

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

IN THIS WORLD, WE EXPERIENCE SUFFERINGS: BUT GLORY IS COMING

SECOND CORINTHIANS

† II CORINTHIANS

An overview of the Book of Second Corinthians, by Given O. Blakely

Lesson #31

COMMENTARY ON: 7:8-12

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

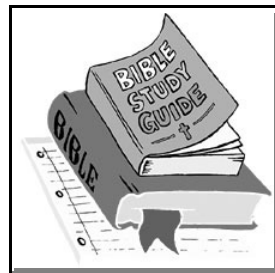
"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

A PROBLEM RESOLVED

When Paul wrote the Corinthians concerning the fornicator that was among them, he was straightforward. The person was not to be tolerated among them. Such conduct would not be overlooked by the Lord. A comely response to that letter, however, was an occasion for great rejoicing, for in their response they exhibited the real nature of spiritual life. Sin had thrust them out of synch with the progressing kingdom of God. Repentance and revenge for their disobedience, however, had brought them back to glorious harmony with the Lord. In this lesson Paul expounds what really occurred in their

2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-2

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"



Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Epistle of Second Corinthians

Lesson Number 31



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO BUILDING THE FAITH AND ENHANCING THE HOPE OF THOSE WHO ARE WORKING OUT THEIR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: AMPLIFIED or AMP = Amplified Bible, (1965), ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), IE = International English, ISV = International Standard Version (1967), JPS = Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LIVING = Living Bible (1971), MONTGOMERY = Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD = Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS = J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT = BISHOP'S New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakh (1985), Webster=The Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS = William's New Testament (1937), TNK = JPS Tanakh (1985), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE= Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

AN EPISTLE WRITTEN TO A CHURCH THAT WAS MOVING AWAY FROM ITS CARNALITY, YET LACKED MUCH INSIGHT. HERE IS A STRONG APPEAL TO PERFECT HOLINESS IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS=UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA=Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT=Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER=Thayer's Greek Lexicon

----- Lexicon and Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

THE PROBLEM RESOLVED

“ 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. 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. ¹⁰ For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 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. 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.” (2 Cor 7:8-12)

INTRODUCTION

Several months after writing his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul is now writing the second. As we read through it, it becomes apparent that the completion of the letter took some time. The report of Titus appears to have been rather lengthy. **While the good news was that some recovery had been made in Corinth, there was also some other news – news that directed the course of the previous chapters, and some of the**

following as well.

There was another side to the report, and it was not a pleasant one. Some of the things he confronted, and which Titus reported, are as follows:

- His change of plans about visiting Corinth had caused some to charge him with levity, or not being serious (2 Cor 1:17).



The discovery of sin within the church is tragic. The report of recovery is glorious– by Given O. Blakely

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- ☛ Remarks had been made about him that was damaging to his character (2 Cor 1:12).
- ☛ Some had charged him with cowardice, saying he was simply unwilling to confront them (2 Cor 1:15-17; 2:1-3).
- ☛ Others said he was unstable, and changed his mind at every little whim (2 Cor 1:23-24).
- ☛ Some criticized him for refusing to receive support from them, as though that was a form of false humility (1 Cor 9:3-18).
- ☛ Some thought he had a critical spirit, and was thoughtless in the manner in which he addressed them (2 Cor 2:1-2; 10:9-10).
- ☛ Still others scoffed at his speech, saying it was too simplistic (2 Cor 11:29).
- ☛ They wondered about his lack of commendatory letters recommending him (2 Cor 3:1-2).
- ☛ They questioned his handling of the Law (2 Cor 3:6-17).
- ☛ Some even suggested he was

dishonest (2 Cor 1:12; 11:10,31).

- ☛ There were doubts about his integrity in the matter of the collections he was gathering (2 Cor 8:18-24).
- ☛ There were even suggestions that he was out of his mind (2 Cor 5:13,16-17; 12:11).

It is no wonder Paul has agitated and assaulted by all manner of inward turmoil. He was not merely aggravated about what they had said and suggested about him, but was concerned for their spiritual welfare. **Whatever a person may think about being in Christ Jesus, there is certainly no allowance for the existence of such attitudes as were found in the Corinthian church.** Whatever freedom we enjoy in Christ Jesus, we are not free to demean the servants of God – particularly uncomely remarks are directed toward those through whom we have believed and made mature in Christ.

Paul's spirit had been agitated and restless because of pondering the Corinthian situation. This agitation was of such significance that even when a door was opened to him by the Lord to preach the Gospel in Troas, because he "had no rest" in his spirit, he left the area and went to Macedonia, hoping to see Titus. He wrote, "Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me, I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said good-by to them and went on to Macedonia" (2 Cor 2:12-13).

