

Lesson Seven

(6:3 — 7:1)

3 We put no obstacle in any one's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, 4 but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, 5 beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watching, hunger; 6 by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, 7 truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; 8 in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as imposters, and yet are true; 9 as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

11 Our mouth is open to you, Corinthians; our heart is wide. 12 You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted in your own affections. 13 In return — I speak as to children — widen your hearts also.

V. 3 — This verse introduces another consideration of Paul's personal service, especially of the fact that he, on his part, was making every attempt not to be a stumbling block for anyone, and perhaps being a means of thwarting the grace of God. See Matthew 18:1ff., Luke 17:1ff.

We now begin considering "the ministry" of Paul, viewed from his personal prospective in regard to 1) objective (external) circumstances, 2) subjective (internal) attitudes, 3) preparations for said service, and 4) public judgments of it, and all these in behalf of others for Jesus' sake, 4:5. Some analyze these as 1) physical, 2) mental and 3) spiritual.

obstacle — The Greek term is one which meant an object which caused one to stumble. Read I Timothy 4:11-16; II Timothy 2:24-26.

fault — See here the idea of "faultless" as in Ephesians 5:27; Philippians 2:14-15; Hebrews 9:14; I Peter 1:19; Revelation 14:5.

V. 4 — **servants of God** — We do well to remember that God is sometimes misunderstood for various reasons, and so it will be with his servants.

Viewed by Paul, the various things he mentions were but what should be taken as commendations of the ministry, rightly seen. In a larger sense, the whole epistle was written for this self-same purpose: a commendation of Paul's service.

commend — "Set ourselves forth" as God's men. This idea parallels the idea of co-worker in v. 1 as the ways in which the "beseeching" of 5:20 is done.

endurance — Some consider that this word sums up the next several things mentioned. It is often translated "patience" in Bible versions. See then Romans 2:7; 5:4; 15:4; Colossians 1:11; II Thessalonians 1:14; James 1:3-4, 12; 5:11; II Peter 1:6; Revelation (the Martyr's book) 1:9; 3:10; 13:10. See also ch. 1:6.

afflictions — Recheck 4:17; 1:6, 8; 2:4.

hardships — The common, inescapable trials of living.

calamaties — Some of these were seen in 4:8-10, and in ch. 11.

V. 5 — **beatings** — more than one!

imprisonments — Some of these turned out profitable (Phil. 1; Phile. 1), but he always wanted out, Hebrews 13:18-19. In Paul's case, it was faith over physical liberty.

tumults — Any variety of disorder, mob violence, etc. as Acts testifies.

labors — The toils of everyday life; plus those of being God's co-worker.

watching — Probably sleepless nights, either from the sundry cares of the ministry or in the "tight spots" mentioned above.

hungry — Seemingly forced upon him rather than just fasting,

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per se.

V. 6 — **purity** — One of the inner qualities/attitudes necessary to effective service. Root for "saint."

knowledge — What is meant is anybody's guess, but it might be in reference to his message, or the basic structure upon which he built.

forbearance — The word often is well translated as "long-suffering," and deals primarily with people relationships.

kindness — The opposite of severity, and a companion virtue to forbearance. See Romans 2:4; Ephesians 2:7; Titus 3:4.

The next four qualities are not in single terms, but double terms:

Holy Spirit — Somewhat better taken as "a holy spirit" meaning that Paul's "inner man" was not characterized by deceit, etc. See 2:17; 4:2.

genuine love — As Romans 12:9, a love unfeigned and not hypocritical.

V. 7 — **truthful speech** — Again, a claim to basic honesty and a message void of falsehood.

power of God — See Romans 15:15-21; especially v. 18.

weapons — Akin to Ephesians 6:10ff., and perhaps the means to exhibit God's power in the exact way needed.

These next three verses likely present the differing ways the co-worker of God was viewed:

V. 8 — **honor/dishonor** — These are apparent states in life (cf. Rom. 9:21; II Tim. 2:20), when the same set of circumstances are viewed through the eyes of people, some opposed, some sympathetic.

ill repute/good repute — Many verses in this epistle deal with integrity, conscience, motives, etc.

imposters/true — Some people refused to (even) hear (cf. Acts 22); others traveled miles to serve Paul (Acts 28).

