "the **fellowship** of the Holy Spirit"; 1Cor 1:9+ = "God is faithful, through Whom you

were called into **fellowship** with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."). It follows that if believers are in **fellowship** with the Holy Spirit and God's Son Jesus Christ (and we are), one cannot simultaneously have **fellowship** with that which is opposed to God (the **world** is anti-God, the **flesh** is godless and the **devil** is the enemy of God). While we can and should talk with those who are in the kingdom of darkness and offer them the message of reconciliation, we should assiduously avoid any and all intimate contact lest our moral fiber be corrupted, which is a certainty! (cf 1Cor 15:33+). John says it this way -- "If we say that we have **fellowship** (**koinonia**) with Him and yet (present tense - continually, habitually) walk in the darkness, we (present tense - continually) lie and (present tense - continually) do not practice the truth;(1Jn 1:6+). **Light** and **darkness** in addition to the moral sphere also speak of two diametrically opposed kingdoms - **light** (Col 1:12-14+) and **darkness** (Acts 26:18+), two kingdoms in continually conflict!

Kruse - In Colossians 1:12–14+ Paul depicts salvation as the deliverance of believers from the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of God's Son, where they share in the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus those who have been transferred into the kingdom of Christ and light can have no fellowship with Satan and the dominion of darkness. In 1 Corinthians 10:14–22 Paul speaks of participation in pagan worship as fellowship with demons, and his question, What accord has Christ with Belial?, probably reflects concern in the same area. ([Full text of TNTC 2 Corinthians](#))

Gromacki - light and darkness. These two have nothing in common. They cannot coexist. Jesus said: "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). God is pure, moral light. There is not a single speck of darkness within His being (1 John 1:5). Therefore, to have fellowship with Him, one must walk in the light and not in the darkness (1 John 1:6).

Partnership (3352) (**metoche** from **metochos** - partakers) sharing, participation; as a participation in common fellowship, a relationship involving shared purposes and activity. In 2 Corinthians 6:14 the absolute lack of "common interest" or ground for "fellowship" between **righteousness** (**dikaiosune**) and **lawlessness** (**anomia**) is emphasized. **Metochē** refers to the partnership, not the partners, emphasizing the active relationship based on shared purposes and activity more than the people involved. Used once in Lxx - Ps 122:3.

Fellowship (communion, sharing) (2842) **koinonia** from **koinos** = that which is in common) describes the experience of having something in common and/or of sharing things in common with others. It describes a close association involving mutual interests and sharing with active, joint participation and cooperation. See excellent article on [Fellowship](#).

Darkness (4655) **skotos** from **skia** = shadow thrown by an object) is literally that sphere in which light is absent. In the present passage **skotos** is used figuratively to describe an absence of moral and spiritual understanding (**spiritual darkness**) as in Acts 26.18+. **Skotos** can also refer to the domain under the authority of the devil and demons, the realm of evil (Lk 22.53+ = "this hour and the power of **darkness** are yours."; Eph 6.12+ = "the world forces of this **darkness**") Sadly **skotos** is used as another name for the place of punishment, eternal misery and eternal separation from God (2Pe 2:17+)

Related Resources:

- [Is it good to have close friendships with unbelievers?](#)
- [Is it right for a Christian to date or marry a non-Christian?](#)
- [Is missionary dating a good idea? can't God use it?](#)
- [What should a Christian do if he or she is married to an unbeliever?](#)
- [Should a Christian go into business with an unbeliever?](#)
- [2 Corinthians 6:14-17 What is biblical separation?](#)
- [2 Corinthians 6:14 Is it good to have close friendships with unbelievers?](#)

Ray Stedman - WHAT IS A YOKE?

The great unanswered question, I am sure, in everyone's mind this morning is, "What is a yoke?" Is a business partnership a yoke? Is a union membership a yoke? Is marriage a yoke? Is a date with a non-Christian a yoke? We have to be careful here, because, as I suggested at the beginning of this study, this verse has been pushed way too far in that direction. There have been some who have taken it as justification for withdrawing from the world, from contact with non-Christians, and building a wholly Christian life from the womb to the tomb without making any friends or even contacts with non-Christians.

That is a violation of other verses. Paul in this very letter has told us we are "ambassadors for Christ," (2 Corinthians 5:20). We are to be in touch with the world. We are to be contacting them with friendship and openness and love so that they are ready to receive our word, "Be reconciled unto God." You cannot do that over a chasm. You have to move in with people. It was Jesus himself who told us, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," (Matthew 10:16 KJV). That is where Christians are to be. We are

not to withdraw from the world. Well, then, what constitutes a yoke that we are to avoid? Now, not all associations are yokes, but yokes have two characteristics by which we can always identify them. The first one is that a yoke is not easily broken. It is a kind of permanent relationship. When you yoke two animals together they are bound together; they do not have any choice. Uncomfortable as it may be, they must do things together.

This is why the church has always taken this passage to refer to marriage, especially. Marriage is that kind of a yoke. It is a relationship that cannot be easily broken.....There is a way of living within a "yoked" relationship, rising above it by faith, so that they can walk in godliness. But the wording of this verse here is, "Stop forming yokes. Don't continue to enter into relationships like this." And marriage is clearly a permanent yoke that is not easily broken. I know that it is easy to be drawn into these relationships. Oftentimes our feelings are attracted to people, as people, and we tend to discount the dangers and to feel that everything is going to work out all right. Young people especially are tempted many times because of love and feelings of affection to enter into a yoke of marriage that is wrong. They sometimes rationalize themselves out of it. I see it happening all the time. But Paul is warning about something that is a deadly danger to faith.

Some years ago I remember reading a prayer addressed to God that a girl had written in her diary on her wedding day:

Dear God, I can hardly believe that this is my wedding day. I know I haven't been able to spend much time with you lately with all the rush of getting ready for today, and I'm sorry. I guess too, I feel a little guilty when I try to pray about all this, since Larry still isn't a Christian. But Oh! Father, I love him so much. What else can I do? I just couldn't give him up. Oh! you must save him some way, somehow. You know how much I have prayed for him and the way we've discussed the gospel together. I've tried not to appear too religious, I know, but that's because I didn't want to scare him off. Yet he isn't antagonistic and I don't understand why he hasn't responded. Oh! if only he were a Christian. Dear Father, please bless our marriage. I don't want to disobey you, but I do love him, and I want to be his wife. So please be with us, and please don't spoil my wedding day.

It was a sincere prayer, but it was a very sadly mistaken prayer. Though she did not realize it, what she was really praying was something like this:

Dear Father, I don't want to disobey you, but I must have my own way at all costs. For I love what you do not love, and I want what you do not want. So please be a good God and deny yourself and move off your throne and let me take over. If you don't like this, all I ask is that you bite your lip and say nothing and don't spoil my wedding day. Let me have my evil.

That is really what she was praying, isn't it? And I am sure she went on to discover, as thousands and thousands of others have, the wisdom of the apostle's words here, "Stop being mismated with unbelievers."

Now the second mark of a yoke is that it constrains someone; it does not permit independent action. There is something that forces you to comply with what the other one wants to do, whether you like it or not. Any kind of relationship that does not permit a believer to follow his Lord in all things is a yoke. Even a friendship can be a yoke. If it is the kind of possessive friendship in which you feel you cannot do what God wants you to do because you will offend your friend, then that is a yoke and it must be broken. God must have first place. We are his temple and he longs to bless us, as these words go on to show us. Paul here gathers together a group of texts from various parts of Scripture and quotes them: (2 Corinthians 6:17-18)

We are back again to this whole reciprocity of love. God's love is saying to us, "Look, I am here to enrich you. I want to make you my royal son and daughter. I want to be a Father to you, a tender, loving, careful, concerned, powerful Father to you, but I can't do it while you are still giving all your affection and all your ties to something else." Therefore, break the yoke, that is what he is saying, in order that you might experience the richness of God. As we have already seen, love to be enjoyed must be responded to, but you cannot respond if you are clinging to an association that is going in another direction. Though God's love is waiting to bless us, we cannot feel it, and enjoy it, until we turn from the yokes that bind us. Notice Paul's final appeal, Chapter 7, Verse 1:

Since we have these promises, beloved, [Hear the endearment of that word. He is not speaking roughly, harshly. This is a loving exhortation.] let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God. (2 Corinthians 7:1 RSV)

Who is it up to? Well, it is up to you, isn't it? Cleanse yourself. God cannot do this. Love cannot constrain you to love back. It can only plead, beg and entreat. (**ED: WHILE I AGREE YOU MUST CLEANSE YOURSELF, I WOULD ADD DO NOT ATTEMPT THIS "HOUSE CLEANING" IN RELIANCE ON YOUR NATURAL POWER, YOUR FLESH. FLESH WILL NEVER CLEAN OUT FLESH! YOU NEED TO RELY ON THE HOLY SPIRIT TO ENABLE HOLY ACTIONS AND BEHAVIOR.**) You have to make that decision; you must break that yoke. If you are tied with some friendship or relationship that is dragging you down, then you have to break that; you must decide to give it up. God will not take it away from you. You have to decide that, and if you do, you make holiness perfect.

Now do not misread that. Many people have. They think that means that if you turn away from all the unclean things in your life, and

give up the ugly, dirty things you may have stumbled into, that you are then making yourself holy. You never do that. Holiness is a gift God gives you right at the beginning of your Christian life. As Romans 12:1+ tells us, "present your body a living sacrifice, [already] holy, acceptable unto God," (Romans 12:1b RSV). God made it that way. You are not *trying* to be holy; you *are* holy; that is the point. But the holiness is perfected, it is made visible by acting like the one you have become, someone who is himself, herself, the dwelling place of God. That is the appeal the apostle makes here. What a loving appeal it is, that we free ourselves from all these limiting, restricting, binding relationships, and be the men and women God has called us to be. That is what this world is waiting to see.

F F Bruce - 2Co 6:14 Yoked with Unbelievers?

There are two ways in which 2 Corinthians 6:14 may be viewed as a hard saying. It may be hard because we don't like the rigorous implications it seems to have for our everyday relationships with persons who are not believers. If it is hard for this reason it should not be made easier, for that would be to obscure its meaning. The saying may, however, be hard because (1) it seems to present the incompatibility between believer and unbeliever more narrowly than other New Testament texts, and (2) it is not clear what being "yoked together" means precisely and how it is to be put into practice. A careful look at the text and its context should help.

One of the major themes in 2 Corinthians is the defense of the integrity of Paul's apostolic ministry, the authenticity of the gospel which he preached and the implications that gospel had for the life of Christians. It is clear from statements in both canonical letters that Paul's relationship with Corinth was a tumultuous one, giving rise to several visits and as many as four letters. There were elements in the church who opposed Paul and his teachings, and because of that opposition (often arising out of misunderstandings of what Paul had said or written earlier), the church at Corinth was in danger of self-destructing again and again.

In the discussion of 2 Corinthians 5:17 we saw that central to Paul's thought was the conviction that "in Christ" believers were "new creatures," their old allegiances had been replaced by a new relationship with God, "who reconciled us to himself" (2 Cor 5:17-18). On the basis of that truth, Paul knew that God had called him into the "ministry of reconciliation." Recognizing that reconciliation in the divine-human relationship had far-reaching implications for human relationships, Paul was grieved by those who opposed him and the gospel (2 Cor 2:1-4) and was concerned about their salvation. So he pleads earnestly with them: "We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20) and "We urge you not to receive God's grace in vain" (2 Cor 6:1).

From his earlier letter (1 Cor) it is clear that there were several areas in their life as a congregation and as individual believers where God's grace seemed to be **in vain** (for example, continuing participation in pagan cultic rituals, 1 Cor 6; 10; taking disagreements into pagan courts, 1 Cor 6). How can "receiving God's grace in vain" be avoided? 2 Corinthians 6:14 is a response to that question.

The Greek word for "yoked together" is found only here in the New Testament. In the Greek Old Testament, the word is used in the prohibition against breeding cattle with a different species of animal (Lev 19:19). From this use of the Greek word comes the meaning "mismatching," which several translations employ for this text (RSV; NEB, "Do not unite yourselves with unbelievers; they are no fit mates for you"). From this rendering of the word has emerged what is probably the commonest understanding of this text; namely, that Paul warns against marriage between believers and nonbelievers.

Though this understanding may be a valid application of the idea, the context of the passage suggests that marriage was not what Paul had in mind here. He seems to use the term in its more general meaning of "unevenly yoked," such as placing animals of a different species in the same harness. Paul may have used the prohibition against such yoking in Deuteronomy 22:10 as a metaphor: there is a decided difference between the Christian and the non-Christian. There is a basic incompatibility which must be recognized and which has implications for life in an environment of unbelief. What is the nature of that incompatibility? And what are its implications?

The statement "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers" is followed by a series of five antithetical questions which define the nature of incompatibility between believers and unbelievers. The questions are rhetorical; thus the answers are obvious. What do righteousness and wickedness, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, believer and unbeliever, the temple of God and idols, have in common? Absolutely nothing! "For we are the temple of the living God" (2 Cor 6:16).

The idea of Christians being, collectively, the temple of God was already laid before the Corinthians in Paul's earlier epistle (1 Cor 3:16). There they were also reminded that God's temple was sacred (holy), and they were that temple (1 Cor 3:17). They were to "flee from sexual immorality" (1 Cor 6:18) and "from idolatry" (1 Cor 10:14), for all forms of wickedness are incompatible with the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10). In 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 the reminder that they are God's temple is followed, via a series of Old Testament texts, by the call to really be God's holy people among whom he is present as in a temple. This exploration of the temple imagery as applied to the Christian community in the world closes with a final exhortation: "Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (2 Cor 7:1).

The whole passage from 2 Corinthians 6:14 on seems to drive toward this climax. Here is the key to what "not being yoked

with unbelievers” means. It means that the Christian is in process, moving toward holiness. The concept of holiness, as applied to both the temple and the people of God, is grounded in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word meaning “separated” always has a double meaning: separated from evil and dedicated to the service of God. Separation from evil is demonstrated by a distinctive way of life which evidences moral behavior of the highest order. Dedication to God’s service is demonstrated by the rejection of all idolatrous contamination (1 Cor 10:14; 2 Cor 6:16), whether in its ancient or modern forms (for “idolatry” is giving ultimate allegiance to beings or powers or things or values, rather than to God).

What are the implications for today? Not monastic isolation from the world. In 1 Corinthians 5:10 Paul recognizes that disassociation from immoral, worldly persons is impossible, since that would mean that one “would have to leave this world” (see also Jesus’ prayer in Jn 17:15, “not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one”). In 1 Corinthians 7:12–16, he recognizes that the marriage of a believer and unbeliever may lead to the sanctification of the unbelieving spouse. And in 1 Corinthians 10:27, he recognizes the possibility of believers at dinner parties in the homes of unbelieving friends or neighbors.

Separatist movements in church history, in the attempt to be faithful to the radical nature of Paul’s call for holiness, have often interpreted that call in terms of external associations or contacts or affiliations. Such a focus has often missed what seems to be the core of Paul’s concern; namely, that while living in the world and in contact with unbelievers, Christians have nothing in common with the darkness and evil and unrighteousness and immorality that claims the loyalties of those who are as yet not reconciled with God.

Thus to be “yoked with unbelievers” is to be of one heart and mind with them, co-opted by the values that guide them, seduced by their commitments to various “gods and lords” (1 Cor 8:5), conformed to a view of things which dismisses absolute truth and moral absolutes. Christians, according to Paul, are new creations living in the midst of the old order. As such, they are to “live as children of light,” bearing “the fruit of the light” which is “goodness, righteousness and truth” (Eph 5:8–9). ([Hard Sayings of the Bible](#))

QUESTION - [What does it mean to be unequally yoked?](#)

ANSWER -The phrase “unequally yoked” comes from 2 Corinthians 6:14 in the King James Version: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” The New American Standard Version says, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?”

A yoke is a wooden bar that joins two oxen to each other and to the burden they pull. An “unequally yoked” team has one stronger ox and one weaker, or one taller and one shorter. The weaker or shorter ox would walk more slowly than the taller, stronger one, causing the load to go around in circles. When oxen are unequally yoked, they cannot perform the task set before them. Instead of working together, they are at odds with one another.

Paul’s admonition in 2 Corinthians 6:14 is part of a larger discourse to the church at Corinth on the Christian life. He discouraged them from being in an unequal partnership with unbelievers because believers and unbelievers are opposites, just as light and darkness are opposites. They simply have nothing in common, just as Christ has nothing in common with “Belial,” a Hebrew word meaning “worthlessness” (2Co 6:15). Here Paul uses it to refer to Satan. The idea is that the pagan, wicked, unbelieving world is governed by the principles of Satan (1Jn 5:19, Jn 12:31) and that Christians should be separate from that wicked world, just as Christ was separate from all the methods, purposes, and plans of Satan. He had no participation in them; He formed no union with them, and so it should be with the followers of the one in relation to the followers of the other. Attempting to live a Christian life with a non-Christian for our close friend and ally will only cause us to go around in circles (ED: OR COULD EVEN BE A CATASTROPHE!).

The “unequal yoke” is often applied to business relationships. For a Christian to enter into a partnership with an unbeliever is to court disaster. Unbelievers have opposite worldviews and morals, and business decisions made daily will reflect the worldview of one partner or the other. For the relationship to work, one or the other must abandon his moral center and move toward that of the other. More often than not, it is the believer who finds himself pressured to leave his Christian principles behind for the sake of profit and the growth of the business.

Of course, the closest alliance one person can have with another is found in marriage, and this is how the passage is usually interpreted. God’s plan is for a man and a woman to become “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24), a relationship so intimate that one literally and figuratively becomes part of the other. Uniting a believer with an unbeliever is essentially uniting opposites, which makes for a very difficult marriage relationship. [GotQuestions.org](#)

James Smith - A Call to Separation - 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 7:1

The Christian is not of the world, but has been sent into it as a new creature, to be a witness for Jesus Christ (John 17:18). The danger is to compromise with the evil customs and false doctrines with which he is surrounded.

I. Why is Separation Needed?

Because the two great currents of influence in the world are diametrically opposed to each other. "The Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error." The purpose of the Lord Jesus Christ and "the God of this age" are vastly different.