SIN AND FAILURE TO GROW IS DISRUPTIVE

The disruptive influence caused by willful deficiency in professed

believers is significant. **Only the coming of the Lord will fully reveal the heartache, pain, and debilitating impact that some failing to "go on to perfect" has had upon godly laborers.** When the Lord comes, He will "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart" (1 Cor 4:5). Too often, men attempt to diagnose spiritual problems in the flesh, giving all manner of explanation for unacceptable attitudes, knowledge, and conduct among professing "Christians." **However, there is no explanation for sin that can reduce its seriousness or enormous implications.**

The books of First and Second Corinthians are as case in point – as well as Galatians, Colossians, James, and Hebrews. Such extensive reasoning and correcting ought not be required – even though it is a mercy that it is. **When God's people do not advance in the faith, so that all manner of sin erupts among them, a most serious condition exists.** That is why the presence of sin and a failure to advance in the faith is always treated with the utmost sobriety and urgency.

Forgiveness for Sin, but NOT Allowance For Its Continuance

In Christ Jesus, God has graciously provided for the forgiveness of sin (1 John 1:7,9; 2:1). However, He has **not** provided for its continuance! Nor, indeed, is there any provision for tolerating its presence, or being indifferent toward it.

As I have said before, there is nothing about salvation – absolutely nothing – that allows for either the eruption of, or continuance in, sin. **Grace does not leave the door to sin standing ajar.** The Holy Spirit does not leave the individual vulnerable to iniquity. The Word of God itself never suggests that

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men may, in fact, dabble with sin, stand aloof from God, or fail to press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. **Where these traits are found God's "great salvation" has been neglected – and about this, there can be no question.** Things related to going "on to perfection," and leaving elementary principles to build upon them, are described as "things that accompany salvation" (Heb 6:9). Further, grace, with all of its marvelous advantages, provides no escape route for those who neglect salvation. Thus, sluggardly professing believers are asked, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation: which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and

At this point, it is necessary to say a word about Apostolic doctrine – particular of its heart and core. Because of the infantile state of the nominal church, there is a great deal of emphasis on unique matters mentioned in certain of the Apostolic writings – particular First Corinthians. There, because of the woeful condition of the Corinthian church, Paul dealt with the disorders and disruptions that were occurring in their assembly. **These corrective instructions did not constitute a statement of New Covenant benefits, but were rather an exposure of the foolishness with which spiritual life was being approached in Corinth.** Permit me to mention a few of the more public issues with which Paul

- ☛ Because of its ministry of edification, exhortation, and comfort, prophecy is the greater gift (1 Cor 14:1-4).
- ☛ A message that cannot be understood by the hearers is of no value whatsoever in the assembly (1 Cor 14:3-6).
- ☛ Things that cannot be understood have no edifying power (1 Cor 14:7-11).
- ☛ The brethren were to seek to excel in edifying the church (1 Cor 14:12-19).
- ☛ The brethren were to be men in their understanding, and not children (1 Cor 14:20).
- ☛ In the assembly, things that cannot be understood are an indication of unbelief, and, as with Israel, are more of a Divine judgment than a blessing (1 Cor 14:21-28; Isaiah 28:7-13, esp v 8).
- ☛ Prophets were to speak one at a time, with no more than three, and in an orderly manner. Interruptions were allowed if something had been revealed to another prophet (1 Cor 14:29-40).

In Thessalonians, hope was the keynote. In Philippians it was joy. In Romans it was faith. In Ephesians it was heavenly things. But in Second Corinthians it is affliction. Much of the affliction referenced in this letter was largely owing to the Corinthian church itself.

was confirmed unto us by them that heard him" (Heb 2:3).

THE THEME OF THIS EPISTLE

In this epistle there is a sort of theme – something that is accentuated. It was the manner of Paul to write in this way. In Thessalonians, **hope** was the keynote. In Philippians it was **joy**. In Romans it was **faith**. In Ephesians it was **heavenly things**. But in Second Corinthians it is **affliction**. Much of the affliction referenced in this letter was largely owing to the Corinthian church itself. **Its miserable condition was a source of the greatest concern to Paul.** As well, in his efforts to restore them, he endured much affliction. Because of this, Second Corinthians is probably the most emotional letter Paul wrote, filled with pleas and passionate expressions. It was the condition of the Corinthian church that dictated this manner of writing.

A WORD ABOUT APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE

dealt.

