

2 Corinthians Chapter 7

2 Corinthians 7:1 "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

The promises spoken of here are that Christians are sons and daughters of God, and that the Spirit of God lives within them.

Paul is saying here, taking all of that under consideration, that we must clean ourselves up both inside and out.

Not many people want to talk to you about holiness.

Perhaps it is because they do not understand the meaning.

“Filthiness”:

This is a Greek word which appears only here in the New Testament and was used 3 times in the Greek Old Testament to refer to religious defilement or unholy alliances with idols, idol feasts, temple prostitutes, sacrifices and festivals of worship.

False religion panders to the human appetites, represented by both “flesh and spirit”.

While some believers for a time might avoid succumbing to fleshly sins associated with false religion, the Christian who exposes his mind to false teaching cannot avoid contamination by the devilish ideologies and blasphemies that assault the purity of divine truth and blaspheme God’s Holy name.

“Perfecting holiness”:

The Greek word for “perfecting” means “to finish” or “to complete”.

Holiness refers to separation from all that would defile both the body and the mind.

Complete or perfect holiness was embodied only in Christ; thus, believers are to pursue him.

2 Corinthians 7:2 "Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man."

Paul is still answering accusations here.

He is just saying that he had dealt with each person in the very same way the Lord would have.

He had not harmed anyone.

He is saying, there is no reason for you not to accept us.

Paul could never be accused of injuring or leading any Corinthian into sin nor could he be accused of encouraging any immoral conduct.

2 Corinthians 7:3 "I speak not [this] to condemn [you]: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with [you]."

Paul is just explaining that he is not angry with anyone there at Corinth, not even the ones who had been complaining.

Whatever they were, Paul felt he was a part of, because he had started the church at Corinth.

He loved them, and would always claim them as his own.

Paul had a forgiving heart and rather than condemning the Corinthians for believing the false teachers and rejecting him, Paul reminded them of his love for them and also his readiness to forgive them.

2 Corinthians 7:4 "Great [is] my boldness of speech toward you, great [is] my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation."

Paul felt that this church at Corinth was to be an example to the evil religions around them.

He had been bold with them, to get them to set a good example.

He was proud of these Corinthians who had made a stand for God amid such evil in their city.

The few tribulations (problems), that had come, should make them stronger.

If they could iron out the problems and go on, this would be an example of true Christianity.

He is saying, they should rejoice that the Lord thought them strong enough to face this tribulation and come out of it victorious.

2 Corinthians 7:5 "For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without [were] fightings, within [were] fears."

On Paul's journeys, he had been facing problems all along.

The Jews and the idolaters as well, had tried to do away with Paul.

Here Paul continues the narrative he left off (in 2:13).

When he arrived in Macedonia after leaving Troas, he had no rest for external "conflicts."

The Greek word is used of quarrels and disputes and probably refers to the ongoing persecution Paul faced.

He was also burdened by internal “fears”, the concern he had for the church and the anti-Paul faction prevalent there.

2 Corinthians 7:6 "Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;"

This refers not to the spiritually humble, but to those who are humiliated.

Such people are lowly in the economic, social or emotional sense.

This is almost a problem by problem recollection of Paul's.

When Titus came to him, he was encouraged.

God always sends someone to build us up, when we get really down.

2 Corinthians 7:7 "And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more."

The good news that Titus had brought was, that the people at the church at Corinth loved Paul.

He had been harsh with them, but they realized it was because he loved them.

Paul had been concerned about how the church at Corinth had received his letter.

Titus brought good news.

The response from the Corinthians came in 3 ways:

1. “Earnest desire”, they longed to see Paul again and resume their relationship with him;
2. “Mourning”, they were sorrowful over their sin and the breach it created between themselves and Paul;
3. “Zeal”, they loved Paul to such a degree that they were willing to defend him against those who sought to harm him, specifically the false teachers.

2 Corinthians 7:8 "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though [it were] but for a season."

Paul had felt badly about the letter of correction he had sent them.

He realizes now, that even though it hurt temporarily, it was the right thing to do.

They had repented and straightened out the problem.

2 Corinthians 7:9 "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing."

Paul did not regret sending them the letter, even though it caused them sorrow, because he knew that sorrow over their sin would affect in them repentance leading to obedience.

Yet Paul did regret having sent it for a brief time while awaiting Titus' return, fearing that his letter was too harsh, and that he might have driven them further away from him.

In the end, he rejoiced because the letter accomplished what he had hoped.

2 Corinthians 7:10 " For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

The "Godly sorrow" refers to sorrow that is according to the will of God and produced by the Holy Spirit.

True repentance cannot occur apart from such a genuine sorrow over one's sin.