1. "What Fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?" How can the righteousness of God and the unrighteousness of Godless men abide in fellowship?
2. "What Communion has light with darkness?" Darkness, it is said, is the natural condition of the universe. Light is its conqueror. "You were sometime darkness, but now are you light in the Lord." Walk as children of light. Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:6-11).
3. "What Concord has Christ with Belial?" What harmony can exist between the Holy Christ and pure vileness and worthlessness? (Deuteronomy 13:13).
4. "What Part has he who believes with an infidel?" The part of the believer is the knowledge of God and the joy of His salvation. What is the part of the infidel?
5. "What Agreement has the temple of God with idols? "You are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwells in you" (1 Corinthians 3:16). How could the Spirit of God agree to that which would dethrone God? Separation is absolutely needed.

II. The Call to Separation.

"Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean" (v. 17). God at the first "divided the light from the darkness" (Genesis 1:4), and ever since man has been trying to blend them. The carnal and the spiritual, the works of the flesh, with the works of the Spirit. In our minds and hearts, in our thoughts and affections, there is to be an exodus from the dominion of world influences, and a complete surrender of ourselves to the call of God. "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth, for you are risen with Christ, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Ephesians 3:1-3). They are reckoned enemies of the Cross who are devoted to earthly things (Philippians 3:18, 19). "You cannot serve God and mammon." Therefore come out and be separated for God and for His Christ.

III. The Promises Made to the Separated.

1. "I will receive you" (v. 17). You are not going out into cold isolation. When you separate yourself for God, you are but going closer into His arms, and nearer to His heart. The man of the world may look upon you with wondering pity, because he has no experience of fellowship with God or of victory by His constraining Spirit.
2. "I will be a Father unto you" (v. 18). Our God knows how very much we shall need Him when we are separated for Him. So He promises, and will act the true Fatherly part toward His devoted children. They can joyfully say: "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us" (1 John 3:1). Fear not, He will not fail you.

Having, therefore, these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord (2Cor 7:1). Father, I will.

C I Scofield - Summary of Separation -

(1) Separation in Scripture is twofold:

- (a) <from> whatever is contrary to the mind of God; and
- (b) <unto> God Himself. (cf 1Th 1:9-10+) The underlying principle is that in a moral universe it is impossible for God fully to bless and use His children who are in compromise or complicity with evil.

(2) Separation from evil implies

- (a) separation in desire, motive, and act, from the world, in the ethically bad sense of this present world system (see Rev 13:8⁺); and
- (b) separation from false teachers, who are described as being "ignoble" persons (2Ti 2:20-21; 2 John 9-11).

(3) Separation is not from contact with evil in the world or the church, but from complicity with and conformity to it (2Co 6:14-18; cp. Jn 17:15; Gal 6:1). And

(4) the reward of separation is the full manifestation of the divine fatherhood(2Co 6:17 - 18); unhindered communion and worship (see Heb 13:13 - 15), and fruitful service (2Ti 2:21), as world conformity involves the loss of these, though not of salvation.

Here, as in all else, Christ is the model. He was "holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners" (Heb 7:26), and yet He was in such contact with them for their salvation that the Pharisees, who illustrate the mechanical and ascetic conception of separation (Mat 3:7, note), judged Him as having lost His Nazirite character (Luke 7:39). Cp. 1 Cor 9:19 -23; 10:27.

Choose Your Alliances Carefully

Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. —2 Corinthians 6:14

Today's Scripture: 2 Chronicles 18:28,19:3

The Star Alliance is an affiliation of airlines that seeks to maximize passenger benefits. If you're traveling on a member airline, you can accumulate frequent-flyer miles after transferring flights and enjoy faster check-in. The Alliance's Web site calls it "a more civilized way to fly the world."

But not all alliances are mutually beneficial. In 2 Chronicles, we read that Ahab, the wicked king of Israel, formed an alliance with Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, when they joined armies against Syria. Why did Jehoshaphat establish this foolish bond with Ahab?

No reasons are given, but we know why Ahab encouraged Jehoshaphat to put on his kingly robes while Ahab disguised himself for the battle. He knew the Syrians would try to kill the king. The opposing army surrounded Jehoshaphat. He cried to the Lord for help and God diverted the troops. Despite Ahab's treacherous scheme to save his own skin, he was killed by a stray arrow.

Although Jehoshaphat escaped, Jehu the prophet confronted him, saying: "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord?" (2 Chronicles 19:2).

Helping people in need is godly. But making unwise alliances with those who hate God may prove disastrous.

Be sure to choose your alliances carefully. By: Albert Lee [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

It is good to join hands with the righteous,
Helping others you meet on your path;
But to make an alliance with evil
Will incur God's displeasure and wrath.
-Hess

Right and wrong can never be partners.

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

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

NET 2 Corinthians 6:15 And what agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share in common with an unbeliever?

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:15 τ ς δ συμφ νησις Χριστο πρ ς Βελι ρ, τ ς μερ ς πιστ μετ π στου;

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:15 What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever?

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever?

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:15 and what fellowship to light with darkness? and what concord to Christ with Belial? or what part to a believer with an unbeliever?

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:15 What agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:15 Or what compatibility does light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:15 What agreement does Christ have with Beliar? Or what does a believer share with an unbeliever?

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:15 What accord has Christ with Beliar? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:15 How can Christ come to an agreement with Beliar and what sharing can there be between a believer and an unbeliever?

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:15 Can Christ agree with the devil? Can a believer share life with an unbeliever?

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:15 And what agreement is there between Christ and the Evil One? or what part has one who has faith with one who has not?

- **Or what harmony has Christ with Belial:** 1Sa 5:2-4 1Ki 18:21 1Co 10:20,21
- **or what has a believer in common:** Ezr 4:3 Mk 16:16 Ac 8:20 1Jn 5:11-13
- **an unbeliever:** 1Ti 5:8
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Corinthians 10:20-21+ No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET!

Or what harmony has Christ ([Christos](#)) with Belial? ("worthlessness") - Whereas light and darkness (cf light in Col 1:12-14+), dark in Acts 26:18+) have to do at least in part with two opposing kingdoms, **Christ** and **Belial** have to do with two opposing kings. For a believer to attempt to live under the authority of **Belial** is tantamount to "spiritual treason." In addition we are in Christ forever and cannot possibly harmonize with **Belial**. What shared interests do people in covenant (oneness) with **Christ** have with people who live like Satan (like the unregenerate citizens of Corinth who were well known for their profligacy - See Collin's definition "[corinethianize](#)"). The word **harmony** is from the Greek root symphonesis which gives us our English [symphony](#) (Latin symphonia "a unison of sounds, harmony," from Greek symphonia "harmony, concord of sounds," from symphonos "harmonious, agreeing in sound,") which gives forth beautiful music, but there is only [cacophony](#) when believers in Christ begin to intimately relate to children of the devil. In other words, the holiness and purity of **Christ** cannot **harmonize** with the wickedness and impurity of Belial! Keep in mind that all humanity is divided into two spiritual families - (1) God is their father (only true believers) or (2) Satan is their father (Jn 8:44, 1Jn 3:10+). In turn these two families are in effect two spiritual kingdoms which are diametrically opposed, continually in conflict and as the saying goes "[never the twain shall meet](#)."

Belial in Hebrew means worthlessness because whatever he or his demons do is invariably worthless (at best) and actively harmful (at worst).

Stedman - Here, then, are the two great captains of the opposing philosophies of life, Jesus Christ and Satan, Belial.

McShane - Not only are these two leaders not in harmony, but they are antagonists. Belial sought to destroy Christ and thought he had accomplished this at the cross; Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil and will eventually consign him to the lake of fire.

[Postiff](#) - Consider that Jesus is the truth (John 14:6). Satan is a liar and the father of it (John 8:44). The same verse tells us that

Satan is a murderer, but we know Jesus is the giver of eternal life (John 6:27, 10:28, 17:2). (The word Belial is used 16 times in the OT and once in the NT. Here it refers to Satan, the Devil. Many times the Bible talks about people who are sons of Belial, those who lead people astray to other gods, who are homosexuals, who are drunkards, who are unbelievers, who despise authority, who are foolish and stubborn, who are greedy, who are destined for destruction, who are liars, and who are worthless.)

Harmony (4857) (**sumphōnesis** from **sun** = together intimately + **phone** = sound) speaks of harmony of people's opinions, actions, character. A being in unison with one another. **BDAG** = "a state of shared interests." The idea is agreement with, which often implies a type of joint decision - joint decision. Concord. Unison. Only 2Co 6:15. Not in Septuagint. The related adjective *sumphōnos* occurs in 1 Cor. 7:5

Belial (955) (**beliar** transliterated from the Hebr. *Belīyya'al* (1100) meaning wickedness (1 Sam. 25:25). Belial, a word applied by the sacred writers to such lewd, profligate, and vile persons as seem to regard neither God nor man (Dt. 13:13; Jdg. 19:22; 1 Sam. 2:12). "A son of Belial" means "a child of wickedness" by a common Hebraism (Deut. 13:13 = "some **worthless** [belial] men have gone out from among you"; Jdg 19:22 = "certain **worthless** [belial] fellows").

Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource Belial, a Hebrew noun meaning "worthlessness," is made up of *beli*, "without," and *ya'al*, "benefit." It appears 27 times in the Old Testament, but never as a proper name despite the fact that in 15 places the Authorized Version transliterates and capitalizes it (Deuteronomy 13:13; 15:19; etc.). Other versions substitute "scoundrels," "base fellows," and the like because in all such cases belial combines with another noun to serve an adjective function. "The sons of Eli were 'sons of worthlessness' " (1 Samuel 2:12); that is, they were "worthless fellows" (compare "man of God" for "godly man"). Hebrew employs nouns in the construct state (i.e., the genitive relation), as seen in 1 Samuel 2:12, to indicate the attribute of a person or thing (Gesenius, Hebrew Grammar, p.417). Since the Septuagint always translates belial, the word does not appear as a name in canonical books. During the Intertestamental Period, however, Belial developed into a proper noun for Satan, the Antichrist, the personal power of evil. It appears a number of times in Jewish apocalyptic writings like The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs (Dan 4:7; 5:1; Levi 19:1; etc.), Book of Jubilees (1:20); Sibylline Oracles (2:167), and Ascension of Isaiah. It is a characteristic term in the Dead Sea Scrolls, appearing frequently in the Essenes' Manual of Discipline (1:18; 23; 2:18, etc.) and elsewhere. The term was corrupted into Beliar, especially in its Greek form because native Greek words end only in vowels, "n," "r," or the "s" sound. The Greek text of 2 Corinthians 6:15 actually spells it Beliar. Twice the Septuagint uses "lawlessness" (*anomia* [455]) to translate belial (2 Samuel 22:5 [LXX 2 Kings 22:5] and Psalm 18:4 [LXX 17:4; 18:5 in Hebrew]). On this basis some have wondered whether in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 Paul used a translation of it when he spoke of the "Man of Lawlessness" (RSV). ("Man of Sin" is an alternate reading [KJV].) "Man" in such a usage would approach the generic idea of "person" or the indefinite pronoun: "the lawless one."

Related Resources:

- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Belial](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Belial](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Belial \(Beliar\)](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Belial, Beliar](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Belial](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Belial](#)

Or what has a believer in common (meris) with an unbeliever (apistos)? - A **believer** is one who shows Himself faithful in the discharge of a duty (his or her allegiance to Christ as their Lord) or the administration of a trust (Mt 24:45). These two have different authorities (Christ, Satan) and belong to different kingdoms (light, darkness).

Believer (faithful) (4103) **pistos** from **peitho** = to persuade - induce one by words to believe, have confidence) is something or someone who is worthy of faith or keeps promises and is applied to God, humans, His Word, etc. *Pistos* means dependable (worthy of reliance or trust), trustworthy, steadfast, unswerving.

Common (share) (3310) (**meris**) is a part which suggests a deep sharing of things in common. In English **common** means belonging equally or shared equally by two or more. Believers have been "qualified to **share** (meris) in the inheritance of the saints in Light." (Col 1:12+).

Unbeliever (571) (**apistos** from **a** = without + **pistos** = believing, faithful) means lacking in faith, without faith, disbelieving, unbelieving - in this [context](#) **apistos** is one who does not believe the Good News about Jesus Christ (1Ti 5:8, Titus 1:15, Rev 21:8). **Apistos** is frequently used (~60% of NT uses) by Paul in the Corinthian

letters 1 Co. 6:6; 1 Co. 7:12; 1 Co. 7:13; 1 Co. 7:14; 1 Co. 7:15; 1 Co. 10:27; 1 Co. 14:22; 1 Co. 14:23; 1 Co. 14:24; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 6:14; 2 Co. 6:15

Related - [What exactly is an unbeliever? | GotQuestions.org](#)

QUESTION - [Who was Belial?](#)

ANSWER - *Belial* is a compound word, believed to have been taken from the Hebrew *beliy*, meaning “not,” and *ya'al*, meaning “profit” or “benefit.” It is used twenty-six times in the Old Testament, usually translated as “worthless” in the New American Standard Bible, but also as “base,” “destruction,” “rascally,” and “wicked.” In the earlier books of the Old Testament, when describing a wicked person, the King James sometimes uses “son of Belial” (or “daughter,” “man,” or “people” of Belial). Like many other uses of the term *son of*, the expression “son of Belial” doesn’t imply that Belial is a real person who fathers children; rather, it’s a description of people characterized by worthlessness or corruption.

A less accepted theory is that *belial* comes from *beli 'ol*, meaning “without yoke”; the definition would remain about the same, however: a “son of Belial” would be someone who is “lawless” or “rebellious.”

Either way, the Old Testament uses *Belial* as a personification of evil, not an actual entity. Later, the personification began to be thought of as an actual person, and in the New Testament *Belial* is used as a proper name of Satan in 2 Corinthians 6:15.

In Jewish Apocryphal literature, Belial is often presented as an actual being and given a back story. Several Hasidic books, including the [Book of Jubilees](#), say Belial was one of the angels who followed Satan in his fall. The Sibylline oracles (supposed prophecies recorded by the Sibyls between AD 100 and 500) say Belial will be the Antichrist and/or a fake Messiah who deceives Samaritans. The former claim may be influenced by 2 Thessalonians 2:3, which calls the Antichrist the “man of lawlessness,” but the oracle is also associated with Nero.

Belial as a demon has been adopted by more recent literature. In [Paradise Lost](#), John Milton writes that Belial was the last demon to fall and the vilest—the demon of impurity and lies. In some occasions that *Belial* is used as a personification in the Bible (Judges 19:22; 1 Samuel 2:12), Milton directly attributes the evil to the individual demon. Belial is also mentioned in the [Lesser Key of Solomon](#), a spell book that promised the user power to control demons for personal use. The book has nothing to do with King Solomon, as it was written in 1600s. In the last century, Belial showed up as a character in various novels and video games.

In Scripture, *Belial* was used to personify wickedness and worthlessness. The only time the word is used to identify a person is [2 Corinthians 6:15](#), where the name is applied to Satan. There is no indication from Scripture that *Belial* is the proper name of a specific demon. [GotQuestions.org](#)

Two Rivers

Can two walk together, unless they are agreed. —Amos 3:3

Today’s Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:11-18

The Brule River, which is on the border between Michigan and Wisconsin, flows for miles with clear, sparkling water. It is inhabited by an abundant population of speckled, rainbow, and brown trout. At one point the Iron River, muddy and thick with sediment of ore and clay, merges with the Brule.

Where these two rivers join, the clear waters of the Brule flow alongside the muddy waters of the Iron for a short distance. Soon the waters are mixed into one stream. Now consider what happens—the clear waters of the Brule do not cleanse the waters of the Iron, but vice versa. The muddy waters of the Iron pollute the whole stream.

Likewise, entering into a close relationship with evil will corrupt a Christian. Partnering with an unsaved person in business or in marriage is contrary to God’s will (2 Cor. 6:14-15). Remaining pure and getting the unbeliever to change is as difficult as keeping the waters of the Brule and Iron separate in the same channel.

Christian, shun the unequal yoke! Retain your separate position in every sphere of life. Never consider uniting with an unbeliever. How “can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:3). “Keep yourself pure” (1 Tim. 5:22). By: M.R. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Lord, be in my thoughts, my words, my actions,
That I may be a river flowing clean;
Keep me from a partnership with evil,
So Christ the living water may be seen.

If you walk with Christ, you can't run with the world.

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

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

NET 2 Corinthians 6:16 And what mutual agreement does the temple of God have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said, "I will live in them and will walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:16 τ ς δ συγκατ θεσις να θεο μετ ε δ λων; με ς γ ρ να ς θεο σμεν ζ ντος, καθ ς ε πεν θε ς τι νοικ σω ν α το ς κα μπεριπατ σω κα σομαι α τ ν θε ς κα α το σοντα μου λα ς.

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:16 And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people."

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:16 and what agreement to the sanctuary of God with idols? for ye are a sanctuary of the living God, according as God said -- 'I will dwell in them, and will walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be My people,

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? for we are a temple of the living God; even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement does God's sanctuary have with idols? For we are the sanctuary of the living God, as God said: I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people.

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:16 What rapport does God's temple have with idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said, I shall dwell in them and move among them. I shall be their God, and they will be my people.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people."

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said: "I will live with them and move among them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people."

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:16 The temple of God cannot compromise with false gods, and that is what we are -- the temple of the living God. We have God's word for it: I shall fix my home among them and live among them; I will be their God and they will be my people.

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:16 Can God's temple contain false gods? Clearly, we are the temple of the living God. As God said, "I will live and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people."

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:16 And what agreement has the house of God with images? for we are a house of the living God; even as God has said, I will be living among them, and walking with them; and I will be their God, and they will be my people.

- **Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols:** Ex 20:3 23:13 34:14 De 4:23,24 5:7 6:14,15 Jos 24:14-24 1Sa 7:3,4 1Ki 18:21 2Ki 17:33,34 21:4,5 23:5-7 2Ch 33:4,5 Eze 36:25 Ho 14:8 Zep 1:5 Mt 6:24 1Jn 5:20,21
- **For we are the temple of the living God;** 1Co 3:16,17 6:19 Eph 2:20 Heb 3:6 1Pe 2:5
- **God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM** Ex 29:45 Lev 26:12 Ps 90:1 Eze 43:7,9 Zec 2:10,11 Joh 6:56 Ro 8:9,11 Eph 3:17 2Ti 1:14 1Jn 4:12,15 Rev 21:3
- **I WILL BE THEIR GOD:** Ge 17:7,8 Jer 24:7 31:33 32:38 Eze 11:20 36:28 37:26,27 Ho 2:23 Zec 8:8 13:9 Ro 9:26 Heb 8:10 Rev 21:7
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- See [J C Ryle's sermon "The World"](#)

Related Passages:

Matthew 6:24+ (IDOLS) "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth (Mammon - [mamonas](#) name of an idol - [see picture](#)).