- ☛ There were coming "together" for "the worse," and not "the better" (1 Cor 11:17).
- ☛ Their gatherings themselves were noted for "divisions" (1 Cor 11:18).
- ☛ They were not coming together to eat the Lord's supper, and therefore he instructed them more perfectly of the intent of that "supper" (1 Cor 11:24-34).
- ☛ He did not want them to be "ignorant" of spiritual gifts, even though they "came behind" in none of them (1 Cor 1:7; 1:31).
- ☛ Although he urged them to "covet earnestly the best gifts," he declared there was a "more excellent way" to approach the matter of serving God and benefitting the brethren – to have "charity" among themselves (1 Cor 13:1-13).

These matters were not an end of themselves. **That is, once these corrections were put in place, that did not make the Corinthians ideal.** The presence of spiritual gifts does not constitute a valid church, but is a means to an end that works in consonance with Divine purpose. Orderliness is the means to an appointed end, and not the end itself.

In the Apostolic doctrine, the Divine objective being realized in salvation and within the church, has been stated in a number of ways. There is no provision for any procedure, teaching, or activity that does not contribute to these appointed aims.

- ☛ That God might take out "a people for His name" – a people who have been purified, are peculiarly His, and are "zealous of good works" (Acts 15:14; Tit 2:14).
- ☛ To make us "kings and priests unto

God” (Rev 1:6).

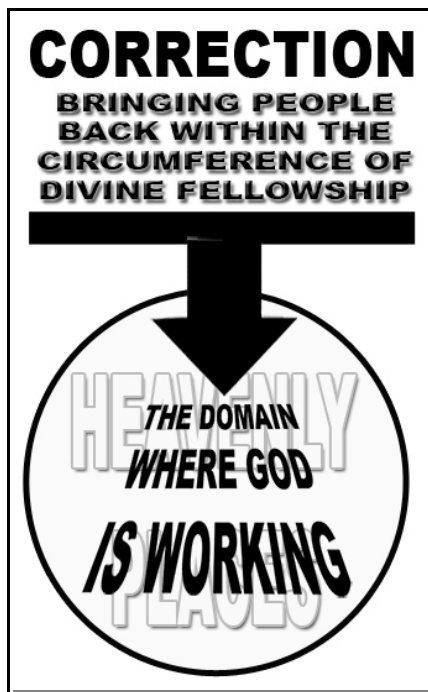
- ☛ That now Christ might dwell in our hearts by faith, that we would be rooted and grounded in love, be able to comprehend the extent of Divine love, and be *“filled with all the fulness of God”* (Eph 3:17-19).
- ☛ Conform the children of God to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29-30; 1 John 3:1-2).
- ☛ For the saints to ultimately inhabit the place God has prepared for them (John 14:1-3; Heb 11:16).
- ☛ To inhabit, and be thoroughly compatible with, the resurrection body (2 Cor 5:1-5).
- ☛ God has called us into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor 1:9).
- ☛ God has called us *“to His kingdom and glory”* (1 Thess 2:12).
- ☛ God has *“called us unto His eternal glory”* (1 Pet 5:10).
- ☛ God has *“called us to glory and virtue”* (2 Pet 1:3).
- ☛ That *“now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God”* (Eph 3:10).
- ☛ That we might inhabit a *“new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness”* (2 Pet 3:13).

Let there be no doubt about this: God is not served, and people are not accepted, where these objectives are not being accomplished! Properly seen, spiritual growth is advancement in these areas – moving closer to the ultimate aim, which is to be presented *“faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy”* (Jude 24). If that does not occur when the Lord appears in glory, then nothing that we have done will work for our good or be recognized as valid.

I do not believe this is generally known in the professed church – at least, if it is, it is not readily apparent. Consider the possibility of a people who

are actually anchored to this world, from which Jesus died to deliver us (Gal 1:4), being in a *“saved”* condition. How can it be that a people that are not in fellowship with Christ and are not actively affiliated with the God of heaven can in any way be acceptable to Him? If there is not advancement in the faith, the culturing of a strong spiritual appetite, and a growing discontent with *“this present evil world,”* precisely what is evidence that can be presented for a person being *“saved?”*

All corrective measures are designed to bring people back within the circumference where God is working, and His objectives for believers are being fulfilled. The aim is not simply to get people to not do what is wrong, and do what is right.



THE AIM OF CORRECTION

The aim of godly correction is not simply to get people to do the right thing – although the right thing is most emphatically to be done! Under the First Covenant, or *“the Law,”* which *“was not of faith”* (Gal 3:12), that may have been sufficient. But this is not the case under the New Covenant. Life in this world was the whole point of the Old Covenant. Nothing within it – absolutely nothing – extended beyond death, or beyond the

grave. There was not promise that did not have to do with life in this world.

Even if we were able to actually do everything we were told, and do it perfectly, Jesus still challenges us with these words: *“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do”* (Luke 17:10). It simply is not possible for the work or activities of man to be the heart of the matter. It seems to me that this is unusually obvious.

