

## II Corinthians Lesson 07

II Cor. Chapter 7

*Distributed by: KJV Bible Studies*

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Memory verses for this week: *1 Pet 5:8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

**Introduction:** Last week in Chapter 6, Paul elaborated on what faces the man of God who is involved in the true gospel ministry. Paul had faced more tribulations than any one we had record of in the New Testament with the exception of Jesus Christ. The chapter begins with a conclusion of what Paul has written over the last several chapters concerning spiritual cleansing and the pursuit of holiness. The remainder of the chapter returns essentially to where he left off in chapter 2.

### I. Perfecting Holiness

*2 Cor 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.*

Before moving on, Paul reiterates what he has written in the past several chapters, particularly God's promises therein. Throughout the previous chapters he spoke of promises such as the liberty of the gospel, the promise of a heavenly home and body, the promise of being a new creature in Christ, and God's promise of blessing for separation from the world. No doubt others could be mentioned as well. In light of the precious promises of God, Paul urged his Corinthian brethren to cleanse themselves of any impurity in their lives.

He specified not only "filthiness of the flesh," which usually is obvious, but the much more subtle and not-so-obvious sins of the spirit. These range from sins of omission to a foul attitude, to bitterness, to rebellion to name a few. We rather are enjoined to perfect "holiness in the fear of God."

Because of the great promises we have from God, we should have a desire to keep ourselves pure and perfect before the Lord. We know that in this old body, we will never reach perfection, but we should strive each day to bring it under subjection. That is what the verse about taking up our cross daily is all about. Bringing the body under subjection that we might live according to the perfect will of God. Paul urges those in the church there in Corinth to cleanse themselves from anything that would defile the flesh or spirit. Sin is the thing that brings us

down and under bondage. Once we are saved, we should never fall back under the bondage of sin. I believe that if we see God with the proper “fear”, a fear like a son fears his father out of respect, we will seek this “perfect holiness”. We see that by sin, we can dishonor the Lord in our bodies.

*Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.*

*Luke 9:24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.*

## **II. Joy of the Apostle over the Corinthian’s Conduct**

*2 Cor 7:2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.*

*2 Cor 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.*

*2 Cor 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 now shifts back to where he left off before he launched into his thoughts and concerns about the ministry. He picks up from where he digressed in chapter 2 and verse 13. With the exception of occasional bursts of doctrinal light, the remainder of the chapter is largely personal in nature as he seeks to smooth ruffled feathers at Corinth. Recall that earlier in the book, Paul sought to explain why he had delayed his promised coming to Corinth. He thus continues the thought left dangling in 2:13. Paul makes mention of what he had interjected in 6:11- 13 and pled with them to once again open their hearts to him.

Paul appeals to the Corinthians to show love towards him because of how much labor he had put forth towards them. In all things, he had preached with honesty and had never defrauded anyone. All Christians should be known as honest and upright people, as we are commanded to let our yea be yea, and our nay be nay. Paul had a great love for these people in his heart, and was willing to both die or live for them. That should be our determination also. If God called us to die, to be willing to do so. But at the same time, if we can, live a life of honor and glory for God. Paul had suffered much, but he counted it all joy.

In verse 3, Paul reemphasizes that he wasn’t writing to condemn them. To the contrary, as he had said in 6:11-12, they were in his heart. If need be, he would die with them or live with them. That was the height of love for them. He had been very frank with them because he loved them. As he had, at such great length, described the ministry with its perils, he thus reminds them;” I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation”. The implication is that some at Corinth had questioned God’s hand upon him because of all the trouble he faced. That in part is why he had gone to such lengths to describe and defend

his ministry. In light of that, he was filled with encouragement and even rejoiced in all his troubles.