1 John 5:21+ Little children, **guard** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves from idols.

Leviticus 26:11; 12+ (**QUOTED HERE BY PAUL**) 'Moreover, I will make My dwelling among you, and My soul will not reject you. 12 **'I will** also **walk among** (Lxx = *emperipateo*) **you** (cf Dt 23:14) and be your God, and you shall be My people.

Exodus 29:45+ "I will dwell among the sons of Israel and will be their God.

Ezekiel 37:26-27+ (**QUOTED HERE BY PAUL**) "I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. 27 "My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.

Genesis 3:8 (**PERFECT COMMUNION IN THE GARDEN**) They heard the sound of the **LORD God walking in the garden** in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

THE TEMPLE OF THE TRINITY

Or what agreement (joint arrangement) **has the temple of God with idols?** - This rhetorical question calls for the resounding answer - "NOTHING!" Apparently the Corinthians idol problem was not idle! The Greek word ([naos](#)) for **Temple** was properly used of the innermost sanctuary of a temple where the divine presence was supposed to be located. Ponder that picture! Paul is saying idols do not belong in the innermost sanctuary. He goes on to state that the Corinthian believers were in effect the "innermost sanctuary," the "holy of holies" occupied by the Holy One. It is good to recall that idolatry is typically closely linked with immorality.

THOUGHT - Don't bypass this question dearly beloved of God. Idols don't have to be carved figures to be objects, thoughts, ideas (money, fame, desire for earthly power) that come between our soul and the heart of God. Paul gave good advice in his first letter commanding the saints "Therefore, my beloved, **flee** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) from idolatry." (1Co 10:14+)

Pagans go into their inanimate temples of dead gods.

Our Living God comes into His animate temple of our bodies.

Hodge - "Parties are said to be in communion (**AGREEMENT**) when they are so united that what belongs to the one belongs to the other, or when what is true of the one is true of the other."

McShane - The downfall of Israel, God's earthly people, was the result of idolatry, and if saints in any way become involved in the same evil, the result must be no less drastic.

Kruse - This final question with its worship imagery offers extra support for the view that the earlier questions reinforce a call to have no involvement in pagan worship. When Paul speaks here of the temple of God the background imagery is that of the Jerusalem shrine, but in the foreground is the Christian community as God's temple. ([Full text of TNTC 2 Corinthians](#))

Wick Broomall on **temple of idols** - In periods of apostasy, abominations were practiced in the holy place (cf. 2Ki 21:7; 2Ki 23:6, 7; Ezek 6:3-14). The heathen temple at Corinth was a cesspool of iniquity (cf. Ro 1:18-32). The quotation introduced by even as God said (ASV) is a composite drawn from the LXX of Lev 26:11, 12; Ezek 37:27 (cf. also Ex 25:8; 29:45; Jer 31:1). We should note how Paul supports his command (2Co 6:14a): (1) by an appeal to five self-evident questions (2Co 6:14b-16a), (2) by an appeal to God (2Co 6:16b), and (3) by an appeal to Scripture (2Co 6:16b).

Gromacki - When Israel went into apostasy, they usually erected idols within the temple (2 Kings 21:7; 23:6-7; Ezek. 6:3-18). When revival broke out, the idols were removed and the sanctuary was cleansed. It must be so also in the life of each Christian.

Agreement (4783) (**sugkatathesis** from **sun** = intimately with + **kata** = down + **thesis** = thesis, position) means literally means to set down a position with (someone). This word suggests a sympathetic union of mind and will in a plan mutually agreed to. It was used in the papyri of a decision arrived at by a group. It is a joint arrangement, an arrangement together, a joint agreement, a mutual agreement. In the philosophy of the Stoics **sugkatathesis** meant the "assent given by the mind to its perceptions" (Liddell-Scott). Not in Septuagint.

Temple (sanctuary) (3485) **naos** in the Greek culture denoted the "abode of the gods" and was used to refer to a literal structure or building associated with, dedicated to and set apart to be a dwelling place for a deity, either pagan gods (Acts 17:24) or the true God (Mt 23:16). **Naos** describes the place where a deity was worshipped (cp Zacharias ministering to God in Lk 1:9). **Naos** referred to the temple proper, including the inner sanctuary, composed of the outer room, the **Holy of Holies** and the innermost **Holy Place**. Uses of **naos** by Paul - 1 Co 3:16; 1 Co 3:17; 1 Co 6:19; 2 Co 6:16; Eph 2:21; 2 Th. 2:4;

Idols (1497) **eidolon** from **eidōs** = that which is seen, what is visible, figure, appearance) is primarily a phantom, form, image, shadow or likeness. In Scripture **eidolon** is an image or representation whether corporeal or imaginary or some other thing which resembles a person, animal, false god, etc. and which is an object of worship.

An idol may be defined as any person or thing
that has usurped in the heart the place of preeminence that belongs to the Lord.
-- Arthur Wallis

For (**gar**) is a [term of explanation](#) which gives the reason there can be no **agreement with idols**. Pagan worship must be assiduously avoided.

We are the temple of the living God- In 1Co 3:16 Paul said "you are a temple (**naos**) of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you." In 1Co 6:19 he asked "do you not know that your body is a temple (**naos**) of the Holy Spirit Who is in you, Whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" **The living God** refers to the Spirit of God. Of course believers have "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col 1:27) and as Jesus taught even the Father would make His abode in believers (Jn 14:23). So in effect believers are the temple of the Trinity! Paul's use of the adjective "**living**" is clearly a direct refutation of the dead "god" the pagans worshipped.

Related Resource:

- [What does it mean that we are the temple of God](#)

Kruse - Paul states clearly that idols in themselves are nothing, the danger of idolatry being that the involvement with demonic powers active therein provokes the Lord to jealousy (1 Cor. 8:4-6; 10:19-22). ([Full text of TNTC 2 Corinthians](#))

Stedman - This is one of the most powerful, the most beautiful descriptions of the glory of Christianity, the fact that God dwells in his people. Some years ago there was a theological conflict which came into prominence called, "The Death of God Movement." Certain theologians were teaching that God had actually died. But that movement did not last very long. God had not died, of course, they had simply lost his address. They did not realize that God lives in his people. That is where you find him. The glory of Christianity is the revelation that our bodies are the temples of God. In that holy temple, he lives; therefore, we are to be guided by his principles in worship and in service. Imagine a person who, as the temple of God, is joined to another person who is the temple of an idol. If you do not worship the true God you worship a false god, and behind the false gods, the idols of any generation, Paul told us in First Corinthians, are demons. Therefore, you are trying to link together the worship of God and the worship of demons. But this is an absolutely impossible thing. That is why Christians everywhere are warned against certain associations. ([2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1](#))

[Watch Out for These\)](#)

Living God - 28x in OT and NT - Deut. 5:26; Jos. 3:10; 1 Sam. 17:26; 1 Sam. 17:36; 2 Ki. 19:4; 2 Ki. 19:16; Ps. 42:2; Ps. 84:2; Isa. 37:4; Isa. 37:17; Jer. 10:10; Jer. 23:36; Dan. 6:20; Dan. 6:26; Hos. 1:10; Matt. 16:16; Matt. 26:63; Acts 14:15; Rom. 9:26; 2 Co. 3:3; 2 Co. 6:16; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Tim. 4:10; Heb. 3:12; Heb. 9:14; Heb. 10:31; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 7:2

Just as God said (introducing OT quotes), **"I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM- Walk among them** is from the Septuagint of Lev 26:12. Note the repeated **"I will"** promises from God. This is an incredible truth. The Living God, living within the bodies of redeemed sinners. The Holy God makes Himself at home in the "jars of clay!" (2Co 4:7). Contrast how the presence of God dwelling the midst of the people was restricted to the Tabernacle/Temple, but now in the amazing new covenant, God dwells in personal proximity and incomprehensible intimacy with every believer! This interrelationship with God will be fully consummated in Heaven John writing "I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them." (Rev. 21:3+). As Paul stated in 2Co 5:5+ the indwelling Spirit of God is a divine down payment of this future full relationship with God! Amazing grace indeed!

Pulpit Commentary has an interesting note - The quotation is altered slightly from the LXX. of Lev. 26:12. But in this and the next verses we have "a mosaic of citations" from this passage and Exod. 29:45; Isa. 42:11; Ezek. 20:34; 2 Sam. 7:14; comp. Jer. 31:9; Isa. 63:6. This mode of compressing the essence of various quotations into one passage was common among the rabbis. ([2 Corinthians 6](#))

AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE- Quoting from the Septuagint of Lev 26:12+ (cf Ezekiel 37:26-27+). He is ours, and are His! This passage is the language of covenant picturing sinful men who are now by amazing grace and the gift of faith in Christ in **union, oneness and communion** with God.

Dwell in (1774) **enoikeo** from **en** = in + **oikéo** = dwell) means literally to "dwell in", to take up residence, make one's home in or among. To live in, inhabit; dwell in. All the NT uses of **enoikeo** are metaphorical. Spoken of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Christians (Rom. 8:11; 2 Tim. 1:14); of the divine presence and blessing (2 Cor. 6:16 [cf. 1 Cor. 3:16]); of the faith (2 Tim. 1:5); of the word of Christ (Col. 3:16). 5v - Ro 7:17; 2 Co. 6:16; Col. 3:16; 2 Ti 1:5; 2 Ti 1:14

Walk among (1774) **emperipateo** from **en** = in, among + **peripateo** = walk around) means literally walk about in a place, move among the people in a place; figuratively, of God's presence among his people. Only here in the NT. Emperipateo used 7x in Septuagint - Lev. 26:12 (quoted in 2Co 6:16 by Paul); Deut. 23:14; Jdg. 18:9; 2 Sam. 7:6; Job 1:7; Job 2:2; Prov. 30:31; 2 Co. 6:16

Phrase - "I will dwell" - Ex 29:45 1 Ki 6:13 Ps 132:14 Ezek 43:7 Ezek 43:9 Zec 2:10 Zec 2:11 2 Cor 6:16

Phrase - "I will be their God"- 9x - Ge 17:8 Jer 24:7 Jer 31:33 Jer 32:38 Ezek 37:23 Ezek 37:27 Zec 8:8 2 Cor 6:16 Heb 8:10

C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." —2 Corinthians 6:16

What a sweet title: "My people!" What a cheering revelation: **"Their God!"** How much of meaning is couched in those two words, **"My people!"** Here is speciality. The whole world is God's; the heaven, even the heaven of heavens is the Lord's, and he reigneth among the children of men; but of those whom he hath chosen, whom he hath purchased to himself, he saith what he saith not of others —**"My people."** In this word there is the idea of proprietorship. In a special manner the "Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance." All the nations upon earth are his; the whole world is in his power; yet are his people, his chosen, more especially his possession; for he has done more for them than others; he has bought them with his blood; he has brought them nigh to himself; he has set his great heart upon them; he has loved them with an everlasting love, a love which many waters cannot quench, and which the revolutions of time shall never suffice in the least degree to diminish.

Dear friends, can you, by faith, see yourselves in that number?

- Can you look up to heaven and say, "My Lord and my God: mine by that sweet relationship which entitles me to call thee Father; mine by that hallowed fellowship which I delight to hold with thee when thou art pleased to manifest thyself unto me as thou dost not unto the world?"
- Canst thou read the Book of Inspiration, and find there the indentures of thy salvation?
- Canst thou read thy title writ in precious blood?
- Canst thou, by humble faith, lay hold of Jesus' garments, and say, "My Christ"?

If thou canst, then God saith of thee, and of others like thee, "My people;" for, if God be your God, and Christ your Christ, the Lord has a special, peculiar favour to you; you are the object of his choice, accepted in his beloved Son.

C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook -

"I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."—2 Cor. 6:16.

HERE is a mutual interest. Each belongs to each. God is the portion of his people, and the chosen people are the portion of their God. The saints find in God their chief possession, and he reckons them to be his peculiar treasure. What a mine of comfort lies in this fact for each believer!

This happy condition of mutual interest leads to mutual consideration. God will always think of his own people, and they will always think of him. This day my God will perform all things for me; what can I do for him? My thoughts ought to run towards him, for he thinketh upon me. Let me make sure that it is so, and not be content with merely admitting that so it ought to be.

This, again, leads to mutual fellowship. God dwells in us, and we dwell in him; he walks with us, and we walk with God. Happy communion this!

Oh, for grace to treat the Lord as my God: to trust him, and to serve him, as his Godhead deserves! Oh, that I could love, worship, adore, and obey Jehovah in spirit and in truth! this is my heart's desire. When I shall attain to it, I shall have found my heaven. Lord, help me! Be my God in helping me to know thee as my God, for Jesus' sake.

David Jeremiah - TEMPLE ON WHEELS - 2Cor 6:16

We, the saints, were never meant to be restricted to one roof. What if you began to see yourself as a saint in circulation, a temple on wheels, so that God could say, "I will dwell in [you] and walk [with you]. I will be [your] God, and [you] shall be My people." (2 Corinthians 6:16). What if you took your worship on the road, so that you rejoiced, prayed, expressed your thanksgiving, and exalted Him everywhere you went? You could think of yourself as a beautiful temple, a place fit for encasing the law of God, a place where all people could come to experience Him—for that's one essential element of a temple, isn't it? It's a place for others to come together in God's name. You may not have a ceiling and large rooms, but through you people can experience the living God just as they did in the old temple of Jerusalem. That's the very idea of having the Holy Spirit come to live within us. It isn't for the purpose of our having some private experience, but in order that we can serve God. (Sanctuary)

2 Corinthians 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."

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

NET 2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore "come out from their midst, and be separate," says the Lord, "and touch no unclean thing, and I will welcome you,

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:17 δι ἑλθατε κ μ σου α τ ν κα φορ σθητε, λ γει κ ριος, κα καθ ρτου μ πτεσθε· κ γ ε σδ ξομαι μ ς

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you.

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:17 wherefore, come ye forth out of the midst of them, and be separated, saith the Lord, and an unclean thing do not touch, and I -- I will receive you,

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing; And I will receive you,

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord; do not touch any unclean thing, and I will welcome you.

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:17 Consequently: Separate from among them. Distance yourselves, says Yahveh. Do not touch filth, and I shall take you in,

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you."

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you,

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore, come forth from them and be separate," says the Lord, "and touch nothing unclean; then I will receive you

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:17 Get away from them, purify yourselves, says the Lord. Do not touch anything unclean, and then I shall welcome you.

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:17 The Lord says, "Get away from unbelievers. Separate yourselves from them. Have nothing to do with anything unclean. Then I will welcome you."

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:17 For which cause, Come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and let no unclean thing come near you; and I will take you for myself,

- **COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE:** 2Co 7:1 Nu 16:21,26,45 Ezr 6:21 10:11 Ps 1:1-3 Pr 9:6 Isa 52:11 Jer 51:6 Ac 2:40 Rev 18:4
- **And I will welcome you:** Joh 6:37,38 Ro 15:7
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- See [J C Ryle's sermon "The World"](#)

Related Passages:

Isaiah 52:11 (**GOD GIVES 5 "STACCATO-LIKE" COMMANDS TO JEWISH EXILES IN BABYLON**) - **Depart, depart, go out from there, Touch nothing unclean; Go out of the midst of her, purify yourselves,** You who carry the vessels of the LORD.

Jeremiah 51:45 "**Come forth** (COMMAND) from her midst (**TO THE JEWS TO COME OUT OF BABYLON AND ITS PAGAN PRACTICES!**), My people, And each of you **save** (COMMAND) yourselves From the fierce anger of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 17:16+ (**SEPARATION FROM EGYPT - SOLOMON DISOBEYED AND NATION DIVIDED**) "Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the LORD has said to you, 'You shall never again return that way.'

Revelation 18:4+ I heard another voice from heaven, saying, "**Come out** ([aorist imperative](#) calling for dependance on [the Holy Spirit to obey](#).) of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues;

1 Corinthians 5:9-12+ (**BALANCING COMING OUT FROM THEIR MIDST**) I wrote you in my letter **not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world.** 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church?

John 17:20-23 (**BALANCING COMING OUT FROM THEIR MIDST**) "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; 21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

A CALL TO SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD

The word saint (hagios) is positionally one who has been set apart by God from the world and to Himself. And yet our privileged

position calls for personal practice of continual pursuit of holiness. This section of Corinthians has a poor chapter break and should be read with Paul's additional call to holiness in 2Cor 7:1+ "Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Therefore - Term of conclusion. Paul now gives the logical conclusion (cf 2Co 2:8, 4:13, 16, 5:9, 12:10). Based on the defiling aspects of idols and who saints truly are in Christ, these truths call for the following conclusion which is in the form of 3 commands. These commands would apply especially to believers in Corinth who are already unequally yoked in some way with the ungodly.

One cannot honor Christ in one's walk,
and at the same time walk with those who dishonor Him.

COME OUT ([exerchomai](#)) **FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE** ([aphorizo](#))" says the Lord - Great privileges call for great practice. **Come out** and **be separate** are both commands urgently calling for immediate obedience ("Just do it!" "Do not delay!") and are both in the [aorist imperative](#) (the "Nike Commercial command") calling for dependance on [the Holy Spirit to obey](#). The verb **be separate** calls for severing ties with the unbelievers. This is especially interesting in that this same verb **aphorizo** is used to describe the final **separation** of the believers from unbelievers (Mt 13:49; 25:32). Just as the OT prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah (see [passages above](#)), called the Jews to separate themselves from pagan practices in Babylon, Paul is commanding the believers in Corinth to separate themselves from the rampant, corrupting idolatrous and immoral practices in Corinth.

Paul is calling for radical "spiritual surgery" even as Jesus did in referring to lust and sexual immorality in Mt 5:27-30.

Gromacki - There cannot be separation within unequal associations. Separation is basically positive, toward God, but it can only take place after departing from sin and unholy alliances. The order of these commands verifies that conclusion. The concept behind "be separate" ([aphoristhēte](#)) is to mark off boundaries beyond which you will not go. These fences of restriction must be based upon obedience to the revealed truth of Scripture (ED: AND ENABLED BY THE SPIRIT, OTHERWISE ONE BORDERS ON LEGALISM!)

[Grant Richison](#) adds that "We cannot love God halfheartedly. He wants all of us or none of us. To embrace one is to forsake the other. When we lose heart for God something else has displaced our love for God." (See Richison's Biblical study in his book [Theology of Sex](#))

Don't roll in the mire to please the pigs.