In Christ Jesus, there is a new order, and it is blessed to consider. It includes the following.

- ☛ Newness of life (Rom 6:4).
- ☛ A new birth (1 Pet 1:23).
- ☛ We are a *“new creation,”* with old things passing away and all things becoming new (2 Cor 5:17).
- ☛ Deliverance from the power of darkness (Col 1:13a).
- ☛ Translation into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (Col 1:13b).
- ☛ A new heart and a new spirit (Ezek 36:26).
- ☛ The laws of God put into the mind and written upon the heart (Heb 8:10).
- ☛ A *“new man, which is created after God in righteousness and true holiness”* (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10).
- ☛ Being *“made righteous”* (Rom 5:19; 2 Cor 5:21).
- ☛ Being quickened from death in trespasses and sins, raised up, and made to sit together with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph 2:1,6).
- ☛ God sends His Holy Spirit into our hearts, crying *“Abba Father”* (Gal 4:6).

Divine fellowship was never realized under a system of Law, and yet without that element it is not possible to

participate in God's purpose. **It is imperative that the individual come within the holy circumference where Divine workings, fellowship, and acceptance are realized.** If that does not happen, Christ will avail nothing for the individual – nothing at all!

This is precisely why Paul has labored so extensively to bring the Corinthians to sound mindedness. He knew very well that their manners had moved them, at the very best, into the spiritual outer court, which has been given over the Gentiles, and in which spiritual growth **cannot** be realized (Rev

11:2). I realize that this view of things does not comport with the contemporary representations. Of course, the Corinthians had not seen this either, and that is why this fervent letter was written to them.

WHY I HAVE SAID THESE THINGS

I have said these things because of the nature of the text before us. If you do not have some grasp of what I have said, this text will make little or no sense to you. It reflects the nature of real kingdom labors, not mere professional religious activity. There is heart in this passage, as evidenced by passion,

concern, zeal, and truthfulness. You sense that Paul cannot ignore the profound needs of the Corinthians, nor, indeed, can he dismiss their attitude toward him as though it was nothing. This condition exists because of the nature of life in Christ Jesus. Although we are individually *“joined to the Lord”* (1 Cor 6:17), we are also members of Christ's body, being *“every one members one of another”* (Rom 12:5; Eph 4:25). **As such, we are often directly impacted by the attitudes and expressions of other members of “the body.”** This can be a blessing or a burden – perhaps a bit of both, as it made known in this text.

I MADE YOU SORRY, BUT I DO NOT REPENT

^{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.”*

The personal tone of this section stands in stark contrast to the impersonal professionalism that has crept into the church. **Wherever the institution becomes the central thing, the heart is lulled to sleep, and self more easily ascends to the throne of both conscience and thought.** That is because an institution has no life in it.

I MADE YOU SORRY, BUT I DO NOT REPENT

“For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent . . .” Other versions read, *“For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it”* ^{NKJV} *“For though I caused your sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it”* ^{NASB} *“For even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it”* ^{NIV} *“For though my letter gave you pain, I have nor regret for it now”* ^{BBE} *“For if I also grieved you in my letter, I do not regret it”* ^{DARBY} *“For even if I saddened you by my letter, I do not regret it”* ^{NAB} *“So now, though I did distress you with my letter, I do not regret it,”* ^{NJB} and *“For although my letter had hurt you.”* ^{PHILLIPS}

Paul admittedly spoke with great

sternness in his first epistle. Here he acknowledges that he had some regrets about the matter – having to write such a harsh letter.

☛ *“For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you”* (1 Cor 1:11).

3:3).

☛ *“But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self”* (1 Cor 4:3).

☛ *“Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us:*

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☛ *“I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name”* (1 Cor 1:14-15).

☛ *“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”* (1 Cor

and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you” (1 Cor 4:8).

☛ *“Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power”* (1 Cor 4:19).

☛ *“It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one*

should have his father's wife. **And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you**" (1 Cor 5:1-2).

- ☛ **"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"** (1 Cor 5:6).
- ☛ **"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?"** (1 Cor 6:1).
- ☛ **"I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?"** (1 Cor 6:5).
- ☛ **"Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren"** (1 Cor 6:8).

many sleep" (1 Cor 11:30).

- ☛ **"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?"** (1 Cor 15:12).
- ☛ **"Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame"** (1 Cor 15:34).
- ☛ **"But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die"** (1 Cor 15:35-36).