*2 Cor 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.*

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

Paul talks of the many tribulations he faced in Macedonia. We think of these men of old as some sort of supermen that could just rise above whatever befell them. That is a false view. They were human, flesh and blood, that suffered and feared and looked to God for strength just like we have to do today. When you look at Paul's life, it was full to trials and heartaches. He was troubled on every side because he delivered the true Gospel message of how Christ was crucified, buried, and risen again on the third day according to the scriptures. Like Paul and Titus, we need to learn to accept being "cast down". God used Titus to come to him to comfort him when he was down and out. Sometimes a fellow Christian brother or sister can be such an encouragement to us.

*Prov 15:23 A man hath joy by the answer of his mouth: and a word spoken in due season, how good is it!*

Paul returns to his reasons for not coming to visit them sooner. It, in considerable measure, had to do with the delay in meeting Titus. Recall from 2:13 when Titus did not return to Troas (in Asia Minor) as he had anticipated, Paul instead traveled across the Aegean Sea to Macedonia (perhaps Philippi) looking for him there. He refers to that situation, to which the Corinthians evidently already were somewhat aware. "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".

Upon arriving there, things had only worsened for Paul and his associates. It is insightful that one of the greatest Christians of all time went through difficult times. He lacked both joy and peace. Accordingly, he wrote how that he there had no rest. There was trouble on all sides. There may have been opposition or persecution not otherwise recorded. In any event, he indicated there was hostility toward him from unnamed sources as well as internal fears.

In verse 6, Paul once again touches upon the wonderful truth that God is the God of all encouragement. God sent them encouragement by the arrival of Titus. They may have feared the worst when he could not be located. However, God lifted their spirits in bringing him back to them. Moreover, it very well may be that Titus, in coming from Corinth, brought news of their repentance and the positive reception of his first epistle. That added joy on top of encouragement. God has a wonderful way of bringing encouragement in times of despair.

J. Vernon McGee had this to say about verses 5 – 6.

Paul gets very personal when he says, “When we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.” This is so personal I almost feel that we shouldn’t read it. But God used a man to comfort Paul: “Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.”

You could help some dear saint of God and be a comfort to him. My friend, when was the last time you went to your preacher and put your arm on his shoulder and said, “Brother, I’ve been praying for you. I see that you are working hard and standing for the things of God, and I just want you to know I am standing with you.” He would appreciate that. Paul continues: “And not by his [Titus’] 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.” In other words, “You comforted Titus and Titus comforted me.”

*2 Cor 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.*

*2 Cor 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 was thrilled at Titus’ arrival. But he also was delighted by the report which Titus brought of the attitude of most toward Paul. He was blessed by their “earnest desire” (i.e., warm regards), their repentant spirit (their mourning from the confrontational portions of I Corinthians), and their fervent spirit toward Paul. In light of all this wonderful news, Paul rejoiced the more.

He realized the sharpness of I Corinthians had shaken some in the Corinthian church. And though he, in retrospect, had initially regretted that, upon learning of their repentance there from, he no longer regretted having written what he did.

When Paul heard the report from Titus, it really lifted his spirit. You remember the man who had been committing fornication with his mother in law. Paul had condemned them for not dealing with this issue in his first letter, and now Titus reports that the church had dealt with it, and the man had been restored to fellowship. I think the human perspective in Paul came out here when he speaks of how he repented from the harsh letter he had written. But notice, he says he did it for their benefit. It was harsh for a season, but then it brought the man back into fellowship. Sometimes hard tough things have to be done. It won’t be easy when we do it, but we are blessed when we do things God’s way.

*2 Cor 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.*

Godly repentance produces the kind of repentance that seeks to correct the wrong. This is what God wants. A change of direction, an acceptance that we were wrong, we wronged a Holy and Righteous God, and we now turn from sin to walk in the right path.

Paul comes to the spiritual point he is driving at. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance". He rejoiced at the repentance which had taken place in their hearts, not that they had been shaken thereby. He continued, "for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing". His point is that God used his epistle to bring them to repentance.

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

*2 Cor 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.*

The sorrow of the world is that they were put to shame for being found out. That is not godly sorrow, but the kind that works death and ruin. The world's way is the way of death. God's way is a change, and a turning to life. We know that the man who was involved in the gross sin turned from it, and came, and sought forgiveness of the people in the church. This is godly sorrow that came after Paul's written rebuke in the first Corinthian letter.