-- C H Spurgeon

MacDonald "The problem abounds on every hand today among evangelical Christians in liberal and neo-orthodox churches. They are continually asking, "What shall I do?" God's answer is found here. They should leave a fellowship where the Lord Jesus is not honored and exalted as God's well-beloved Son and the Savior of the world. They can do more for God outside such a fellowship than they will ever accomplish inside it. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

THOUGHT - Christians are not to stay intimately in the middle of evil in order to attempt to remedy it. I heard someone say years ago, such a practice usually ends up pulling the believer down, not the converse! Beware!

Do not be deceived ([pres imp w negative](#) requires dependence on the [Spirit](#) - stop being deceived! - see deceitfulness of sin)

"Bad ([kakos](#)) company (present tense - continually, definitely) corrupts ([phtheiro](#)) good ([chrestos](#)) morals."
1Co 15:33+

AND DO NOT TOUCH ([hapto/haptomai](#)) **WHAT IS UNCLEAN** ([akathartos](#)) **and I will welcome you** - Paul says to "touch no **unclean** thing" and in context refers primarily to those things that relate in some way to idolatry which defiles everything it touches and was a common practice among the pagans in Corinth and was part of the "baggage" that many if not most of the Gentile believers brought with them into the church body. Note that the fruit of obedience is fellowship with the Father, **I will welcome you** being the first of three incredible promises. As [Wick Broomall](#) says "God cannot lovingly entertain those who are knowingly and willingly involved in evil."

THOUGHT - Do you feel far from the Father today? Perhaps you need to use the "magnifying glass" of Paul's 3 commands and 5 rhetorical questions to see if you are deceiving yourself and have failed in any of those areas. The Father is holy, set apart, and He calls set apart children into fellowship with Him. Although we are children of light, we can sadly still willfully sin and made the horrible choice to walk in spiritual darkness. As alluded to earlier, John says "If we say that we have fellowship ([koinonia](#)) with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1 Jn 1:6-7+) If you are walking in any area of spiritual darkness, this undoubtedly is the cause of your feeling far from the Father. Confess your sins and repent and He will welcome you (1Jn 1:9+, Pr 28:13+).

It is worth noting that the first use of **hapto** in the Septuagint in Ge 3:3+ in which Eve misquoted God's command saying "You shall not eat from it or **touch** it, lest you die." God had said nothing about touching the tree in the Garden. Now in 2Co 6:17 God not commands His children not to **touch** what is unclean. There is a beautiful promise for the one who obeys these commands for God Himself will "put out the welcome mat" for us!

J Vernon McGee - The believer should not even touch the unclean thing. Back in the Book of Joshua we learned how Joshua and the Israelites took the fortified city of Jericho by faith. However, Achan took the "accursed thing." Israel had touched what God had declared to be unclean. Then they went up to the little city of Ai with great confidence because they were sure of an easy victory, but Joshua and Israel were overcome and defeated at Ai. God asks for a separation from worldliness and from the unclean thing....When I made my decision to enter the ministry, the vice-president of the bank where I worked called me into his office. He was a godless man—he could swear as I've never heard anyone swear. I think it rather moved him when I announced that I was giving up my job to study for the ministry. He called me over to his desk and said, "Vernon, I want to tell you a story." This is what he told me: During World War I he was working in another bank and with him worked a man as godless and worldly as could be. However, this man was the soloist in a church. One day the man who was now the vice-president went to church, and there he heard his co-worker sing a solo, "Jesus Satisfies." A dear lady said to him afterwards, "Wasn't that a marvelous solo? It sounds like it came out of heaven!" Since he knew this man at work, he knew that Jesus did not satisfy him. One day this same woman came into the bank to do some business, and the teller who had been the soloist was attempting to get a balance sheet balanced, but it was off, and he began to rip out oaths and curses. The lady was really shocked at this and asked my friend, "Who is that man?" He answered, "That is the voice you heard the other Sunday and thought it came right out of heaven." The vice-president of the bank was a skeptic and a rascal because he had seen a professing Christian singing, "Jesus Satisfies," when he knew Jesus did not satisfy that man. He knew that man was immoral, a drinker, and a man of vile language. He knew a Christian should not be like that, and it made him a cynical individual. He reached over and touched me on the knee and said to me, "Vernon, don't be a preacher unless you mean it." I have never forgotten that. God says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, ... and touch not the unclean thing." Don't be a Christian unless you mean it. Don't say that Jesus satisfies you if He is not really satisfying you. This is what Paul is talking about.

Gromacki - The command literally reads: "Stop touching anyone or anything which is characterized by uncleanness." The adjective "unclean" is in the emphatic first position in the sentence. It can be either masculine (person) or neuter (thing) in word gender. Once the distinctive position of separation has been established, there should never be a contact with any unequal association again.

McShane - In the remainder of the chapter he combines a number of references from the OT and uses them in a NT sense. The call just quoted is taken from Isa 52:11 where the nation, particularly its priests, were told to escape from Babylon and not to touch any unclean thing. Again he does not quote the exact words but rather the sense. He can clearly see that the Corinthians were in a situation not unlike Babylon, and that the defilement of idolatry was ever near them, so they had to be careful not even to touch what was so corrupting. It is one thing to separate from the unsaved, but it is quite another not to touch the evils they practise. There can be no virtue in leaving wrong associations, if the defiling things amongst them are not forsaken. In the religious sphere, some have left unscriptural positions, but have brought with them certain wrong teachings which they ought to have left behind. Even at Corinth those who would not have dared to venture back to the idols' temple, may have tampered with certain idolatrous and defiling customs. It is assumed by the apostle that separation will be costly and that those who pay the price will need encouragement. Parting with former companions may bring a sense of loneliness into the heart, but being received by God, which involves fellowship with Him, can more than fill the vacuum created. Perhaps the greatest loss experienced by those who refuse to separate from the unsaved is absence of the presence of the Lord. It is impossible to enjoy the things of the world and at the same time enjoy communion with Him. ([What the Bible Teaches](#))

Gotquestions writes - Christians are supposed to [separate themselves](#) from idol worship of any kind.

Guzik makes a great point commenting on **I will welcome you** - The promise and I will receive you reminds us that this is not only a separation from evil but also a separation unto God. "It is not a question simply of trying to empty your heart and life of every worldly desire—what an awful impossibility! It is rather opening your heart wide to all the love of God in Christ, and letting that love just sweep through you and exercise its expulsive power till your heart is filled with love." (Redpath) (See related idea - Expulsive Power of a New Affection).

Come out (1774) (**exerchomai** from **ex** = out + **erchomai** = to come) In early literature **exerchomai** refers to going out of a place, of words which go out of a man, of sicknesses which leave a man, and of time which passes. It is usually used of living beings. In the Septuagint the word is used of coming forth out of the earth and of the fruit of a man's body or lips. It especially refers to works that proceed from God. (1) literally go or come out of (Jn 4.30); go forth or away, depart (Mk 1.35), opposite me, now (remain); from a ship disembark (Mk 6.54); of liquids flow out (Jn 19.34); with an infinitive of purpose go forth or out to do something (Mt 11.7); (2) figuratively, of thoughts and words proceed, go forth, come out (Jas 3.10); (3) of evil spirits that leave a person come or go out (Mk

1.25); (4) euphemistically leave the world, die (1Co 5.10); (5) in John's Gospel of Jesus' birth come forth from God (Jn 8.42); (6) figuratively be gone, disappear (Acts 16.19)

Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource - In the New Testament *exerchomai* is used most often in narrative accounts to refer to a person going away from some place (see Matthew 8:28). In that same vein it speaks of someone leaving another person's presence (see Luke 5:8). At times it goes further than just a general coming or going to refer to someone going forth to do a set thing, such as preaching (Mark 6:12; 16:20; Luke 6:12) or to do a job (Matthew 13:3). **Exerchomai** can also mean something that comes forth from a man: rumors, statements, evil thoughts (see Matthew 15:18, 19). Of special significance are the references to demons coming out of a person (see Matthew 12:43; Mark 1:26). In an even more special sense John 8:42 refers to Jesus as **coming from God**. This relationship between the Father and the Son is interwoven throughout John's gospel. Jesus' entire life and ministry was dominated by this consciousness of having been commissioned by the Father (Ladd, New Testament Theology, p.248). The context here of Christ's divine commission prevents this from being interpreted as some form of neo-platonic emanation. When Jesus said here that He is "from" (ek) the Father, this preposition denotes origin; this is not a statement of the origin of Christ's **nature** but the origin of His **mission**. The Church is also better understood from *exerchomai*, as it speaks of the proclamation of the Word of God (see 1 Corinthians 14:36) and shows that the Word of God goes out from the Church (see 1 Th 1:8). The people of God are to come out from among nonbelievers in their life-style (2 Co 6:17).

[See uses of exerchomai below.](#)

Be separate (873) **aphorizo** from **apó** = off from, apart + **horizo** = mark out the limit) means to mark off the boundaries, to appoint, set one apart for some purpose. The central idea is "to limit by setting apart from the rest," hence, to distinguish from others in some specific way. **Aphorizo** is used of the separation of the disciples from the world (Lk 6:22); and of the setting apart of apostles to special functions (Acts 13:2).

Touch (681) **hapto/haptomai** where **haptomai** is the [middle voice](#) which constitutes the majority of uses) means to grasp, to lay hold of with the basic meaning of touching for the purpose of manipulating. **Hapto** conveys the sense handling of an object as to exert a modifying influence upon it or upon oneself. The majority of the 39 uses are in the Gospels and are associated with Jesus touching someone (or someone touching Him) usually with a beneficial effect. In contrast the use in 1Jn 5:18 speaks of touching with the intent of a negative or harmful effect (cp harmful sense in Lxx of Ge 26:11, Ex 19:12). Four uses refer to lighting a lamp (Lk 8:17, 11:33, 15:8) or kindling a fire (Acts 28:2). Paul uses it of touching a woman, apparently a euphemism for sexual contact (2Cor 7:1, cp Abimelech "had not come near" [Lxx = haptomai] Sarah - Ge 20:4,6; see hapto in Pr 6:29). In Ge 32:25 (cp Ge 32:32).

Unclean (169) **akathartos** from **a** = without + **kathairo** = cleanse from **katharos** = clean, pure, free from the adhesion of anything that soils, adulterates, corrupts, in an ethical sense, free from corrupt desire, sin, and guilt) (See study of related word [akatharsia](#)) in a moral sense refers to that which is unclean in thought, word, and deed. It can describe a state of moral impurity, especially especially sexual sin (cf Rev 17:4+) and the word *foul* is an excellent rendering. The idea is that which is morally indecent or filthy. It is notable that **every** use of **akathartos** in the Gospels (19x out of 30 total NT uses) is applied to filthy demonic spirits! As noted below, all of the uses of **akathartos** in the Gospels refer to **unclean** spirits or demons. In Acts 5:16+ Luke describes "those afflicted with **unclean** spirits" who were healed (see Acts 8:7). In Scripture, **akathartos** pertains to that which may not come into contact with that which is holy and set apart. (Acts 10:14, 28+, Acts 11:8+ - these passages refer to acting in accordance with the Levitical laws - [see all the uses in Leviticus](#)) In the **Septuagint** **akathartos** refers almost universally to ceremonial uncleanness or to whatever (or whomever) is ritually defiled .

Welcome (1774) (**eisdechomai** from **eis** = into + **dechomai** = to receive, welcome, accept) to admit, to receive (into one's favor). To accept the presence of a person with friendliness. Receive graciously into one's presence, into one's favor, into communion. In the NT only in 2Co 6:17. **Uses of eisdechomai** in the **Septuagint** - Jer. 23:3; Ezek. 11:17; Ezek. 20:34; Ezek. 20:41; Ezek. 22:19; Ezek. 22:20; Hos. 8:10; Mic. 4:6; Hab. 2:5; Zeph. 3:8; Zeph. 3:19; Zech. 10:8; Zech. 10:10

Uses of exerchomai in the NT and Septuagint:

Exerchomai - 210 verses - translated came(33), came forth(4), come(22), come forth(3), comes(1), coming(7), departed(1), departing(1), descended*(1), eluded(1), get(2), go(21), go away(2), go*(1), goes(2), going(2), gone(13), gone forth(2), got(2), leave(4), left(15), proceeded forth(1), spread(3), went(61), went ashore(2), went away(3), went forth(5), went off(1). Matt. 2:6; Matt. 5:26; Matt. 8:28; Matt. 8:32; Matt. 8:34; Matt. 9:26; Matt. 9:31; Matt. 9:32; Matt. 10:11; Matt. 10:14; Matt. 11:7; Matt. 11:8; Matt. 11:9; Matt. 12:14; Matt. 12:43; Matt. 12:44; Matt. 13:1; Matt. 13:3; Matt. 13:49; Matt. 14:14; Matt. 15:18; Matt. 15:19; Matt. 15:21; Matt. 15:22; Matt. 17:18; Matt. 18:28; Matt. 20:1; Matt. 20:3; Matt. 20:5; Matt. 20:6; Matt. 21:17; Matt. 22:10; Matt. 24:1; Matt. 24:26; Matt. 24:27; Matt. 25:1; Matt. 25:6; Matt. 26:30; Matt. 26:55; Matt. 26:71; Matt. 26:75; Matt. 27:32; Matt. 27:53; Mk. 1:25; Mk. 1:26; Mk. 1:28; Mk. 1:38; Mk. 1:45; Mk. 2:12; Mk. 2:13; Mk. 3:6; Mk. 3:21; Mk. 4:3; Mk. 5:2; Mk. 5:8; Mk. 5:13; Mk. 5:30; Mk. 6:1; Mk. 6:10; Mk. 6:12; Mk. 6:24; Mk. 6:34; Mk. 6:54; Mk. 7:29; Mk. 7:30; Mk. 7:31; Mk. 8:11; Mk. 8:27; Mk. 9:25; Mk. 9:26; Mk. 9:29; Mk. 9:30; Mk. 11:11; Mk. 11:12; Mk. 14:16; Mk. 14:26; Mk. 14:48; Mk. 14:68; Mk. 16:8; Mk. 16:20; Lk. 1:22; Lk. 2:1; Lk. 4:14; Lk. 4:35; Lk. 4:36; Lk. 4:41; Lk. 4:42; Lk. 5:8; Lk. 5:27; Lk. 6:12; Lk. 6:19; Lk. 7:17; Lk. 7:24; Lk. 7:25; Lk. 7:26; Lk. 8:2; Lk. 8:5; Lk. 8:27; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 8:33; Lk. 8:35; Lk. 8:38; Lk. 8:46; Lk. 9:4; Lk. 9:5; Lk. 9:6; Lk. 10:10; Lk. 11:14; Lk. 11:24; Lk. 11:53; Lk. 12:59; Lk. 13:31; Lk. 14:18; Lk. 14:21; Lk. 14:23; Lk. 15:28; Lk. 17:29; Lk. 21:37; Lk. 22:39; Lk. 22:52; Lk. 22:62; Jn. 1:43; Jn. 4:30; Jn. 4:43; Jn. 8:9; Jn. 8:42; Jn. 8:59; Jn. 10:9; Jn. 10:39; Jn. 11:31; Jn. 11:44; Jn. 12:13; Jn. 13:3; Jn. 13:30; Jn.

13:31; Jn. 13:33; Jn. 16:27; Jn. 16:28; Jn. 16:30; Jn. 17:8; Jn. 18:1; Jn. 18:4; Jn. 18:16; Jn. 18:29; Jn. 18:38; Jn. 19:4; Jn. 19:5; Jn. 19:17; Jn. 19:34; Jn. 20:3; Jn. 21:3; Jn. 21:23; Acts 1:21; Acts 7:3; Acts 7:4; Acts 7:7; Acts 8:7; Acts 10:23; Acts 11:25; Acts 12:9; Acts 12:10; Acts 12:17; Acts 14:20; Acts 15:40; Acts 16:3; Acts 16:10; Acts 16:13; Acts 16:18; Acts 16:36; Acts 16:40; Acts 17:33; Acts 18:23; Acts 20:1; Acts 20:11; Acts 21:5; Acts 21:8; Acts 22:18; Acts 28:3; Rom. 10:18; 1 Co. 5:10; 1 Co. 14:36; 2 Co. 2:13; 2 Co. 6:17; 2 Co. 8:17; Phil. 4:15; 1 Thess. 1:8; Heb. 3:16; Heb. 7:5; Heb. 11:8; Heb. 13:13; Jas. 3:10; 1 Jn. 2:19; 1 Jn. 4:1; 2 Jn. 1:7; 3 Jn. 1:7; Rev. 3:12; Rev. 6:2; Rev. 6:4; Rev. 9:3; Rev. 14:15; Rev. 14:17; Rev. 14:18; Rev. 14:20; Rev. 15:6; Rev. 16:17; Rev. 18:4; Rev. 19:5; Rev. 19:21; Rev. 20:8

Exerchomai in the Septuagint - Gen. 4:16; Gen. 8:7; Gen. 8:16; Gen. 8:18; Gen. 8:19; Gen. 9:10; Gen. 9:18; Gen. 9:22; Gen. 10:11; Gen. 10:14; Gen. 12:1; Gen. 12:4; Gen. 12:5; Gen. 14:8; Gen. 14:17; Gen. 15:4; Gen. 15:14; Gen. 17:6; Gen. 19:6; Gen. 19:14; Gen. 19:15; Gen. 19:23; Gen. 24:5; Gen. 24:43; Gen. 24:50; Gen. 24:63; Gen. 25:25; Gen. 25:26; Gen. 27:3; Gen. 27:30; Gen. 28:10; Gen. 30:16; Gen. 31:13; Gen. 31:33; Gen. 34:1; Gen. 34:6; Gen. 34:26; Gen. 35:11; Gen. 38:28; Gen. 38:29; Gen. 38:30; Gen. 39:12; Gen. 39:13; Gen. 39:15; Gen. 39:18; Gen. 41:46; Gen. 42:15; Gen. 43:31; Gen. 44:4; Gen. 44:28; Gen. 46:26; Gen. 47:10; Gen. 47:18; Exod. 1:10; Exod. 2:11; Exod. 2:13; Exod. 4:14; Exod. 8:12; Exod. 8:20; Exod. 8:29; Exod. 8:30; Exod. 9:29; Exod. 9:33; Exod. 10:6; Exod. 10:18; Exod. 11:8; Exod. 12:22; Exod. 12:31; Exod. 12:41; Exod. 13:3; Exod. 15:20; Exod. 16:1; Exod. 16:4; Exod. 16:27; Exod. 17:6; Exod. 17:9; Exod. 17:10; Exod. 18:5; Exod. 18:7; Exod. 21:3; Exod. 21:4; Exod. 21:11; 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QUESTION - [What does it mean to come out from among them \(2 Corinthians 6:17\)?](#)

ANSWER - 2 Corinthians 6:17 says, “Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord; do not touch any unclean thing, and I will welcome you” (CSB). The clause *come out from among them* is a reference to a passage in Isaiah.