Paul's letter had a calculated effect upon the Corinthians, and rightly so! They had not done well. In this text,

There was only one case mentioned, and it was most grievous. **This is the sole subject of the fifth chapter of First Corinthians.**

It falls under the general heading of *"fornication,"* which covers virtually all unlawful involvement in the *"lust of the flesh."* Sins that fall into this category include sodomy (Lev 18:22; 20:13; Rom 1:24-27; 1 Cor 6:9; 1 Tim 1:10), bestiality (Ex 22:19; Lev 18:23; 20:15,16; 27:21), incest (Deut 27:22-23), intimacy outside of marriage (Lev 18:20; Heb 13:4), rape (Deut 22:25; Lam 5:11), whoredom (Deut 23:17), prostitution (Lev 19:29), and sensuality (Mk 7:22; Rom 7:8; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:19; Col 3:5; 1 Thess 4:5; 1 Pet 4:3; Jude 1:4).

Under the Law, the single word *"adultery"* covered all such transgressions: *"Thou shalt not commit adultery"* (Ex 20:14). The command was expounded in detail in Leviticus 18:20-23, and 20:10-21.

In Corinth, *"fornication"* was a case of *"incest"* – illicit intimacy between family members: *"that one should have his father's wife"* – *"that a man has taken his father's wife"*^{MONTGOMERY} (1 Cor 5:1c). This was a transgression, Paul wrote, that *"is not so much as named among the Gentiles,"* or *"that almost never occurs – even among the people of the world"*^{IE} (1 Cor 5:1b). It was utterly reprehensible, and had to be judged and put from them.

- ☛ It is not possible to **live by faith** and do such a thing!
- ☛ **Walking in the Spirit** will not permit such involvement in this sin (Gal 5:17).
- ☛ **Having hope** in the return of the Lord moves one to turn from such things (1 John 3:3).
- ☛ One's **love for God** will not allow such an indulgence.
- ☛ **Nature** cries out against such a sin.
- ☛ **The Law** pointedly condemned it (Lev 18:8; 20:11; 22:30; 27:20).
- ☛ **The grace of God** effectively teaches

A review of that circumstance will serve to emphasize how the church is to respond to immortality among its members. This is a hallmark example of, what is commonly

- ☛ **"Mine answer to them that do examine me is this, have we not power to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"** (1 Cor 9:3-5).
- ☛ **"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?"** (1 Cor 10:21-22).
- ☛ **"Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse"** (1 Cor 11:17).
- ☛ **"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and**

to make *"sorry"* is to "make one uneasy, grieve, and offend,"^{THAYER} to "cause one to be distressed or sorry," to "pain, grieve, and injure,"^{UBS} and to "vex, annoy, and cause pain or grief."^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

The Particular Matter

The particular matter that Paul now addresses was the case of the Corinthian fornicator. It was a matter that required immediate and resolute action. **A review of that circumstance will serve to emphasize how the church is to respond to immortality among its members.** This is a hallmark example of, what is commonly referred to as, *"church discipline."*

While Paul was away from Corinth, he received a report that there was *"fornication"* among them: *"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you"* (1 Cor 5:1a). He spells out that he did not mean a wave of fornication had swept through a variety of members within the congregation.

men to deny such sins (Tit 2:11-12).

The presence of this sin, therefore, was owing to a deliberate and aggressive choice to sin. Faith, hope, and love, had to be violently thrown to the side. To commit this sin, the love of God had to be suppressed. The cries of nature had to be ignored. The Law had to be despised. And, the grace of God had to be despised, and finally frustrated.

Paul therefore chided the Corinthians for their tolerance of this condition. *“And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you”* (1 Cor 5:2). Perhaps they thought that, what they conceived to be wonderful things happening in their assembly, somehow outweighed the grievousness of this circumstance. Surely the abundance of spiritual gifts would offset this condition. After all, it was only one man! Make sure of this, as the case of Achan proved (Josh 7:1, 18-24), **the sin of a single individual can neutralize the effectiveness of three thousand otherwise effective soldiers** (Josh 7:2-12).

It is for this reason that Paul called for decisive action against the man, and not for an effort to restore him. Even though he was not there in person, Paul had already judged the individual who had committed this deed.

Here is an overview of his instructions. They are straightforward, being clearly stated.

- They were to come together, conscious of the fact that Paul was with them in spirit. *“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor 5:4).
- Their joint purpose was to hand this transgressor over to Satan, withdrawing themselves totally from him: *“To deliver such an one unto Satan”* (1 Cor 5:5a).
- The objective of this judgment was the destruction of his flesh, in which this sin was being committed: *“for the destruction of the flesh”* (1 Cor 5:5c).