They no longer tolerated evil within the church, and that made the church holy and acceptable before God. Is there never sin in our lives once we are saved? Of course there is still sin. But when we falter, we confess and seek God's forgiveness. We don't use our salvation for a reason to serve the flesh.

*1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

*1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

*1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

This occasions the Apostle to state a sound fact regarding the principle of repentance. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be

repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death". Godly sorrow (literally, 'the sorrow according to God') produces repentance which leads to salvation. It is never regretted. However, the sorrow of the world leads only to death. The world regrets getting caught. Godly sorrow regrets the sin and it produces a change of heart regarding the sin. It causes a turning from the sin and unto God.

There is a sequential development therein. (1) Godly sorrow (over sin) leads to (2) true repentance which precedes (3) salvation and (4) is never regretted. The world is sorry it got caught, but sneaks back to its old sin thereafter, leading to the wages of sin.

In verse 11, Paul rehearses the sequence of events which took place amongst his Corinthian brethren after they had read his first epistle (I Corinthians). "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort." As a result, "In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." They appropriately dealt with it and cleared up the problem. Though initially slow to react, the church had, in due course, properly dealt with the problem of serious open sin in their ranks.

*2 Cor 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.*

Though he had been quite sharp in his first epistle, Paul determined now to be gracious. He had been forceful in I Corinthians 5:13. However, he writes now that he had so done, not so much on account of the wrong doer, nor others offended thereby, but rather for the good of the church and to show his concern for them. The ultimate purpose of church discipline is for the good of the church. It is not primarily punitive against the sinner.

Paul recognized that the church had to deal with the problem of open sin in the church or it would destroy the church. The entire assembly would have become corrupted and defiled.

*1 Cor 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*

*1 Cor 5:7 Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:*

*1 Cor 5:8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*

While being concerned in keeping the church pure, Paul explains that the purpose of the first letter was not so much to secure the punishment of the guilty person in the church as it was to demonstrate the care and love he had for the whole church. We individually, make up the members of the church. But the

whole church's benefit was Paul's chief concern. God wants his church to be a pure and perfect church.

*Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

*Rev 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

*Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

*Rev 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.*

*2 Cor 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.*

*2 Cor 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.*

To Paul's relief, the church had received his admonition in this problem well. He thus wrote, "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". Paul then adds a note to hopefully dispel any fears of the Corinthians regarding what Paul may have told Titus about them. Paul purposefully uses the word boast or boasting. Both have the sense of 'glorying' or 'rejoicing.' His thought is that he had boasted to Titus regarding them. He was ashamed of nothing which he had said about them. Even as he had spoken the truth to them, so spoke he to Titus. Their repentance was thus well founded.

*2 Cor 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.*

*2 Cor 7:16 I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.*

Paul went on to comment regarding his inner feelings remembering their obedience and how with fear and trembling they received him. He made mention that Titus had an even greater warm spot in his heart toward them. He well remembered their obedience to Paul and how they received him with open arms. The Apostle concludes this section by commenting, "I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things". Paul paid them a strong compliment in noting his confidence in them. He continued his attempts to build rapport which might have been strained. Moreover, he is about to touch upon another sensitive

matter in the coming section.

Paul basically concludes that he has been comforted by their good conduct there in the church. It had truly blessed Paul when he learned of the way they had blessed Titus when he visited the church. Paul had boasted earlier to Titus that they were a sound church at heart and desired to do the will of God. Every true church of Jesus Christ should so desire to do the will of God. That takes soul searching and seeking the leadership of God in each of our lives. Paul feels great that his boasting had proven true. He rejoices in the last verse saying that he has confidence in all things that they might do. We need to be people who can be trusted and be dedicated to the work of the Lord. The bible teaches that God blesses those who are faithful.

*Luke 16:10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.*

*Luke 16:11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?*

*Luke 16:12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?*

*Prov 25:19 Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint.*

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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