Isaiah 52:11 speaks of the Israelites who are returning from exile in Egypt. (When Jerusalem fell, many of the people were carried away to Babylon, but some of the people fled to Egypt, thinking they would be safe there. Jeremiah warned them not to do this, but many of them went to Egypt anyway, and they took Jeremiah with them against his will. See Jeremiah 42 – 43.) In Isaiah 52, God is promising to call back to the Promised Land the descendants of those who went down to Egypt. The command to “come out from among them” is also an effective call. The people of Israel are commanded to forsake any idolatrous habits they may have picked up while in Egypt and to return to the Promised Land; at the same time, it is a promise that God will be the one to bring them back when the time is right.

Paul quotes this passage from Isaiah in reference to the Corinthian church. He is taking familiar wording and giving it meaning in a fresh context. Just as the Israelites in exile were to put off any idolatry they may have picked up while living in Egypt, so the Corinthian believers are to lay aside the idolatry and sexual immorality that they were steeped in by virtue of living in Corinth. They must be separate from the sin of the world.

Leading up to 2 Corinthians 6:17, Paul tells them, “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers” (verse 14). We often apply this to a believer marrying an unbeliever, but it has a much wider application. In the context of the Corinthian church, it seems to have to do with participating in idolatry.

As a further rationale for the prohibition against being yoked to unbelievers, Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions. The implied answer to all of these is a big NOTHING!:

- “What do righteousness and wickedness have in common?” (2 Corinthians 6:14).
- “What fellowship can light have with darkness?” (verse 14).
- “What harmony is there between Christ and Belial [the devil]?” (verse 15).
- “What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?” (verse 15).
- “What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?” (verse 16).

This final question gets to the heart of the matter. If there is no fellowship between the temple of God and idols, then the Christian should have nothing to do with idol worship: “For we are the temple of the living God” (2 Corinthians 6:16). Then to further support

the idea that Christians are the temple of God, Paul quotes from Leviticus 26:12, which is also alluded to in Jeremiah 32:38 and Ezekiel 37:27: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people" (2 Corinthians 6:16). The temple of God is where God dwells, and He says He will dwell among His people, making them the temple.

Since believers are in fact the temple of God, Paul concludes, "Come out from them and be separate. . . . Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." Christians are supposed to [separate themselves](#) from idol worship of any kind.

The concept of "separation" became one of the major teachings of [fundamentalist Christianity](#) in the United States in the 20th century. There was a lot of focus on "coming out and being separate" from the world in all sorts of ways, many of which may not have been warranted by Scripture. Many Christians were taught that they should separate from anything that looks at all like what "the world" was doing—attending movie theaters, playing cards, and dancing were commonly forbidden. (ED: THIS TYPE OF "SEPARATION" SMACKS OF [LEGALISM](#) WHICH WILL SUCK THE LIFE OUT OF GRACE!)

The biblical admonition of 2 Corinthians 6:17 is not so all-encompassing. Paul wants believers to be separate from [idol worship](#) in all its forms, but he never calls for a complete separation from pagan idol worshipers, whom they should attempt to win to Christ. Paul clarifies the matter of separation in 1 Corinthians 5:9–11:

"I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people."

Yes, the Lord wants His people to "come out from among them and be separate." That means, first, that we should be separate from participation in sin. Second, we are to be separate from professing believers who are living in sin. Beyond that, Christians are called to not get involved in entangling relationships with unbelievers, which would lead to compromise (and thus being "yoked" with an unbeliever). Balancing that is the biblical understanding that we cannot completely remove ourselves from the world of unbelievers, as that would cause us to lose all influence. In the United States, if the 20th century was marked by believers being so separate from the world that there was not enough interaction with it, the 21st century may be marked by Christians being so involved with the world that it is hard to tell the difference between the two. Either way, evangelism is hampered. There must be a balance that cannot be summarized by a set of "dos and don'ts." Every Christian has to decide if he or she is influencing the world or if the world is influencing him or her and then make choices accordingly. [GotQuestions.org](#)

QUESTION - What is biblical separation?

ANSWER - Biblical separation is the recognition that God has called believers out of the world and into a personal and corporate purity in the midst of sinful cultures. Biblical separation is usually considered in two areas: personal and ecclesiastical.

Personal separation involves an individual's commitment to a godly standard of behavior. Daniel practiced personal separatism when he "resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine" (Daniel 1:8). His was a biblical separatism because his standard was based on God's revelation in the Mosaic law.

A modern example of personal separation could be the decision to decline invitations to parties where alcohol is served. Such a decision might be made in order to circumvent temptation (Romans 13:14), to avoid "every kind of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22), or simply to be consistent with a personal conviction (Romans 14:5).

The Bible clearly teaches that the child of God is to be separate from the world. "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.' Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord" (2 Corinthians 6:14-17; see also 1 Peter 1:14-16).

Ecclesiastical separation involves the decisions of a church concerning its ties to other organizations, based on their theology or practices. Separatism is implied in the very word "church," which comes from the Greek word *ekklesia* meaning "a called-out assembly." In Jesus' letter to the church of Pergamum, He warned against tolerating those who taught false doctrine (Revelation 2:14-15). The church was to be separate, breaking ties with heresy. A modern example of ecclesiastical separation could be a denomination's stance against ecumenical alliances which would unite the church with apostates.

Biblical separation does not require Christians to have no contact with unbelievers. Like Jesus, we should befriend the sinner

without partaking of the sin (Luke 7:34). Paul expresses a balanced view of separatism: "I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world" (1 Corinthians 5:9-10). In other words, we are in the world, but not of it.

We are to be light to the world without allowing the world to diminish our light. "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

F. B. MEYER. - The electrician cannot charge your body with electricity, while a single thread connects you with the ground, and breaks the completeness of your insulation. The Lord Jesus cannot fully save you whilst there is one point of controversy between you and Him. Let Him have that one last thing, the last barrier and film to a life of blessedness, and glory will come filling your soul.

David Jeremiah - Father, You command me, Your child, to keep myself from idols. "Come out from among them and be separate," You say. If I do not touch what is unclean, You will receive me. You will be a Father to me, and I shall be Your child, a child of the Lord Almighty. I cannot serve You and mammon. So I shall worship no other god, for You, Lord, whose name is Jealous, are a jealous God. I will serve You with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for You, Lord, search my heart and understand all the intent of my thoughts. Surely You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom. For man looks at the outward appearance, but You, Lord, look at the heart. If my heart does not condemn me, I have confidence toward You, Lord God. You know the idols that compete for my wholehearted devotion to You. Help me turn from them and serve only You. (Life-Changing Moments with God)

Rod Mattoon - Off by just a little - On Halloween, 1983, Korean Airlines flight 007 departed from Anchorage, Alaska, for a direct flight to Seoul, Korea. Unknown to the crew, however, the computer engaging the flight navigation system contained a one and a half degree routing error. It was just a tiny little error. At the point of departure, the mistake was unnoticeable. One hundred miles out, the deviation was still so small as to be undetectable. As the giant 747 continued through the Aleutians and out over the Pacific, the plane strayed increasingly from its proper course. The jet eventually was flying over Soviet air space. The Soviet radar system picked up the error, and the fighter jets were scrambled into the air to intercept. Over mainland Russia the jets shot Flight 007 out of the sky and everyone was killed. The story illustrates how little errors and little compromises can lead to our getting far off course down the road of our life. Those little compromises you make, especially with those of the opposite sex, can lead to major catastrophes in your life which can destroy your family, your testimony, and your ministry.

C H Spurgeon - "Be ye separate."—2 Corinthians 6:17

The Christian, while in the world, is not to be of the world (Jn 17:11, 16). He should be distinguished from it in the great object of his life. To him, "to live," should be "Christ." (Php 1:21) Whether he eats, or drinks, or whatever he does, he should do all to God's glory (1Co 10:31). You may lay up treasure; but lay it up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, where thieves break not through nor steal. (Mt 6:20-21) You may strive to be rich; but be it your ambition to be "rich in faith," (Jas 2:5) and good works (1Ti 6:18). You may have pleasure; but when you are merry, sing psalms and make melody in your hearts to the Lord (Eph 5:18). In your spirit, as well as in your aim, you should differ from the world. Waiting humbly before God, always conscious of his presence, delighting in communion with him, and seeking to know his will, you will prove that you are of heavenly race. And you should be separate from the world in your actions. If a thing be right, though you lose by it, it must be done; if it be wrong, though you would gain by it, you must scorn the sin for your Master's sake (cf Ro 14:23). You must have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them (Eph 5:11). Walk worthy of your high calling and dignity (Eph 4:1, 1Th 2:12). Remember, O Christian, that thou art a son of the King of kings. Therefore, keep thyself unspotted from the world (Jas 1:27).

Soil not the fingers which are soon to sweep celestial strings;

let not these eyes become the windows of lust which are soon to see the King in his beauty—

let not those feet be defiled in miry places, which are soon to walk the golden streets—

let not those hearts be filled with pride and bitterness which are ere long to be filled with heaven, and to overflow with ecstatic joy.

Then rise my soul! and soar away,
Above the thoughtless crowd;
Above the pleasures of the gay,
And splendours of the proud;

Up where eternal beauties bloom,
And pleasures all divine;
Where wealth, that never can consume,
And endless glories shine.

J C Philpot - If we are entangled in the love of the world, or fast bound and fettered with worldly anxieties, and the spirit of the world is rife in our bosom, all our profession will be vapid, if not worthless. We may use the language of prayer, but the heart is not in earnest; we may still manage to hold our head high in a profession of the truth, but its power and blessedness are neither known nor felt. To enjoy any measure of communion with the Lord, whether on the cross or on the throne, we must go forth from a **world** which is at enmity against Him. We must also go forth out of **self**, for to deny it, renounce it, and go forth out of it lies at the very foundation of vital godliness. There must be “a mortifying, through the Spirit, of the deeds of the body;” (Ro 8:13+) a being “always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Cor 4:11+); and unless there is a going forth out of self by this self-crucifixion, there is **nowalking in hand** with Christ, no manifest **union**, no heavenly **communion** with Him; for there can no more be a partnership between Christ, the soul, and self than there can be a partnership between Christ, the soul, and sin. (Ears from Harvested Sheaves.)

Coley - In Brazil, there grows a common plant, which forest-dwellers call the matador, or “murderer.” Its slender stem creeps at first along the ground; but no sooner does it meet a vigorous tree, than, with clinging grasp, it cleaves to it, and climbs it, and, as it climbs, keeps, at short intervals, sending out arm-like tendrils that embrace the tree. As the murderer ascends, these ligatures grow larger, and clasp tighter. Up, up, it climbs a hundred feet, nay, two hundred if need be, until the last loftiest spire is gained and fettered. Then, as if in triumph, the parasite shoots a huge, flowery head above the strangled summit, and thence, from the dead tree’s crown, scatters its seed to do again the work of death. Even thus worldliness has strangled more churches than ever persecution broke. (See related topic - Backsliding)

First we form habits, then they form us.
Conquer your bad habits or they will conquer you.
– Dr. Rob Gilbert

GOT MILK? - David Jeremiah

Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean. 2 CORINTHIANS 6:17

Though previous generations enjoyed milk directly from the cow, today’s health officials warn that raw milk carries increased risk of contamination. But supporters of raw milk say pasteurization destroys nutrients.

Although some of us grew up on farms, most of us now get our milk from stores where we have enough choices to make Betsy the Cow’s head spin: standardized, whole, reduced fat, low fat, skim, nonfat, buttermilk, organic, acidophilus . . .

Grabbing that gallon of milk forces us to make a choice about separation, whether we realize it or not. After it stands awhile, fresh milk has a tendency to separate into a high-fat cream layer on top and a thinner layer below. When we grab our particular jug of choice, we’re determining our preferred degree of separation.

The processing of milk reflects a wider truth. At the last day, God will separate the cream from the skim, the wheat from the chaff, and the sheep from the goats. Until then, we should lead lives of separation, holy and pleasing to Him, to “come out from among them” and be separate. Perhaps there’s something we need to skim off the top of our lives today. (You Daily Journey With God)

Insulated From Sin

Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. —Romans 12:9

Today’s Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1

I watched with fascination as workers from the Grant Tower Company dismantled each section of the transmitter tower. The powerful radio signal had been sent up a 1” copper tube inside a 4” protective steel pipe. At each joint and throughout the 20’ sections, nylon spacers kept the copper from getting too near the outside pipe and ruining the signal.

A major lightning strike had blown out a transmitter bay and “fried” the transmission line at every weak joint, dirty connection, and worn spacer. A little preventive maintenance just might have kept that radio station on the air.

Much as that transmission line had fallen into disrepair, the Corinthian church was becoming susceptible to destructive forces. The

apostle Paul expressed deep concern and urged those struggling believers to keep themselves insulated from sin by keeping their distance from it. In fact, he appealed to them to be completely separate from the unclean things of the world (2 Cor. 6:17). The closer their connection with the world, the more they would be corrupted by it.

Let's ask God to help us avoid situations that may damage our spiritual health. The Holy Spirit's power and guidance is the only way we can keep insulated from sin. By: David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O child of God, guard well your life
From anything that stains your heart;
Forsake those things that soil your mind—
Your Father wants you set apart.
—Fasick

We can live in the world without letting the world live in us.

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

KJV 2 Corinthians 6:18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

NET 2 Corinthians 6:18 and I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters," says the All-Powerful Lord.

BGT 2 Corinthians 6:18 κα σομαι μ ν ε ς πατ ρα κα με ς σεσθ μοι ε ς υ ο ς κα θυγατ ρας, λ γει κ ριος παντοκρ τωρ.

NLT 2 Corinthians 6:18 And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty. "

ESV 2 Corinthians 6:18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

NIV 2 Corinthians 6:18 "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

YLT 2 Corinthians 6:18 and I will be to you for a Father, and ye -- ye shall be to Me for sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'

ASV 2 Corinthians 6:18 And will be to you a Father, And ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

CSB 2 Corinthians 6:18 I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty.

MIT 2 Corinthians 6:18 and I shall be as a father to you. You will be to me as sons and daughters, says Yahveh omnipotent.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 6:18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

NRS 2 Corinthians 6:18 and I will be your father, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

NAB 2 Corinthians 6:18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty."

NJB 2 Corinthians 6:18 I shall be father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to me, says the almighty Lord.

GWN 2 Corinthians 6:18 The Lord Almighty says, "I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters."

BBE 2 Corinthians 6:18 And will be a Father to you; and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord,

the Ruler of all.

- **And I will be a father to you:** Ps 22:30 Jer 3:19 Jer 31:1,9 Hos 1:9-10 John 1:12 Ro 8:14-17,29 Gal 3:26 Gal 4:5-7 Eph 1:5 1Jn 3:1-2 Rev 21:7
- **Says the Lord Almighty:** Ge 17:1 48:3 Rev 1:8 21:22
- 2 Corinthians 6 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Samuel 7:14 (QUOTE ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO SOLOMON) "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men,

Jeremiah 31:1+ "At that time," declares the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people."

Hosea 1:9-10 And the LORD said, "Name him Lo-ammi, for you are not My people and I am not your God." 10 Yet the number of the sons of Israel Will be like the sand of the sea, Which cannot be measured or numbered; And in the place Where it is said to them, "You are not My people," It will be said to them, "You are the sons of the living God."

John 1:12+ But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

Romans 8:14-17+ for all who are being led by the Spirit of God (HOW? SEE Ro 8:13+), these are **sons of God**. 15 For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of **adoption as sons** by which we cry out, "**Abba! Father!**" 16 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.

ALL IN THE FAMILY OF GOD OUR FATHER

After issuing three commands calling for complete and immediate obedience, Paul does not leave the believers in Corinth "hanging," but now declares truths that should encourage them to become holy (separated) as God is holy.

While not everyone sees a direct OT link with what follow **Colin Kruse** does writing "There follows an adaptation of 2 Sa 7:8, 14 (LXX): and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty. This promise, originally addressed to King David, Paul adapts by substituting the second person plural pronouns (you) and adding the words and daughters. As it stands in the present context the quotation further emphasizes the immense privilege of belonging to God's people. What greater incentive could there be to abandon all idolatrous practices than knowing there was a welcome from the Lord Almighty who will treat them as his children?" ([Full text of TNTC 2 Corinthians](#))

Guzik thinks Paul is quoting from "Jeremiah 31:9+ to show the benefit of separating from worldly influence: a more intimate relationship with God (I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters). There is always a glorious promise for those who are willing to separate themselves from the world's influences for the sake of godliness.

McShane - All believers are in the family of God and can call Him Father, but here there is something more, for the special portion of those who separate is to enjoy His most tender care. In some cases those who left the idols' temple may have found themselves in dire straits and those who left the Jewish synagogue may also have been ostracised, so both alike would need these promises to sustain them. ([What the Bible Teaches](#))

And I will be a father (pater) to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord (kurios) Almighty (pantokrator) - **Father** refers to our heavenly Father (see [What is fellowship with God?](#)). He imparts life, from physical birth to the gift of eternal life through the second birth (regeneration, being born again). Through ongoing sanctification, the believer more and more resembles their heavenly Father.

THOUGHT - Notice that our gentle, loving Father is the Almighty One ("the one who has his hand on everything"), so what do we have to fear if we have a holy (reverential) fear of Him?

The blessedness of true separation

is nothing less than the glorious companionship of the great God Himself.

Henry Morris on you shall be sons and daughters to Me - This promise is not quoted explicitly from any Old Testament passage, though the sense of it can often be detected. There are also many explicit New Testament passages that do assert that those who receive Christ become children of God (e.g., Jn 1:12; Ro 8:16). By direct inspiration, if nothing else, Paul could assure his readers that being separated unto God from the world, through receiving Christ, would indeed assure them that He would receive them as His sons and daughters. ([Defender's Study Bible](#))

[Guzik](#) makes an excellent point - The call to purity and separation unto God flows from the offer of reconciliation mentioned at the end of 2 Corinthians 5. "A man cannot accept reconciliation with God and live in sin; because the renunciation of sin is involved in the acceptance of reconciliation. Paul never assumes that men may accept one benefit of redemption, and reject another. They cannot take pardon and refuse sanctification." ([Hodge](#))

Father ([3962](#)) ([pater](#)) is the genitor (a begetter), by whom another is begotten. Stated more simply this is a man who has begotten a child. Father is the progenitor, the ancestor in the direct line (a forefather -- thus Adam was the "progenitor" of the Human Race). A father is one who imparts life and is committed to it.