- This was necessary in order that the man’s spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, when He comes again: *“that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus”* (1 Cor 5:5d).
- In view of the fact that *“a little leaven leavens the whole lump,”* this man, like *“old leaven”* was to be purged from the church: *“Your glorying is not good. Know ye not*

with those involved in immorality: *“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat”* (1 Cor 5:11).

- Paul told them this did not give them license to judge those who were outside of the church. Those would be

His concern was driven by his understanding of the nature of salvation, and of the disruptive influence of sin when it is found among God’s people. Today, with such great stress being placed upon counseling, this kind of attitude is relatively unknown.

that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven” (1 Cor 5:6-7a).

- This would result in a certain newness that is required to be acceptable to God: *“that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us”* (1 Cor 5:7b).
- This had to do with their observance of the Lord’s supper, which observance was contaminated by the presence of this fornicator: *“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”* (1 Cor 5:8).
- Paul had already written them, saying they should not keep company with fornicators, and that this particularly applied to the church: *“I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators; yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world”* (1 Cor 5:9-10).
- He also instructed them not to *“eat”*

judged by God. However, those within the church were to be judged by them: *“For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person”* (1 Cor 5:12-13).

Paul was concerned with great *“care”* about whether or not the Corinthian brethren would respond in a godly manner to his letter – particular to what he said about the fornicator in their presence. With him, this was not a matter of pride. **His concern was driven by his understanding of the nature of salvation, and of the disruptive influence of sin when it is found among God’s people.** Today, with such great stress being placed upon counseling, this kind of attitude is relatively unknown.

There are matters in which the interest of the whole supercedes the interest of the individual. This very matter was a case in point. The welfare of church itself was of more significance than that of the sinner with which they had to deal. I understand that this cannot be received by some professing believers. Notwithstanding, this is the manner of the kingdom, as Paul will

abundantly clarify shortly.

The Corinthians Were “Made Sorry”

Paul’s letter struck the spiritual nerve center of the Corinthian church. It delivered a decisive blow to their pride, which had caused them to formerly be “puffed up,” rather than “mourn” (1 Cor 5:2). Notwithstanding this sorrow, however, Paul said “I do not repent.” **He knew that the work of the Lord does not revolve around people and their feelings.** Although he had no desire to go about causing sorrow, there were times when this had to be done. **A person or a**

over those who did not keep God’s law: “*Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law*” (Psa 119:136).

- ☛ It is why Jeremiah wept for the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem: “*Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!*” (Jer 9:1).
- ☛ It is why holy Jews “sighed and cried” for the abominations that were

that has labored in the Lord’s vineyard who has not felt this sorrow? Such souls must know that this sorrow does not direct the path of the kingdom laborer. It is very real, but it is not decisive. **The course of the Lord’s work is not to be altered because of the pain associated with it.** I will venture to say that such things are rarely taught to prospective workers for Jesus. Such a circumstance, should it exist, is saddening, for there are some people who must be wounded before they can recover! Thus God says of Himself, “*I wound, and I heal*” (Deut 32:39). Hosea, speaking for Israel, said, “*Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up*” (Hosea 6:1). **Thus, Paul had to strike the Corinthians with a rod before he could apply oil to their heads.**

Although he had no desire to go about causing sorrow, there were times when this had to be done. A person or a congregation that is steeped in sin has no right to be happy, or to feel at ease.

Like it or not, there are some spiritual responses that are calculated to cause grief and sorrow. **This is because recovery from sin always leads through the valley of sorrow.** If our sin caused Jesus sorrow (Isa 53:4), what effect ought they to have upon us?

congregation that is steeped in sin has no right to be happy, or to feel at ease.

Paul fulfilled the proverb of Solomon, “*Faithful are the wounds of a friend*” (Prov 27:6). David knew this to be true when Nathan confronted him about his sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam 12:7-15). That is one reason why he later wrote, “*Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head*” (Psa 141:5).

THOUGH I DID REPENT

“ . . . though I did repent . . . ” Other versions read, “*though I did regret it,*”^{NKJV} “*though I had before,*”^{BBE} “*if even I have regretted it,*”^{DARBY} “*though I was sorry for a time,*”^{NLT} and “*I am not sorry about it now.*”^{IE}

Notwithstanding the fact that Paul was not in a state of repentance and sorry concerning the letter that he wrote, he acknowledges that he was troubled for a time about it. **His great heart took no delight in having to speak in such a manner to the church, but he knew that it had to be done.**

- ☛ This is precisely why David wept

in Jerusalem: “*And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof*” (Ezek 9:4).

- ☛ It is why Jesus “wept over” Jerusalem: “*And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it*” (Luke 19:41).
- ☛ It is also why God affirms of Himself, “*Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*” (Ezek 33:11).