"Repentance":

This is at the very heart of and proves one's salvation: unbelievers repent of their sin initially when they are saved, and then as believers, repent of their sins continually to keep the joy and blessing of their relationship to God.

"Sorrow of the world worketh death":

Human sorrow is unsanctified remorse and has no redemptive capability.

It is nothing more than the wounded pride of getting caught in a sin and having one's lusts go unfulfilled.

That kind of sorrow leads only to guilt, shame, despair, depression, self-pity and hopelessness.

People can die for such sorrow.

2 Corinthians 7:11 "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, [what] clearing of yourselves, yea, [what] indignation, yea, [what] fear, yea, [what] vehement desire, yea, [what] zeal, yea, [what] revenge! In all [things] ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter."

Paul is just saying he is pleased that they have repented in all areas where they needed to, and are completely forgiven.

There is nothing against their record.

They are completely cleared.

This verse provides a look at how genuine repentance will manifest itself in one's own attitude.

“Carefulness”:

Better translated “earnestness or eagerness.

It is the initial reaction of true repentance to eagerly and aggressively pursue righteousness.

This is an attitude that ends indifference to sin and complacency about evil and deception.

Paul is just saying he is pleased that they have repented in all areas where they needed to, and are completely forgiven.

There is nothing against their record.

They are completely cleared.

“What clearing of yourselves”:

This is a desire to clear one's name of the stigma that accompanies sin.

The repentant sinner restores the trust and confidence of others by making his genuine repentance known.

“Indignation”:

This is often associated with righteous indignation and holy anger.

Repentance leads to anger over one's sin and displeasure at the shame it has brought on the Lord's name and His people.

“Fear”

This is reverence toward God, who is the One most offended by sin.

Repentance leads to a healthy fear of the One who chastens and judges sin.

“Vehement desire”:

Could be translated “yearning”, or a “longing for”, and refers to the desire of the repentant sinner to restore the relationship with the one who was sinned against.

“Zeal”:

Refers to loving someone or something so much that one hates anyone or anything that harms the object of this love.

“Revenge”:

Or vindication could be translated “avenging of wrong”, and refers to the desire to see justice done.

The repentant sinner no longer tries to protect himself; he wants to see the sin avenged no matter what it might cost him.

And finally, “To be clear in this matter”:

This is the essence of repentance is an aggressive pursuit of holiness, which was characteristic of the Corinthians.

The Greek word for “clear” means “pure” or “holy”.

They demonstrated the integrity of their repentance by their purity.

2 Corinthians 7:12 "Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, [I did it] not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you."

God would have held Paul responsible, if he had known of this terrible sin in the church, and had not done anything about it.

This was not just a misdemeanor.

The sin was fornication, which had been specifically mentioned as one of the four things required of the Christians to abstain from.

Paul had written to help the whole church, not just specifically for the one man who was the “him” or the leader of the mutiny in the Corinthian church.

2 Corinthians 7:13 "Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all."

Titus had been well treated by the church in Corinth.

Paul was very pleased with that, and with the good news that Titus had brought about the church.

2 Corinthians 7:14 "For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which [I made] before Titus, is found a truth."

Paul had given the truth to Titus.

Paul had every confidence in the church at Corinth, and they did not let him down.

Paul said that what he said was not to boast, but to state a fact.

2 Corinthians 7:15 "And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him."

Paul is still speaking of Titus here.

Titus was overjoyed that the church there at Corinth had received Paul's message so well and had repented of their sin.

They were in obedience to Paul.

This obedience to Paul showed Titus that these people in Corinth had real character.

The "fear and trembling" is reverence toward God and a healthy fear of judgment.

2 Corinthians 7:16 "I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all [things]."

This is just Paul saying one more time how pleased he was at their attitude.

He reminds them he has confidence that they would do the right thing.

He is sure that they will continue to walk in the light and is confident they will follow the teachings he has given them.

2 Corinthians Chapter 7 Questions

1. What are these promises?
2. Why do you suppose most people do not like to speak of holiness?
3. Who is the only one who can do this cleansing?
4. What 3 things did Paul say, he had not done to any man in verse 2?
5. Paul did not say these things to _____ them.

6. Why did Paul feel that he was part of whatever they were?
7. Who was this church at Corinth to be an example for?
8. What was an example of true Christianity they did?
9. What did Paul face in his journeys?
10. What comforted Paul?
11. Paul had made them sorry with what?
12. What caused Paul to rejoice?
13. Godly sorrow worketh _____.
14. In verse 11 what emotions had this stirred up in the people?
15. Who had Paul written this letter for?
16. How had the church at Corinth treated Titus?
17. Even Paul's boasting was _____.
18. Paul had confidence in them in _____.
19. Paul was pleased with their _____.