Father (title for God), (Jn 10:15; Lk 23:34.)

God the Father (15x in NAS, Not once in the OT): 1 Cor 8:6; Gal 1:1; Eph 6:23; Phil 2:11; Col 1:3; 3:17; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:2; 1Ti 1:2; 2Ti 1:2; Titus 1:4; 1Pet 1:2; 2Pet 1:17; 2 John 1:3; Jude 1:1

God and Father (14x NAS, Not once in the OT): Rom 15:6; 1 Cor 15:24; 2 Cor 1:3; 11:31; Gal 1:4; Eph 1:3; 4:6; Phil 4:20; 1Th 1:3; 3:11, 13; Jas 1:27; 1Pet 1:3; Rev 1:6

Almighty ([3841](#)) **pantokrator** from **pás** = all + **kratos** = strength or might, especially manifested power, the power to rule or control) is literally the ruler over all or the One Who controls all things and Who has power over everything. The One in total control! Pantokrator thus describes God's sovereign, omnipotent, irresistible power. Note that Vine gives the derivation of pantokrator as from pas = all + krato = to hold or to have strength. Pantokrator, for "Almighty," is used in the LXX. for "Lord of sabaoth," and in the New Testament only occurs elsewhere in the Apocalypse.

Pantokrator is used only of God, indicating that He is omnipotent (omni = all), universally sovereign. The Ruler of all things. The All-Powerful. The Omnipotent (One). Pantokrator is He Who holds sway over all things and the Ruler of all. It speaks of His supremacy over all things. In light of the fact that 9/10 NT uses of **Pantokrator** are in **The Revelation**, clearly **Pantokrator** is the characteristic title for God in the book which records the consummation of God's victory over sin and the evil one Satan and His awesome control over all the universe and all history.

As noted above chapter 6-7 is a poor chapter break and clearly the next passage in chapter 7 flows in context from 2Co 6:14-18...

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2Co 7:1+)

NEW TESTAMENT PURITANISM

2 Cor. 6:11-7:1

Benjamin B Warfield

IT is not easy to determine with exactitude the circumstances which gave occasion to this striking paragraph, which stands out so prominently on the pages of Second Corinthians as almost to separate itself from its context and form a whole of its own. Of two things, however, we may be reasonably sure. There was a party in the Corinthian Church which we may perhaps fairly describe as the party of the Libertines; and out of this party, too, there had arisen an opposition to the leadership of Paul, and a tendency to accuse him of insincerity and self-seeking in his work at Corinth. We must picture the Apostle, therefore, as compelled to defend himself and the purity of his ministry, in this Epistle, not only against a narrow Judaistic formalism, with its touch not, taste not, handle not, but also against a loose worldliness which was inclined to adapt its Christianity to the usages current in the heathen society about it. Differing in everything else, both parties agreed in unwillingness to subject themselves unreservedly to the guidance of Paul; and in defence of themselves represented him as acting towards the church from interested motives.

Bearing this in mind, we may readily understand how, when in the course of his self-defence the Apostle has been led to dwell upon the hardships he had suffered in the prosecution of his mission, he should break off suddenly with an appeal to his Corinthians to

separate themselves from heathen practices and points of view, and themselves to walk worthily of the Gospel they professed. "See, O Corinthians," he exclaims, "how freely I am speaking to you, how widely open my heart is to you. You find no constraint on my part with reference to you; the only constraint there is between us lies in your own hearts. Give me what I give you—I am speaking as to may children; open wide your heart to me. Seek not your standards of life in the unbelievers about you. Remember who you are and what you should be as organs of the Holy Spirit; and be not content until you have attained that perfect holiness which becomes the children of God." So the Apostle transforms his defence of his ministry into an exhortation to his readers, in which he again exercises his ministry of love in a disinterested plea to them to walk worthily of the Gospel of holiness.

Dr. James Denney in his commentary on this Epistle, published in "The Expositor's Bible," heads the chapter in which he deals with this section, "New Testament Puritanism." On the face of it, this is a very good designation for it. The note of Puritanism, which is the note of separation, certainly throbs through the section. "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord"—that assuredly expresses the very essence of Puritanism. Or, perhaps, we may more precisely say that it is exactly that conformity with the world which, above all things, Puritanism dreads, that Paul here declares, almost with indignation, to be inconceivable in a true Christian. "For what fellowship," he demands "is there between righteousness and iniquity? Or what communion is there for light with darkness? Or what concord of Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has a temple of God with idols?" Here certainly is Puritanism at the height of its expression.

Nevertheless we must be careful not to give the Apostle's exhortation a turn which does not belong to it. The Apostle is not here requiring of Christians a withdrawal from the world, considered as the social organism; and most certainly he is not asking of them to segregate themselves into a community apart, between which and the mass of men there shall be no, or only the least possible, intercourse. On a former occasion, when addressing these same readers, he does indeed command them not to keep company with fornicators. But he immediately adds that he means this aloofness only as a disciplinary measure towards sinning brethren. If a man who is called a Christian be a fornicator, Christian fellowship must be withdrawn from him, that it may be brought home to him that a man cannot be both a Christian and a fornicator. But, says the Apostle, I do not mean that you should not associate with fornicators of the world; else you would need to remove out of the world—a thing, he implies, which would be manifestly impossible; and let us add, for the leaven which is placed in the world, grossly inconsistent with the prosecution of its function in the world, which is to leaven the whole mass. And if we will scrutinize our present passage closely we shall quickly see that the separation which the Apostle is urging here, too, is not separation from men but from evil—applying, indeed, to the Corinthians in the way of exhortation what our Lord prayed for in behalf of His followers, not that they should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil of the world. The exhortation: "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord," is immediately followed by the explanation, "And touch no unclean thing." And the whole exhortation closes with a poignant prayer that they may "cleanse themselves from every defilement." It is not from their fellow-men that the Apostle would have Christians hold themselves aloof; it is from the sin and shame, the evil and iniquity, which stains and soils the lives of so many of their fellow-men. This is the Apostolic variety of Puritanism.

The opposite impression is perhaps fostered among simple Bible readers by the phrase which stands in the forefront of the exhortation in our English Bibles: "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." This certainly appears at first sight to represent any commerce with unbelievers as indecorous and to forbid it on that account. This impression is wholly due, however, to the awkwardness of the rendering given to an unusual Greek phrase. This Greek phrase is an exceedingly awkward one to render; and I am not sure that it is possible to give it an English equivalent which will convey its exact sense. The figure which underlies it is, no doubt, the yoking together, in the bizarre way of the East, incongruous animals for labour, say an ox and an ass. And the English version is a very creditable effort to bring the figure home to the English reader; for surely such a yoking of incongruous animals together is a very unequal one. Yet the English phrase fails to express the exact shade of meaning of the Greek term. This does not say: "Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" but rather, "Become not bearers of an alien yoke along with unbelievers"—or, in other words, "Take not on yourselves a yoke that does not fit you, in order to be with unbelievers." You see the point is very different from that which is often taken from the English phrase. What is forbidden is not that we should company with unbelievers; but that we should adopt their points of view and their modes of life. It is a question, in other words, not of intercourse, but of standards. What the Apostle is concerned about is not that his converts lived in social communion with their heathen neighbours; this he would have them do. What he is concerned about is that they took their colour from the heathen neighbours with whom they lived. He wished them to be leaven and to leaven the lump; they were permitting themselves rather to be leavened; and this made him indignant with them.

We see, then, that the Apostle's urgency here is against not association with the world, but compromise with the worldly. Compromise! In that one word is expressed a very large part of a Christian's danger in the world. We see it on all sides of us and in every sphere of life. We must be all things to all men, we say, perverting the Apostle's prescription for a working ministry; for there was one thing he would on no account and in no way have us be, even that we may, as we foolishly fancy, win the more; and that is, evil. From evil in all its forms and in all its manifestations he would have us absolutely to separate ourselves; the unclean thing is the thing he would in no circumstances have us handle. Associate with the world, yes! There is no man in it so vile that he has not

claims upon us for our association and for our aid. But adopt the standards of the world? No! Not in the least particular. Here our motto must be and that unfailingly: No compromise!

The very thing which the Apostle here presses upon our apprehension is the absolute conflict between the standards of the world and the standards of Christians; and the precise thing which he requires of us is that in our association with the world we shall not take on our necks the alien yoke of an unbeliever's point of view, of an unbeliever's judgment of things, of an unbeliever's estimate of the right and wrong, the proper and improper. In all our association with unbelievers, we, as Christian men, are to furnish the standard; and we are to stand by our Christian standard, in the smallest particular, unswervingly. Any departure from that standard, however small or however desirable it may seem, is treason to our Christianity. We must not, in any case, take the alien yoke of an unbeliever's scheme of life upon our necks.

Interesting to us as this exhortation itself is, and important beyond expression for the guidance of our lives, it, perhaps, yields in interest to the grounding which the Apostle supplies for it in an explanation of the essential springs of a Christian's life. This grounding he gives in a series of rhetorical questions, by means of which he sets forth the absolute contrariety of the Christian's and the unbeliever's points of view, sources of judgment and principles of conduct. The ordering of these questions is such that they begin by setting over against one another the obvious contradictions of righteousness and iniquity; and then proceed in a series of rapid and convincing antitheses until they end in setting the believer and the unbeliever over against one another as the embodiment respectively—at least in principle—of those contradictions, righteousness and iniquity. "What fellowship have righteousness and iniquity," the Apostle demands in support of his exhortation not to take on themselves the alien yoke of unbelievers, "or," he continues, "what communion has light with darkness? or what concord has Christ with Belial? or what portion has a believer with an unbeliever? or—clinching the whole matter with a reference to the source of the entire contrast—what agreement has a temple of God with idols?"

The force of the appeal lies in the necessary—and inevitable—identification, as we go on through the series, of each pair with the preceding; so that with the fundamental "righteousness" is identified the light; and, of course, Christ; and because he is Christ's, the believer, who is the temple of the living God: and with the fundamental iniquity is identified the darkness, Belial, and the unbeliever, because he is the worshipper of idols and partaker of the idolatrous point of view. The reason, then, why a Christian must not take on himself the alien yoke of unbelievers is just because it is to him alien; he is in and of himself, because a believer in Christ and, therefore, a temple of the living God, a different, a contrary, an opposite kind of being from the unbeliever; and it is, therefore, incongruous in the extreme for him to put his neck in the same yoke with an unbeliever, seek to live on the same plane, or consent to order his life or to determine questions of conduct by his standards, in any degree whatever.

Now it is just in this contrast drawn by the Apostle between the believer and the unbeliever—in its firmness, its clearness, its extremity if you will—that we discern the most interesting, the most important, teaching of our passage. According to the Apostle, obviously, there are two kinds of men in the world, believers and unbelievers. And these two kinds of men stand over against one another in complete, not only contrast, but contradiction; as complete contradiction as righteousness and iniquity. There can be no compromise between them any more than between righteousness and iniquity. There may be intercourse—mutual action and reaction—but never compromise.

The Apostle is far from saying, of course, that in any given individuals this fundamental contradiction is fully manifested. It finds its complete manifestation only in the abstract—in the contrariety of righteousness and iniquity; and in the full concrete manifestation of righteousness and iniquity in Christ and Belial. Between Christians and unbelievers the manifested contradiction is only relative. Compromise there ought not to be—in principle there can not be—but compromise in fact there is. Christians are not, like Christ, pure embodiments of righteousness; they require exhortation not to admit iniquity into the governing principles of their life. Alas, alas, though they are temples of the living God, they are far, far from having no commerce with idols. The Apostle recognizes all this. On his recognition of it he founds the urgent exhortation of our passage. Nevertheless he founds this exhortation also on the fact that this contradiction exists in principle—that Christians, like Christ, their Lord, are in principle righteousness, and that unbelievers are, like Belial, their lord, in principle iniquity. It is because Christians are thus in principle holy and unbelievers are thus in principle unholy that he proclaims that it is incongruous that Christians should adopt their standards of life from unbelievers, who are not merely their opposites but their contradictories; so that there can be no mean between them but every one must be one or the other.

There are then, according to the Apostle, two kinds of men in the world, believers and unbelievers; and these two kinds of men stand in contradiction to each other. One may conquer and eliminate the other; but there can be no mixture between them. The ultimate source of the fundamental difference between them he finds in the indwelling in Christians of the Holy Ghost: "Or what agreement hath a temple of God with idols? For we"—emphatic here, in contrast with the unbelievers, "as for us, we are a temple of the living God." The influx of the Holy Spirit into the heart constitutes, then, a new humanity. Over against those who have not the Spirit, and who are, therefore, as another Scripture puts it, earthly, sensual, devilish,—the children of Belial, as this Scripture suggests,—those who have the Spirit are a new creation, with new standards and new powers of life alike. There can be no compromise between such opposites. It has become customary among theologians to speak of these two kinds of men as the men of nature and the men

of the palingenesis; or as it is now becoming fashionable to call them, once born and twice born men. They who are born of the flesh are fleshly; and they only who are born of the Spirit are spiritual; and to the spiritual man belong all things. The message which Paul brings to us in this passage is, then, that we who are spiritual, because we are believers in Christ Jesus, have in principle the righteousness which belongs to Him, and though it may not yet appear what we shall be, we must in all our walk comport ourselves as what we are, the temples of the living God, having the powers and potencies of a new, even a Divine, life within us. The ultimate reason why the Christian man is not to compromise with the world is, because as a Christian man, he is a new creature, born from above, with the vigour of the Divine life itself moving in him and with an entirely new life-course marked out for him. Why should—how can—such an one put his neck incongruously within the yoke of worldly policy or self-seeking, or evil-living with unbelievers; and seek to deflect his Spirit-given powers to a life on this lower plane and for these ignoble ends? O, says the Apostle, O, Christian men, this is surely impossible to you; do you not see that in the power of your new life you are to—you must—take an utterly new course, directed to a new goal, and informed with new aspirations, hopes and strivings?

On the basis of this great declaration the Apostle erects, then, his exhortation. Nor is he content to leave it in a negative, or merely inferential form. In the accomplishment of the Spirit-filled life he sees the goal, and he speaks it out in a final urgency of exhortation into which he compresses the whole matter: "Having, therefore, such promises as these (note the emphasis), beloved," he says, "let us purify ourselves from every defilement of flesh and spirit and perfect holiness in the fear of God." It is perfection, we perceive, that the Apostle is after for his followers; and he does not hesitate to raise this standard before the eyes of his readers as their greatest incitement to effort. They must not be content with a moderate attainment in the Christian life. They must not say to themselves, O, I guess I am Christian enough, although I'm not too good to do as other men do. They must, as they have begun in the Spirit, not finish in the flesh; but must go on unto perfection.

What are they to cleanse themselves from? Every defilement—every kind of defilement—not only of the flesh but of the spirit. Aiming at what? At the completion of holiness in the fear of God! The Apostle does not tell them they are already holy—except in principle. They obviously were not already holy—except in principle. They were putting their necks in the alien yoke of unbelieving judgments. They were contenting themselves with heathen standards. They were prepared to say, O, the Lord doesn't ask all that of us; O, there is nothing wrong in this; O, I guess it will be enough if I am as good as the average man; O, you can't expect me to live at odds with all my neighbours; O, these things are good enough for me. Such compromises with the spirit of the world are wrong; and the Apostle tells his readers plainly that they are unworthy of them as Christian men. They were, if not born to better things, yet certainly born anew to better things. Let them turn their backs on all such inconsistencies and live on their own plane of life as believers, believers in Christ, Christ the Light, Christ our Righteousness. Let them remember they are temples of the living God and have no commerce with idols.

No, they were not perfect—except in principle. But in principle, they were perfect; because they had within them the principle of perfection, the Spirit of the Most High God. Let them walk in accordance with their privileges, then, on a level with their destiny. Hear God's great promise. And having these promises, cleanse yourselves; O, cleanse yourselves, the Apostle cries; cleanse yourselves from every defilement whether of flesh or spirit, and so perfect—complete, work fully out to its end—holiness in the fear of God. Let your standard be the holiness of the indwelling Spirit whose temples you are. Let your motive be, not merely regard to the good of others, much less to your own happiness, but joy in God's gracious promises. Let your effort be perfect sanctification of soul and body, cleansing from all defilement. Let your end be, pleasing God, the Holy One. In a word, says the Apostle in effect, here as elsewhere: O, ye Christians, work out your own salvation in fear and trembling, for it is God who is working in you the willing and the doing according to His own good pleasure.

We perceive, thus, in the end that the thing Paul is zealous for is the holiness of his followers. For in their holiness he sees the substance of their salvation. We are saved by Christ and only Christ; and Christ is righteous; both for us and unto us. For it is by grace that we are saved, through faith; and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God—not out of works, lest we should boast, but unto good works, which God has afore prepared that we should walk in them. And if we walk not in them—are we, then, saved? Holiness of life is, I repeat, precisely the substance of salvation, that which we are saved to, that in which salvation consists. If then we are in Christ Jesus, shall we not live like Christ Jesus? "If we are in the Spirit, shall we not walk by the Spirit?" This is Paul's final exhortation to us; since we are Christ's, and the Spirit dwells in us and we are the temples of the living God, let us be careful of good works; let us, remembering the great promises He has given us, cleanse ourselves from all defilement of body and soul; and let us perfect holiness in the fear of God, so that we approve ourselves His children and He will be to us as a Father and we shall be to Him sons and daughters.

THE WORLD
by J. C. Ryle
(1816-1900)

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 "Therefore, **COME OUT** FROM THEIR MIDST AND **BE SEPARATE**," says the Lord. "AND **DO NOT TOUCH** WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you. 18 "And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me," Says the Lord Almighty.

The text which heads this page touches a subject of vast importance in Christianity. That subject is the great duty of separation from the world. This is the point which Paul had in view when he wrote to the Corinthians, "Come out from them and be separate."

The subject is one which demands the absolute attention of all who profess and call themselves Christians. In every age of the Church, separation from the world has always been one of the grand evidences of a work of grace in the heart. He that has been really born of the Spirit, and made a new creature in Christ Jesus, has always endeavored to "come out from the world," and live a separate life. Those who only wore the name "Christian," without the reality, have always refused to "come out and be separate" from the world.