Such sorrow is not intended to be forever! At some point it must give way to the will of the Lord, even when it causes great grief. **Sin is always disruptive.** In the case of the Corinthians, it caused sorrow to erupt in Paul because he had to deal with such miserable conditions as were found among the people of God. Who is there

YOU WERE SORRY FOR A SEASON

“ . . . for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.” Other versions read, “*For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while,*”^{NKJV} “*for I see that I grieved you with that letter, though only briefly,*”^{NRSV} “*for I see that the letter gave you pain, but only for a time,*”^{BBE} “*For I see that that letter, even if it were only for a time, grieved you,*”^{DARBY} “*And I realize that the letter distressed you, but only for a while,*”^{NJB} “*for I know that it was painful for you a little while,*”^{NLT} “*For I perceive that the letter, even if for an hour, did make you sorry,*”^{YLT} “*But it hurt you only for a little while,*”^{LIVING} “*even though for a time it gave you pain, had a salutary effect,*”^{WEYMOUTH} and “*I can see the letter did upset you, though only for a time.*”^{PHILLIPS}

As Paul will substantiate, sorrow is not intended to be an end of itself. Nor, indeed, it is meant to continue without interruption. True sorrow leads to something better. The idea here is twofold.

- ☛ **First,** they sorrowed for a season that

they had fallen into such a snare. However, then they got to the business of correcting that error, refusing to forever “*pine away*” because of their foolishness.

- **Second**, Paul will now speak comforting words to them about this matter. He was sad at first, but is now rejoicing, and he desires the same experience for them.

For the Corinthians, this letter could very well fulfill the psalm, “*For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favor is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning*” (Psa 30:5). Those who “*mourn*” will, according to the promise of Jesus, “*be comforted*” (Matt 5:4). While this certainly applies to all kinds of mourning, it has particular relevance to the mourning that is induced by the conviction of sin.

A WORD ABOUT INSPIRATION

There is something about inspiration and Divine direction that is to be seen here. Within the Christian community, there is a thought floating about that associates a person moved by God to speak with an overriding of the personality. In such a case, the person is perceived as speaking like a kind of robot, with words flowing out of his

This does not all comport with the view of robotic utterances that carry all the weight of a Divine word, yet do not have an effect upon the heart and mind of the speaker. Such views are nothing more than superstition, borrowed from the dark world of occultism.

mouth, and being disassociated from both heart and mind. Certain sectarian circles have heartily embraced this view as though it was from God, imagining that messages are delivered by God to men while the speaker is in a sort of trace. This is view is like that of “channeling,” which is embraced by the cultists – a view than has men speaking while in a state of practical unconsciousness.

If we take this passage to be inspired of God – and who would dare to postulate that it was not – then the whole myth to which I have referred comes tumbling down to the ground. Paul wrote First Corinthians in a state of full discernment. He heard a report, collated it with the truth of God, and wrote with a full consciousness of both the gravity of the situation, and its abrasiveness

against the truth of God as well. It impacted Paul when he wrote the letter, as he had some regrets that he wrote with such strength. He had no desire to inflict damage on the Corinthians, but rather longed for their recovery. However, now it rejoices his heart to know the letter was received, and the matter of the fornicator was handled with godly conviction and discretion.

This does not all comport with the view of robotic utterances that carry all the weight of a Divine word, yet do not have an effect upon the heart and mind of the speaker. Such views are nothing more than superstition, borrowed from the dark world of occultism. We have no use for people who speak without understanding and personal involvement. This is not the Divine manner.

NOW I REJOICE

“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.”

Now Paul confirms the genuineness of the repentance in Corinth. **He measures there repentance by kingdom standards and spiritual norms, for he has repudiated the wisdom of this world.**

NOW I REJOICE

“*Now I rejoice . . .*” Other versions read, “*Now I am glad I sent it,*”^{NLT} and “*I am glad of it now.*”^{WILLIAMS}

This rejoicing pertains specifically to the sending of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians. Now that he has heard of some of its results, he is glad he sent it. This rejoicing is not the general joy in which believers can consistently walk, although it is subordinate to that superior joy. That is, if a person is not rejoicing in the Lord (Phil 4:4), or joying “*in God*” (Rom 5:11), the kind of joy to which Paul now refers is not possible.

This is the kind of joy to which Isaiah referred when he wrote, “*Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil*”

(Isa 9:3). **It is a joy related the effects of the Lord’s working, particularly through faithful servants.** Thus Paul spoke of the Phillippians as being his joy: “*Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved*” (Phil 4:1). The seed that Paul had sown in Corinth was now producing some God-glorifying results, and it was an occasion for joy.