V. 9 — **unknown/well-known** — As in Acts 9; I Corinthians 4; Galatians 1; Philippians 4, or with no credentials, etc.

dying/live — Paul's effort was to be absorbed by and into Christ, existing to serve others, Galatians 2:20; Mark 10:45.

punished/killed — The paradoxes of the Christian life are scarcely appreciated by the non-Christian.

V. 10 — **sorrowful/rejoicing** — Note that Paul had personal reasons to have these attitudes of mind, and also attempted to share the similar experiences of others. Cf. Romans 12:15.

poor/rich — Certainly the people of God, whose earthly wealth is often given over to the use of others, and who count riches more in things unseen than things seen, are rarely perceived as having riches. Note Hebrews 10:32ff.; Luke 9:57ff.; Revelation 3:14ff.; II Corinthians

4:16ff.; etc.

nothing/everything — The Christian, whether Paul or whoever, ideally believes that Christ possessed is enough, and the whole world without Christ is nothing, even as Jesus taught, Matthew 5:3-12; 16:24-26; Luke 12:1-59; I Corinthians 1:5; 3:18ff.; II Peter 1:3-11.

V. 11 — This verse is probably best understood to mean that Paul had been open and forthright with the Corinthians, quite willing to accept them, faults and all, because he loved them as a father loves children (see I Thess. 2:11-12) and had suffered much for them personally. They need then to love him in like manner.

V. 12 — The problem in the relationship between the church at Corinth and the apostle was not with him, but rather with them. Hence (v. 13) they are encouraged to return/repay what Paul had given them: love and acceptance; to open up their affections for him. They had been too confining (the word is the same as in v. 4 "calamities," narrow, constricted places) with their willingness to receive him.

QUESTIONS:

42. Why did Paul commend himself?
43. What difference did the death of Jesus make in Paul's life? Will it do the same for us?
44. How complete is the "conversion process" upon one's life?
45. What contrasts are in v. 21?
46. How can God's grace be made "in vain"?
47. Does 6:3-10 describe a life committed to Jesus?

SECTION X 6:14 — 7:1

14 Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? 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 move among them,
and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them,
says the Lord,

and touch nothing unclean: then I will welcome you,

18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and

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daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

7 Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God.

V. 14 — This verse picks up the idea presented in 6:1 concerning the grace of God which brought about their salvation, and couples up with the particular point of making that grace of no profit (i.e., vain/empty). It is the same idea as in Romans 5:20-21, where grace is said to abound where sin abounds, but yet we are not to sin so that grace may abound more, 6:1ff. Why? Because a life of sinfulness rather than of Christian living will effectively nullify grace, make it vain, useless. God cannot and will not save us if we choose not to be saved.

So then, the picture is this: Christ and Satan are opposites; each and all Christians are in Christ's body, the church (temple of God, v. 16) and thus stand opposite to any and all unbelievers who serve Satan, the god of this world, 4:4. Since Jesus and Satan understandably have nothing in common, neither should the Christian and the non-Christian. It is to be noted that the contrast is between those in the body and not in the body, not between various "parts" of the body. Termination by the congregation/church of fellowship with one of its members is just that: body vs. individual member rather than member to member, and as a subject is not treated in this text. See I Corinthians 5.

What we have here is the individual member and his/her participation in things apart from what should characterize a Christian.

See the contrasts, none of which are considered possible: righteous/iniquity, light/darkness, Christ/Belial, believer/unbeliever, temple/idol.