The subject perhaps was never more important than it is today. There is a widespread desire to make things pleasant in Christianity--to saw off the corners and edges of the cross, and to avoid, as far as possible, self-denial. Everywhere we hear professing Christians declaring loudly that we must not be "too narrow and exclusive," and that there is no harm in many things which the holiest saints of old thought would be bad for their souls. That we may go anywhere, and do anything, and spend our time in anything, and read anything, and keep any company, and plunge into anything, and all the while still be good Christians--this is the saying of thousands. In a day like this I think it is good to raise a warning voice and bring attention to the teaching of God's Word. It is written in that Word, "Come out from them and be separate."

There are four points which I will try to show my readers, in examining this great subject.

I. First, "That the world is a source of great danger to the soul."

II. Secondly, "What is not meant by separation from the world."

III. Thirdly, "What real separation from the world consists."

IV. Fourthly, "The secret of victory over the world."

And now, before I go a single step further, let me warn every reader of this paper that he will never understand this subject unless he first understands what a true Christian is. If you are one of those unhappy people who think everybody is a Christian who goes to a place of worship, no matter how he lives, or what he believes, I fear you will care little about separation from the world. But if you read your Bible, and are serious about your soul, you will know that there are two classes of (those who call themselves) "Christians"--converted and unconverted. You will know that what the Jews were among the nations of the Old Testament, this the true Christian is meant to be under the New. You will understand what I mean when I say that true Christians are meant, in like manner, to be a "peculiar people" under the Gospel, and that there must be a difference between believers and unbelievers. To you, therefore, I make a special appeal this day. While many avoid the subject of separation from the world, and many absolutely hate it, and many are puzzled by it, give me your attention while I try to show you "the thing as it is."

I. First of all, let me show that "the world is a source of great danger to the soul."

Remember, that by "the world," I do not mean the material world on the face of which we are living and moving. He that pretends to say that anything which God has created in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, is in itself harmful to man's soul, says that which is unreasonable and absurd. On the contrary, the sun, moon, and stars--the mountains, the valleys, and the plains--the seas, the lakes, and rivers--the animal and vegetable creation--all are in themselves "very good" (Genesis 1:31). All are full of lessons of God's wisdom and power, and all proclaim daily, "The hand that made us is Divine." The idea that "matter" is in itself sinful and corrupt is a foolish heresy.

When I speak of "the world" in this paper, I mean those people who think only, or chiefly, of this world's things, and neglect the world to come--the people who are always thinking more of earth than of heaven, more of time than of eternity, more of body than the soul, more of pleasing man than of pleasing God. It is of them and their ways, habits, customs, opinions, practices, tastes, aims, spirit, and tone, that I am speaking when I speak of "the world." This is the world from which Paul tells us to "Come out and be separate."

Now "the world," in this sense, is an enemy to the soul. There are three things which a baptized Christian must renounce and give up, and three enemies which he must fight with and resist. These three are the flesh, the devil, and "the world." All three are terrible foes, and all three must be overcome if we would be saved.

Let us turn to the testimony of the Holy Scriptures. If the texts I am about to quote do not prove that the world is a source of danger to the soul, then there is no meaning in words.

(a) Let us hear what the Apostle Paul says:

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2).

"We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God" (1 Corinthians 2:12).

"Christ gave Himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age [world]" (Galatians 1:4).

"You were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world" (Ephesians 2:1-2).

"Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me" (2 Timothy 4:10)

(b) Let us hear what James says:

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27).

"Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God" (James 4:4).

(c) Let us hear what John says:

"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-- the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever" (1 John 2:15-17).

"The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him" (1 John 3:1).

"They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them" (1 John 4:5).

"Everyone born of God overcomes the world" (1 John 5:4).

"We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 John 5:19).

(d) Let us hear, lastly, what the Lord Jesus Christ says:

"The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life [this world] and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful" (Matthew 13:22).

"You are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23).

"The world cannot accept Him [Holy Spirit], because it neither sees Him nor knows Him" (John 14:17).

"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated Me first" (John 15:18).

"If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you" (John 15:19).

"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of it" (John 17:16).

I make no comment on those texts. They speak for themselves. If any one can read them carefully, and fail to see that "the world" is an enemy to the Christian's soul, and that there is an utter opposition between the friendship of the world and the friendship of Christ, he is past the reach of argument, and it is a waste of time to reason with him. To my eyes they contain a lesson as clear as the sun at noon day.

I turn from Scriptures to matters of fact and experience. I appeal to any old Christian who keeps his eyes open, and knows what is going on in the Churches. I ask him whether it is not true that nothing damages the cause of Christianity so much as "the world"? It is not open sin, or open unbelief, which robs Christ of His professing servants, so much as the love of the world, the fear of the world, the cares of the world, the business of the world, the money of the world, the pleasures of the world, and the desire to keep in with the world. This is the great rock on which thousands of young people are continually being crushed against and destroyed. They don't object to any of the truths of the Christian faith. They do not deliberately choose evil, and openly rebel against God. They hope somehow to get to heaven in the end; and they think it is proper to have some religion. But they cannot give up their idol: they must have the world. And so after running well and longing for heaven while boys and girls, they turn aside when they

become men and women, and go down the broad way which leads to destruction. They begin with Abraham and Moses, and end with Demas and Lot's wife.

The last day alone will prove how many souls "the world" has slain. Hundreds will be found to have been trained in Christian homes, and to have known the Gospel from their very childhood, and yet missed heaven. They left the harbor of home with bright prospects, and launched forth on the ocean of life with a father's blessing and a mother's prayers, and then turned from the right course through the seductions of the world, and ended their voyage on the reef and in misery. It is a sorrowful story to tell; but it is all too common! I can clearly see why Paul says, "Come out from them and be separate."

II. Let me now try to show "what does not constitute separation from the world."

The point is one which requires clearing up. There are many mistakes made about it. You will sometimes see sincere and well-meaning Christians doing things which God never intended them to do, in the matter of separation from the world, and honestly believing that they are in the very will of God. Their mistakes often do them great harm. They give opportunity to the wicked to ridicule all Christianity, and supply them with an excuse for having none. They cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of, and add to the offense of the cross. I think it a plain duty to make a few remarks on the subject. We must never forget that it is possible to be very dedicated, and to think we are "doing God service," when in reality we are making some great mistakes. There is such a thing as having a "zeal that is not based on knowledge" (Romans 10:2), for example, "A time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God" (John 16:2). There are few things about which it is so important to pray for a right judgment and sanctified common sense, as about separation from the world.

(a) When Paul said, "Come out from them and be separate," he did not mean that Christians ought to give up all worldly callings, trades, professions, and business. He did not forbid men to be soldiers, sailors, lawyers, doctors, merchants, bankers, shopkeepers, or tradesmen. There is not a word in the New Testament to justify such a line of conduct. Cornelius the centurion [soldier], Luke the physician, Zenas the lawyer, are examples to the contrary. Idleness is in itself a sin. A lawful calling is a remedy against temptation. "If a man will not work, he shall not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10). To give up any business of life which is not necessarily sinful to the wicked and the devil, from fear of getting harm from it, is lazy, cowardly conduct. The right plan is to carry our Christianity into our business, and not to give up business under the false pretense that it interferes with our Christianity.

(b) When Paul said, "Come out from them and be separate," he did not mean that Christians ought to decline all association with unconverted people, and refuse to go into their society. There is no warrant for such conduct in the New Testament. Our Lord and His disciples did not refuse to go to a marriage feast, or to sit at dinner in the home of a Pharisee. Paul does not say, "If some unbeliever invites you to a meal," you must not go, but only tells us how to behave if we do go (1 Corinthians 10:27). Moreover, it is a dangerous thing to begin judging people too closely, and settling who are converted and who are not, and what society is godly and what ungodly. We are sure to make mistakes. Above all, such a course of life would cut us off from many opportunities of doing good. If we carry our Master with us wherever we go, who can tell but we may "save some," and not be harmed? "To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22).

(c) When Paul says, "Come out from them and be separate," he did not mean that Christians ought to take no interest in anything on earth except religion. To neglect science, art, literature, and politics--to read nothing which is not directly spiritual--to know nothing about what is going on among mankind, and never to look at a newspaper--to care nothing about the government of one's country, and to be utterly indifferent as to the persons who guides it, counsels and make its laws--all this may seem very right and proper in the eyes of some people. But I think that it is an idle, selfish neglect of duty. Paul knew the value of good government as one of the main helps to our "living peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:2). Paul was not ashamed to read heathen writers, and to quote their words in his speeches and writings. Paul did not think it beneath him to show an acquaintance with the laws and customs and callings of the world, in the illustrations he gave from them. Christians who pride themselves on their ignorance of secular things are precisely the Christians who bring Christianity into contempt. I knew the case of a blacksmith who would not come to hear his clergyman preach the Gospel, until he found out that he knew the properties of iron. Then he came.

(d) When Paul said, "Come out from them and be separate," he did not mean that Christians should be strange and odd in their dress, manners, demeanor, and voice. Anything which attracts notice in these matters is most objectionable, and ought to be carefully avoided. To wear clothes of such a color, or made in such a fashion, that when you go into company every eye is fixed on you, and you are the object of general observation, is an enormous mistake. It gives occasion to the wicked to ridicule Christianity, and looks self-righteous and unnatural. There is not the slightest proof that our Lord and His apostles, and Priscilla, and Persis, and their companions, did not dress and behave just like others in their own ranks of life. On the other hand, one of the many charges our Lord brings against the Pharisees was that of "making their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long," so as to be "seen by men" (Matthew 23:5). True sanctity and sanctimoniousness are entirely different things. Those who try to show their

unworldliness by wearing conspicuously ugly clothes, or by speaking in a whining, snuffling voice, or by affecting an unnatural slavishness, humility, and gravity of manner, miss their mark altogether, and only give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

(e) When Paul said, "Come out from them and be separate," he did not mean that Christians ought to retire from the company of mankind, and shut themselves up in solitude. It is one of the crying errors of the Roman Catholic Church to suppose that eminent holiness is to be attained by such practices. It is the unhappy delusion of the whole army of monks, nuns, hermits. Separation of this kind is not according to the mind of Christ. He say distinctly in His last prayer, "My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one" (John 17:15). There is not a word in Acts or the Epistles to recommend such a separation. True believers are always represented as mixing in the world, doing their duty in it, and glorifying God by patience, meekness, purity, and courage in their several positions, and not by cowardly desertion of them.

Moreover, it is foolish to suppose that we can keep the world and the devil out of our hearts by going into holes and corners. True Christianity and unworldliness are best seen, not in timidly forsaking the post which God has allotted to us, but in boldly standing our ground, and showing the power of grace to overcome evil.

(f) Last, but not least, when Paul said, "Come out from them and be separate," he did not mean that Christians ought to withdraw from every Church in which there are unconverted members, or to refuse to worship in company with any who are not believers, or to keep away from the Lord's table if any ungodly people go up to it. This is a very common but a grievous mistake. There is not a text in the New Testament to justify it, and it ought to be condemned as a pure invention of man. Our Lord Jesus Christ deliberately allowed Judas Iscariot to be an apostle for three years, and gave him the Lord's Supper. He has taught us, in the parable of the wheat and tares, that converted and unconverted will be together till the harvest, and cannot be divided (Matthew 13:30). In His Epistles to the Seven Churches, and in all Paul's Epistles, we often see faults and corruptions mentioned and reproved; but we are never told that they justify desertion of the assembly, or the neglect of the Lord's table. In short, we must not look for a perfect Church, a perfect congregation, and a perfect company of communicants until the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. If others are unworthy Churchgoers or unworthy partakers of the Lord's Supper, the sin is theirs and not ours: we are not their judges. But to separate ourselves from Church assemblies, and deprive ourselves of the Lord's Supper because others use them unworthily, is to take up a foolish, unreasonable, and unscriptural position. It is not the mind of Christ, and it certainly is not Paul's idea of separation from the world.

I commend these six points to the calm consideration of all who wish to understand the subject of separation from the world. Far more might be said about each and every one of them than I have space to say in this paper. I have seen so many mistakes made about each one of them, and so much misery and unhappiness caused by those mistakes, that I want to put Christians on their guard. I want them not to take up positions carelessly, in the zeal of their first love, which they will afterwards be obliged to give up.

I leave this part of my subject with two pieces of advice, which I offer especially to young Christians.

I advise them, for one thing, if they really desire to come out from the world, to remember that the shortest path is not always the path of duty. To argue with our unconverted relatives, to "avoid" all our old friends, to withdraw entirely from mixed society, to live an exclusive life, to give up every act of courtesy and civility in order that we may devote ourselves to the direct work of Christ--all this may seem very right, and may satisfy our consciences and save us trouble. But I venture a doubt whether it is not often a selfish, lazy, self-pleasing line of conduct, and whether the true cross and true line of duty may not be to deny ourselves, and adopt a very different course of action.

I advise them, for another thing, if they want to come out from the world, to watch against a sour, morose, ungenial, gloomy, unpleasant, bearish demeanor, and never to forget that there is such a thing as "winning without the Word." (1 Peter 3:1 - "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives"). Let them strive to show unconverted people that their principles, whatever may be thought of them, make them cheerful, amiable, good-tempered, unselfish, considerate for others, and ready to take an interest in everything that is innocent and of good report. In short, let there be no needless separation between us and the world. In many things, as I will soon show, we must be separate; but let us take care that it is separation of the right sort. If the world is offended by such separation we cannot help it. But let us never give the world occasion to say that our separation is foolish, senseless, ridiculous, unreasonable, uncharitable, and unscriptural.

III. In the third place, I will try to show "what true separation from the world really is."

I take up this branch of my subject with a very deep sense of its difficulty. That there is a certain line of conduct which all true Christians ought to pursue with respect to "the world, and the things of the world," is very evident. The texts already quoted make that plain. The key to the solution of that question lies in the word "separation." But in what separation consists it is not easy to

show. On some points it is not hard to lay down particular rules, on others it is impossible to do more than state general principles, and leave every one to apply them according to his position in life. This is what I will attempt to do.

(a) First and foremost, he that desires to "come out from the world, and be separate," "must steadily and habitually refuse to be guided by the world's standard of right and wrong."

The rule of the mass of mankind is to go with the stream, to do as others, to follow the fashion, to keep in with the common opinion, and to set your watch by the town clock. The true Christian will never be content with such a rule as that. He will simply ask, "What does the Scripture say? What is written in the Word of God?" He will maintain firmly that nothing can be right which God says is wrong, and that the customs and opinions of his neighbors can never make that to be an unimportant matter which God calls serious, or that to be no sin which God calls sin. He will never think lightly of such sins as drinking, swearing, gambling, lying, cheating, swindling, or dishonoring of the Lord's Day, because they are common, and many say, "Where is the harm?" That miserable argument, "Everybody thinks this way, everybody says so, everybody does it, everybody will be there," means nothing to him. Is it condemned or approved by the Bible? That is his only question. If he stands alone in the town, or congregation, he will not go against the Bible. If he has to come out from the crowd, and take a position by himself, he will not flinch from it rather than disobey the Bible. This is genuine Scriptural separation.

(b) He that desires to "come out from the world and be separate," "must be very careful how he spends his leisure time."

This is a point which at first sight appears of little importance. But the longer I live, the more I am persuaded that it deserves most serious attention. Honorable occupation and lawful business are a great safeguard to the soul and the time that is spent upon them is comparatively the time of our least danger. The devil finds it hard to get a hearing from a busy man. But when the day's work is over and the time of leisure arrives, then comes the hour of temptation.

I do not hesitate to warn every man who wants to live a Christian life to be very careful how he spends his evenings. Evening is the time when we are naturally disposed to relax after the labors of the day; and evening is the time when the Christian is too often tempted to lay aside his armor, and consequently brings trouble on his soul. "Then comes the devil," and with the devil the world. Evening is the time when the poor man is tempted to go to the bar and fall into sin. Evening is the time when the workman too often sits for hours hearing and seeing things which do him no good. Evening is the time which the higher classes choose for dancing, gambling, and the like; and consequently never get to bed till late at night. If we love our souls, and would not become worldly, let us be careful how we spend our evenings. Tell me how a man spends his evenings, and I can generally tell what his character is.

The true Christian will do well to make it a settled rule never to "waste" his evenings. Whatever others may do, let him resolve always to make time for quiet, calm thought-for Bible-reading and prayer. The rule will prove a hard one to keep. It may bring on him the charge of being unsociable and overly strict. Let him not mind this. Anything of this kind is better than habitual late hours in company, hurried prayers, slovenly Bible reading, and a bad conscience. Even if he stands alone in his church or town let him not depart from his rule. He will find himself in a minority, and be thought an eccentric man. But this is genuine Scriptural separation.

(c) He that desires to "come out from the world and be separate," "must steadily and habitually determine not to be swallowed up and absorbed in the business of the world."

A true Christian will strive to do his duty in whatever station or position he finds himself, and to do it well. Whether statesman, or merchant, or banker, or lawyer, or doctor, or tradesman, or farmer, he will try to do his work so that no one can find occasion for fault in him. But he will not allow it to get between him and Christ. If he finds his business beginning to eat up his Sundays, his Bible-reading, his private prayer time, and to bring clouds between him and heaven, he will say, "Stand back! There is a limit. This is as far as you can go, and no further. I cannot sell my soul for position, fame, or gold." Like Daniel, he will make time for communion with God, whatever the cost may be. He will deny himself anything rather than lose his Bible-reading and his prayers. In all this he will find he stands almost alone. Many will laugh at him, and tell him they get along just fine without being so strict and particular. He will not listen. He will resolutely hold the world at arms length, whatever present loss or sacrifice it may seem to entail. He will choose rather to be less rich and prosperous in this world, than not to prosper about his soul. To stand alone in this way, to run counter to the ways of others, requires immense self-denial. But this is genuine Scriptural separation.

(d) He that desires to "come out from the world and be separate" must steadily "abstain from all amusements and recreations which are inseparably connected with sin."

This is a hard subject to handle, and I approach it with pain. But I do not think I would be faithful to Christ, and faithful to my office as a minister, if I did not speak very plainly about it, in considering such a matter as separation from the world.

Let me, then, say honestly, that I cannot understand how any one who makes any pretense to real vital Christianity can allow himself to attend horse races and theaters. Conscience no doubt is a strange thing, and every man must judge for himself and use his liberty. One man sees no harm in things which another regards with abhorrence as evil. I can only give my own opinion for what it

is worth, and entreat my readers to consider seriously what I say.

