



Daily Bible Habit

II Corinthians

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Focus Points...*For II Corinthians 7*

Stop And Consider...

- * How the focus of Paul's letters to the Corinthians was not just to keep them in the Gospel, but to urge them to holy living.

Listen...

- * To Paul as he shares his joy with the responsive Corinthians who have stayed in faith.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, You have called all of us by grace to Your salvation. As I read II Corinthians 7, help me also to see that Your calling is also a calling to holiness and purity of living. As I live each day in Your grace, sanctify and purify me that I may fulfill Your holy calling for me. Amen.

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Commentary:

It is hard not to see Paul's defensiveness in 7:1ff. He had already spent several chapters commending his ministry and encouraging the Corinthians to remain in faith. Chapter 7:1-2 continues his appeal.

"Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God. Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one."

Apparently, the vehement attacks on Paul's character had to be countered. Reminding the Corinthians of his upright behavior, Paul hoped that the Corinthians would not give up their confidence in Christ. It would be an even greater shame if they gave up their faith based on lies and misrepresentations about him.

One of the clearest indications of how the Corinthians received Paul's first letter is in 7:8-9.

"I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us."

Paul's previous letter had caused a lot of pain. Some people were enraged by Paul's bold words of rebuke. Those who were enraged attacked Paul for being hurtful, mean and destructive. Since they didn't like Paul or his message, they engaged in character assassination. Others, however, heeded Paul's teaching and repented of their evil. Of them Paul wrote,

“See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.” (7:11).

Ah, victory! Finally! What great news Paul had as he described how the Corinthian Church had just turned the corner of transformation and renewal in faith. Their attitude was such that Paul was greatly encouraged.

“In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me.” (7:13-14)

Yes, God's Spirit was at work healing the Corinthian Church. Paul's reputation was being repaired even as Titus and the others in ministry at Corinth were refreshed. Now that changes had been made, repentance expressed, and support given for their pastors, Paul had much to be thankful for.

As he commended the Corinthians in 7:16, Paul could breathe a little easier knowing that the Corinthian Church was going to be OK. “I am glad I can have *complete* confidence in you.”

Do you, like the believing Corinthians, support your pastor and other ministers? It's so important. So *very* important!

PRAYER:

Lord of the Church, You have provided prophets, teachers, evangelists and so many other ministers to oversee and direct Your Church. Give me a grateful heart that I may respect, honor and love those who labor on Your behalf. Give me opportunities that I may express my appreciation for their continued prayers and ministry to me and others. When times are difficult, fortify them so that they will proclaim Your Word boldly, discipline those who need disciplining, and offer reconciliation, counsel and encouragement to all in their ministry...including me. In Your name I pray. Amen.

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