To state the possibilities is to see clearly what must not be, if Christians are to enjoy what God has promised to all who are reconciled to him, 5:19-20. Hence, the only thing to do is cleanse self of any defilement, perfecting holiness, etc., 7:1.

mismatched — Unequally yoked, such as would be true if Jesus and Satan were "yoke-fellows." See Deuteronomy 22:10; Leviticus 19:19. Ephesians 5:3-20 is a fine parallel passage to this text. Note the I Corinthian letter with its various admonitions about being "in the world but not of it," such as 5:9ff.; 6:1ff.; 7:1ff.; 8:1ff.; 10:14-22, 23 — 11:1; etc.

partnership — No "having together" of these things, no common possessions. We are the righteousness of God in Christ who became sin/iniquity in our behalf.

fellowship — Our word “koinonia” which is about synonymous with the preceding word. Many texts deal with light/darkness, such as Ephesians 5; Acts 26:18; Romans 13:12; II Corinthians 4:6; I Thessalonians 5:5-8; I Peter 2:9. I John 1:5-10 would be good to read here.

V. 15 — **accord** — The word is transliterated as “symphony” in English. It has the idea of harmony, making together the same sounds, etc. Without a dissenting voice, Christ and Belial (Epithet for Satan) have not accord!

in common — not one believer has a “part” (= Greek word) with an unbeliever, since they are citizens of differing kingdoms, etc. The Psalmist said it well in Psalm 1, didn't he?

agreement — No “voting” to agree (cf. Luke 23:51), since the church is God's temple, I Corinthians 3:16, and idolatry is anti-God (first commandment), destructive of the “temple of God”; results in God destroying such person, I Corinthians 3:17. If anyone should have known about temples, it was the Corinthians. Some of them had been there, I Corinthians 6:9-11. Compare I Corinthians 10:14-22.

“I will live in them” — So God had promised and prophesied in the Old Testament. Check Exodus 25:8; 29:44-46; Leviticus 26:11ff.; II Samuel 7:8-14; Isaiah 52:11; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 20:34; 37:27; and the whole book of Leviticus, the theme of which is “Be holy, because I, the Lord your God, am holy.” Hebrews 12:14 says, “Strive . . . for holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.”

V. 17 — This verse, too, combines many texts in the Old Testament, and causes one to think of God's call to Abraham in Genesis 12:1, “Go . . .” (Get out!).

V. 18 — God considered Israel in many ways, one of which was as a son, Exodus 4:22; Jeremiah 31:9. If the people of God became defiled, they also ceased to be “sons and daughters.” It is interesting that Paul, often accused of being negative about women, should include the specific idea of “daughters” in this array of quotes from the Old Testament. There is nothing so fine as being possessed by God! Wonder why we act as if it were so bad?

7:1 — Christians are the dwelling place of God in the spirit, Ephesians 2:22, this temple. We have (present possession) these promises. Since this is so, the “containers” must be like the “contained”: holy. Moreover, having such great and precious promises (Heb. 11:39 — 12:2; II Pet. 1:4) as these (spelled out in 6:16-18), it is imperative that certain things be done: cleansing of self, perfecting of holiness.

cleanse — From a term meaning to sanctify, to prune away, etc. See Matthew 23:25; Mark 1:44; 7:19; John 2:6; Acts 10:15; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 1:3; 9:22; II Peter 1:9. So, remove causes of defilement from your lives.

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defilement — A word which means “to stain,” then that which stains. Here then, whatever would stain and cause God to reject would need to be removed. Note then again I Corinthians 5, and our immediate text. Consider the word in I Corinthians 8:7; Revelation 3:4; 14:4.

flesh and spirit — From the viewpoint of this text, the human is indissoluble, even if at other places the human is treated otherwise.

make (holiness) perfect — The Greek term is rather common in the New Testament with the basic idea of completing, becoming mature, finishing out, etc. Here it conveys the idea of “working out” (Phil. 2:12-13) or bringing to perfectness (Eph. 4:13), adding to (II Pet. 1:3ff.). Recheck Ephesians 5:3ff.; plus Colossians 2:20 — 3:17.

QUESTIONS:

48. If a Christian did not live as 6:14 — 7:1 indicates a Christian should, would God’s grace be made “vain”?
49. What groups are discussed in our text: Christian/non-Christian or Christian/Christian?
50. If the Christian lives as God directs, what will God do for that Christian?
51. Will the Christian ever do any of the things a non-Christian does?
52. What promises did Paul have in mind? What were the promises to produce?
53. How would one cleanse body and spirit?