That to look at horses running at full speed is in itself perfectly harmless, no sensible man will pretend to deny. That many plays, such as Shakespeare's, are among the finest productions of the human intellect, is equally undeniable. But all this is beside the question. The question is whether horse racing and theaters, as they are conducted, are downright wicked. I assert without hesitation that they are. I assert that the breach of God's commandments so invariably accompanies the race and the play, that you cannot go to the amusement without helping sin.

I entreat all professing Christians to remember this, and to take heed what they do. I warn them plainly that they have no right to shut their eyes to facts which every intelligent person knows, for the mere pleasure of seeing a horse-race, or listening to good actors or actresses. I warn them that they must not talk of separation from the world, if they can lend their sanction to amusements which are invariably connected with gambling, betting, drunkenness, and fornication. These are the things "God will judge," and which "result in death!" (Hebrews 13:4; Romans 6:21).

These are hard words! But are they not true? It may seem to your relatives and friends very strait-laced, strict, and narrow, if you tell them you cannot go to the races or the theater [movies] with them. But we must fall back on first principles. Is the world a danger to the soul, or is it not? Are we to come out from the world, or are we not? These are questions which can only be answered in one way.

If we love our souls we must have nothing to do with amusements which are bound up with sin. Nothing short of this can be called genuine Scriptural separation from the world.

I would like to note here that thoughtful and intelligent readers will probably observe that, under the head of worldly amusements, I have said nothing about dancing and card-playing. They are delicate and difficult subjects, but I am quite willing to give my opinion, and the more so because I do not speak of them without experience in the days of my youth.

1. Concerning "dancing" (or going to Balls), I only ask Christians to judge the amusement by its tendencies and accomplishments. To say there is anything morally wrong in the mere bodily act of dancing would be absurd. David danced before the ark. Solomon said, "There is a time to dance" (Ecclesiastes 3:4). Just as it is natural to lambs and kittens to frisk about, so it seems natural to young people, all over the world, to jump about to a lively tune of music. If dancing were taken up for mere exercise, if dancing took place at early hours, and men only danced with men, and women with women, it would be needless and absurd to object to it. But everybody knows that this is not what is meant by modern dancing (going to Balls and dances). This is an amusement which involves very late hours, extravagant dressing, and an immense amount of frivolity, vanity, jealousy, unhealthy excitement, and vain conversation. Who would like to be found in a modern dance-hall when the Lord Jesus Christ comes the second time? Who that has taken much part in balls and dancing, as I myself once did before I knew better, can deny that they have a most dissipating effect on the mind, like using drugs and the drinking of alcoholic beverages does on the body? I cannot withhold my opinion that dancing and the going to balls is one of those worldly amusements which "war against the soul," and which it is wisest and best to give up. And as for those parents who urge their sons and daughters, against their wills and inclinations, to go to balls and dances, I can only say that they are taking on themselves a most dangerous responsibility, and risking great injury to their children's souls.

2. Concerning card-playing and gambling, my judgment is much the same. I ask Christian people to judge it by its tendencies and consequences. Of course it would be nonsense to say there is positive wickedness in an innocent game of cards, for diversion, and not for money. I have known instances of old people of lethargic and infirm habit of body, unable to work or read, to whom cards in an evening were really useful, to keep them from drowsiness, and preserve their health. But it is vain to shut our eyes from facts. If parents once begin to play cards in the living room, children are likely to play cards in their rooms; and then comes in a whole train of evils. Moreover, from simple card-playing to desperate gambling there is but a chain of steps. If parents teach young people that there is no harm in the first step, they must never be surprised if they go on to the last.

I give this opinion with much diffidence. I lay no claim to infallibility. Let every one be persuaded in his own mind. But, considering all things, it is my deliberate judgment that the Christian who wishes to keep his soul right, and to "come out from the world," will do wisely to have nothing to do with card-playing. It is a habit which seems to grow on some people so much that it becomes at last a necessity, and they cannot live without it. "Madam," said Romaine to an old lady, who declared she could not make it without her cards--"Madam, if this is the case, cards are your god, and your god is a very poor one." Surely in doubtful matters like these it is well to give our souls the benefit of the doubt, and to refrain.

3. Concerning "Sports," I admit that it is not easy to lay down a strict rule. I cannot go the length of some, and say that galloping across the country, or shooting grouse, partridges, or pheasants, or catching salmon or trout, are in themselves positively sinful occupations and distinct marks of an unconverted heart. There are many persons, I know, to whom violent outdoor exercise and complete diversion of mind are absolute necessities, for the preservation of their bodily and mental health. But in all these matters the chief question is one of degree. Much depends on the company men are thrown into, and the extent to which the thing is

carried. The great danger lies in excess. It is possible to be "excessive" about hunting and as well as about drinking. We are commanded in Scripture to be "moderate in all things," if we would be successful in the Christian life; and those who are addicted to sports should not forget this rule.

The question, however, is one about which Christians must be careful in expressing an opinion, and moderate in their judgments. The man who can neither ride, nor shoot, nor throw a fly, is hardly qualified to speak dispassionately about such matters. It is cheap and easy work to condemn others for doing things which you cannot do your self, and are utterly unable to enjoy! One thing only is perfectly certain—all overindulgence or excess is sin. The man who is wholly absorbed in sports, and spends all his years in such a manner that he seems to think God only created him to be a "hunting, shooting, and fishing animal," is a man who at present knows very little of Scriptural Christianity. It is written, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

(e) He that desires to "come out from them and be separate," must be "moderate in the use of lawful and innocent recreations."

No sensible Christian will ever think of condemning all recreations. In a world of work and stress like the one that we live in, occasional relaxation is good for everyone. Body and mind alike require seasons of lighter occupation, and opportunities of letting off high spirits, and especially when they are young. Exercise itself is a positive necessity for the preservation of mental and bodily health. I see no harm in field sports, rowing, running, and other athletic recreations. I find no fault with those who play chess and other such games of skill. We are all fearfully and wonderfully made. No wonder the poet says,

"Strange that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long!"

Anything which strengthens nerves, and brain, and digestion, and lungs, and muscles, and makes us more fit for Christ's work, so long as it is not in itself sinful, is a blessing, and ought to be thankfully used. Anything which will occasionally divert our thoughts from their usual grinding path, in a healthy manner, is a good and not an evil.

But it is the excess of these innocent things which a true Christian must watch against, if he wants to be separate from the world. He must not devote his whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and time to them, as many do, if he wishes to serve Christ. There are hundreds of lawful things which are good in moderation, but bad when taken in excess. Healthful medicine taken in small quantities is good, but downright poison when swallowed down in huge doses. In nothing is this so true as it is in the matter of recreations. The use of them is one thing, and the abuse of them is another. The Christian who uses them must know when to stop, and how to say "Enough!" Do they interfere with his private religion? Do they take up too much of his thoughts and attention? Have they a secularizing effect on his soul? Have they a tendency to pull him down to earth? Then let him be very careful. All this will require courage, self-denial, and firmness. It is a line of conduct which will often bring on us the ridicule and contempt of those who know not what moderation is, and who spend their lives in making trifles serious things and serious things trifles. But if we mean to come out from the world we must not mind this. We must be "temperate" even in lawful things, whatever others may think of us. This is genuine Scriptural separation.

(f) Last, but not least, he that desires to "come out from them and be separate" must be "careful in friendships, intimacies, and close relationships with worldly people." We cannot help meeting many unconverted people as long as we live. We cannot avoid having association with them, and doing business with them, unless we "leave this world" (1 Corinthians 5:10). To treat them with the utmost courtesy, kindness, and charity, whenever we do meet them, is a positive duty. But acquaintance is one thing, and intimate friendship is quite another. To seek their society without cause, to choose their company, to cultivate intimacy with them, is very dangerous to the soul. Human nature is so constituted that we cannot associate with other people without it having an effect on our own character. The old proverb will never fail to prove true: "Tell me with whom a man chooses to live, and I will tell you what he is." The Scripture says expressly, "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm" (Proverbs 13:20). If then a Christian who desires to live consistently, chooses for his friends those who either do not care for their souls, or the Bible, or God, or Christ, or holiness, or regard them as of secondary importance, it seems to me impossible for him to prosper in his Christianity. He will soon find that their ways are not his ways, nor their thoughts his thoughts, nor their tastes his tastes; and that, unless they change, he must give up intimacy with them. In short, there must be separation. Of course such separation will be painful. But if we have to choose between the loss of a friend and the injury of our souls, there ought to be no doubt in our minds. If friends will not walk in the narrow way with us, we must not walk in the broad way to please them. But let us distinctly understand that to attempt to keep up close intimacy between a converted and an unconverted person, if both are consistent with their natures, is to attempt an impossibility.

The principle here laid down ought to be carefully remembered by all unmarried Christians in the choice of a husband or wife. I fear it is too often entirely forgotten. Too many seem to think of everything except religion in choosing a partner for life, or to suppose that it will come somehow as a matter of course. Yet when a praying, Bible-reading, God-fearing, Christ-loving, Church-honoring Christian marries a person who takes no interest whatever in serious Christianity, what can the result be but injury to the Christian,

or immense unhappiness? Health is not infectious, but disease is! As a general rule, in such cases, the good go down to the level of the bad, and the bad do not come up to the level of the good. The subject is a delicate one, and I do not care to dwell upon it.

But this I say confidently to every unmarried Christian man or woman-if you love your soul, if you do not want to fall away and backslide, if you do not want to destroy your own peace and comfort for life, resolve never to marry any person who is not a true and devoted Christian, whatever the resolution may cost you. It would be better for you to die than to marry an unbeliever. Hold on to this resolution, and let no one ever persuade you out of it. Depart from this resolution, and you will find it almost impossible to "come out and be separate." You will find you have tied a mill-stone around your own neck in running the race towards heaven; and, if saved at last, it will be "as one escaping through the flames" (1 Corinthians 3:15).

I offer these six general hints to all who wish to follow Paul's advice, and to come out from the world and be separate. In giving them, I lay no claim to infallibility; but I believe they deserve consideration and attention. I do not forget that the subject is full of difficulties, and that scores of doubtful cases are continually arising in a Christian's course, in which it is very hard to say what is the path of duty, and how to behave. Perhaps the following bits of advice may be found useful.

1. In all doubtful cases we should first pray for wisdom and sound judgment. If prayer is worth anything, it must be especially valuable when we desire to do right, but do not see our way.
2. In all doubtful cases let us often judge ourselves by remembering that God has His eye on us. Should I go to such and such a place, or do such and such a thing, if I really believed God was looking at me?
3. In all doubtful cases let us never forget the Second Coming of Christ and the day of judgment. Should I like to be found in such and such company, or employed in such and such ways?
4. Finally, in all doubtful cases let us find out what the conduct of the holiest and best Christians has been under similar circumstances. If we do not clearly see our own way, we need not be ashamed to follow good examples.

I throw out these suggestions for the use of all who are in difficulties about disputable points in the matter of separation from the world. I cannot help thinking that they may help to untie many knots, and solve many problems.

IV. I shall now conclude the whole subject by trying to "show the secrets of real victory over the world."

To come out from the world of course is not an easy thing. It cannot be easy so long as human nature is what it is, and a busy devil is always near us. It requires a constant struggle and exertion; it entails incessant conflict and self-denial. It often places us in exact opposition to members of our own families, to relatives and neighbors, it sometimes obliges us to do things which give great offense, and bring on us ridicule and petty persecution. It is precisely this which makes many hang back and shrink from resolute Christianity. They know they are not right; they know that they are not so "thorough" in Christ's service as they ought to be, and they feel uncomfortable and ill at ease. But the fear of man keeps them back. And so they linger on through life with aching, dissatisfied hearts-with too much religion to be happy in the world, and too much of the world to be happy in their religion. I fear this is a very common case, if the truth were known.

Yet there are some in every age who seem to get the victory over the world. They come out decidedly from its ways, and are unmistakably separate. They are independent of its opinions, and unshaken by its opposition. They move on like planets in an orbit of their own, and seem to rise equally above the world's smiles and frowns. And what are the secrets of their victory? I will set them down.

(a) The first secret of victory over the world is a right heart.

By that I mean a heart renewed, changed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit--a heart in which Christ dwells, a heart in which old things have passed away, and all things become new. The grand mark of such a heart is the bias of its tastes and affections. The owner of such a heart no longer likes the world and the things of the world, and therefore finds it no trial or sacrifice to give them up. He no longer has any appetite for the company, the conversation, the amusements, the occupations, the books which he once loved, and to "come out" from them seems natural to him. Great indeed is the explosive power of a new principle! Just as the new spring-buds in a hedge push off the old leaves and make them quietly fall to the ground, so does the new heart of a believer invariably affect his tastes and likes, and make him drop many things which he once loved and lived in because he now likes them no more. Let him that wants to "come out from the world and be separate," make sure first and foremost that he has got a new heart. If the heart is really right, everything else will be right in time. "If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light" (Matthew 6:22). If the affections are not right there never will be right action.

(b) The second secret of victory over the world is a "lively practical faith" in unseen things.

What does the Scripture say? "This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4). To attain and keep up the habit of looking steadily at invisible things, as if they were visible-to set before our minds every day, as grand realities, our souls, God, Christ, heaven, hell, judgment, eternity, to cherish an abiding conviction that what we do not see is just as real as what we do see, and ten thousand times more important--this, this is one way to be conquerors over the world. This was the faith which made the noble army of saints, described in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, obtain such a glorious testimony from the Holy Spirit. They all acted under a firm persuasion that they had a real God, a real Savior, and a real home in heaven, though unseen by mortal eyes. Armed with this faith, a man regards this world as a shadow compared to the world to come, and cares little for its praise or blame, its hatred or its rewards. Let him that wants to come out from the world and be separate, but shrinks and hangs back for fear of the things seen, pray and strive to have this faith. "Everything is possible for him who believes" (Mark 9:23). Like Moses, he will find it possible to forsake Egypt, seeing Him that is invisible. Like Moses, he will not care what he loses and who is displeased, because he sees afar off, like one looking through a telescope, a substantial recompense of reward. (Hebrews 11:26)

(c) The third and last secret of victory over the world is to attain and cultivate the "habit of boldly confessing Christ" on all proper occasions.

In saying this I don't want to be misunderstood. I want no one to blow a trumpet before him, and thrust his Christianity on others all the time. But I do wish to encourage all who strive to come out from the world to show their colors, and to act and speak out like men who are not ashamed to serve Christ. A steady, quiet assertion of our own principles, as Christians--an habitual readiness to let the children of the world see that we are guided by other rules than they are, and do not mean to swerve from them--a calm, firm, courteous maintenance of our own standard of things in every company--all this will insensibly form a habit within us, and make it comparatively easy to be a separate man. It will be hard at first, no doubt, and cost us many a struggle; but the longer we go on, the easier will it be. Repeated acts of confessing Christ will produce habits. Habits once formed will produce a settled character. Once our characters are known, we shall be saved a lot of trouble. Men will know what to expect from us, and will count it no strange thing if they see us living the lives of separate peculiar people. It is a great thing to be able to say "No" decidedly, but courteously, when asked to do anything which conscience says is wrong. He that shows his colors boldly from the first, and is never ashamed to let men see "whose he is and whom he serves," will soon find that he has overcome the world and will be let alone. Bold confession is a long step towards victory,

It only remains for me now to conclude the whole subject with a few short words of application. The danger of the world ruining the soul, the nature of true separation from the world, the secrets of victory over the world, are all before the reader of this paper. I now ask him to give me his attention for the last time, while I try to say something directly for his personal benefit.

(1) My first word shall be "a question."

Are you overcoming the world, or are you overcome by it? Do you know what it is to come out from the world and be separate or are you still entangled by it, and conformed to it? If you have any desire to be saved, I entreat you to answer this question.

If you know nothing of "separation" I warn you affectionately that your soul is in great danger. The world passes away; and they who cling to the world, and think only of the world, will pass away with it to everlasting ruin. Wake up and see your peril before it is too late. Awake and flee from the wrath to come. The time is short. The end of all things is at hand. The shadows are lengthening. The sun is going down. The night comes when no man can work. The great white throne will soon be set. The judgment will begin. The books will be opened. Awake, and come out from the world while it is called today.

Yet a little while, and there will be no more worldly occupations and worldly amusements--no more getting money and spending money--no more eating, and drinking, and feasting, and dressing, and dancing, and theaters, and races, and cards, and gambling. What will you do when all these things have passed away forever? How can you possibly be happy in an eternal heaven, where holiness is all in all, and worldliness has no place? Oh consider these things, and be wise! Awake, and break the chains which the world has thrown around you. Awake, and flee from the wrath to come.

(2) My second word shall be a "counsel."

If you want to come out from the world, but don't know what to do, take the advice which I give you this day. Begin by applying direct, as a penitent sinner, to our Lord Jesus Christ, and put your case in His hands. Pour out your heart before Him. Tell Him your whole story, and keep nothing back. Tell Him that you are a sinner wanting to be saved from the world, the flesh, and the devil, and beg Him to save you.

That blessed Savior "who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age" (Galatians 1:4). He knows what the world is, for He lived in it thirty-three years. He knows what the difficulties of a man are, for He was made man for our sakes, and dwelt among men. High in heaven, at the right hand of God, He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him--able to keep us from the evil of the world while we are still living in it--able to give us power to become the sons of God--able to keep us from

falling-able to make us more than conquerors. Once more I say, "Go direct to Christ with the prayer of faith, and put yourself wholly and unreservedly in His hands." Hard as it may seem to you now to come out from the world and be separate, you shall find that with Jesus nothing is impossible. You, even you, shall overcome the world.

(3) My third and last word shall be "encouragement."

If you have learned by experience what it is to come out from the world, I can only say to you, take comfort, and persevere. You are in the right road; you have no cause to be afraid. The everlasting hills are in sight. Your salvation is nearer than when you believed. Take comfort and press on.

No doubt you have had many a battle, and made many a false step. You have sometimes felt ready to faint, and been half disposed to go back to Egypt. But your Master has never entirely left you, and He will never suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear. Then persevere steadily in your separation from the world, and never be ashamed of standing alone. Settle it firmly in your mind that the most dedicated Christians are always the happiest, and remember that no one ever said at the end of his course that he had been too holy, and lived too near to God.

Hear, last of all, what is written in the Scriptures of truth:

"Whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God" (Luke 12:8).

"No one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields--and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mark 10:29-30).

"Do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay'" (Hebrews 10:35-37).

Those words were written and spoken for our sakes. Let us lay hold of them, and never forget them. Let us persevere to the end, and never be ashamed of coming out from the world, and being separate. We may be sure it brings its own reward.