YOU SORROWED UNTO REPENTANCE

“*. . . not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance . . .*” Other versions read, “*your sorrow led to repentance,*”^{NKJV} “*that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance,*”^{NASB}

"your grief led to repentance," ^{NRSV} "you were grieved into repenting," ^{RSV} "your sorrow was the cause of a change of heart," ^{BBE} "your sorrow brought you to repentance," ^{MRD} "you were saddened into repentance," ^{NAB} "the pain caused you to have remorse and change your ways," ^{NLT} "not because it hurt you, but because your pain turned you to God," ^{LIVING} "you were sad enough to change your hearts," ^{IE} "because you were pained into repentance [and so turned back to God]," ^{AMPLIFIED} and "because it made you grieve for things that were wrong, in other words, the result was to make you sorry." ^{PHILLIPS}

Sorrow for sin is not enough. It is a preparative work that leads to a very real recovery and change of ways. This kind of sorry is progressive, leading to something that is of greater value than itself—namely, repentance. The presence of repentance inducts the end of the sorrow that leads to it.

Repentance

Here is a spiritual work that is essential conversion—our initial recovery from sin—and any consequent recovery from a "fall," or being "overtaken in a fault" (Gal 6:1). The word "repentance" comes from the Greek word *μετάνοια* which means, "a change of mind; as it appears in who repents of a purpose he has formed, or something he has done," ^{THAYER} "a change of mind leading to a change of behavior, conversion, turning about," ^{FREIBERG}

Repentance stands between the old and the new. **It is the door of exit from sin, and the door of entrance to righteousness.** Through it, we exit the wrath of God and enter into Divine favor. No recovering change is valid before God that is not preceded by repentance, and no repentance is valid

that is not followed by a change for the better.

Sin causes a disruption between God and man, and therefore "sorrow" for sin cannot be avoided. **In order for a person to sin, the very thought of God must be thrust into the background, and "self" must be exalted to the throne.** It is the conviction of this circumstance that induces great sorrow for sin.

David expressed sorrow in very specific words: "There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin" (Psa 38:3). Again he said, "For I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin" (Psa 38:18).

Sorrow takes place when sin impacts the sinner in the same way that it effects God Almighty. In it, sin becomes offensive, and great regret of any involvement in it envelops the soul. This leads to a firm and unwavering determination to change, turning toward the Lord in conduct as well as in word.

SORRY AFTER A GODLY MANNER

"... for ye were made sorry after a godly manner..." Other versions read, "sorrowful according to the will of God," ^{NASB} "sorrowful as God intended," ^{NIV} "you felt a godly grief," ^{NRSV} "yours was a holy sorrow," ^{BBE} "ye have been grieved according to God," ^{DARBY} "you were saddened in a godly way," ^{NAB} "your distress was the kind that God approves," ^{NJB} "It was the kind of sorrow God wants His people to have," ^{NLT} "you were made sorry toward God," ^{YLT} "You became sad, and that is what God wanted," ^{IE} "for you



felt grief such as God meant you to feel," ^{AMPLIFIED} and "as God would have had you sorry," ^{PHILLIPS}

A "godly manner" cannot be emulated. It is **not** a standard of conduct toward which we strive, hoping to have some measure of success in it. **Rather, this sorrow is induced by a view toward sin that God Himself possesses.** Even a casual acquaintance with Scripture exposes one to the way in which the Living God is effected by sin. The response of God to the sin of Adam and Eve (Gen 3:16-24), Cain (Gen 4:11-15), the world of Noah's day (Gen 6:12-13), the sin of Sodom (Gen 18:20-21; 19:13), the transgression of Israel (Psa 78:59; 106:40), the pride of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 4:30-33), and Jerusalem's rejection of Christ (Luke 13:34-35) leaves no question about the "godly" view of sin.

Although it is true that God desires us to have this sorrowful view toward our involvement in sin, that is not the meaning of this text. As you can see, several versions present this as something God wants us to do. This, however, is an extremely weak and unprofitable view that pushes our thoughts in the wrong direction. **The idea is that this IS the way God is, and no person is in any sense safe who is out of harmony with God.** Any other kind of sorrow is nothing more than a prelude to condemnation, as seen with remarkable clarity in Judas (Matt 27:3; Acts 1:25).

God has left no doubt concerning how He reacts to sin—none at all. The Divine "manner" of viewing sin is not a subject for speculation or philosophizing. Any view of sin that is accommodating, or causes one to be tolerate of its presence, cannot possibly be "after a godly manner." This has some rather

Sorrow takes place when sin impacts the sinner in the same way that it effects God Almighty. In it, sin becomes offensive, and great regret of any involvement in it envelops the soul. This leads to a firm and unwavering determination to change, turning toward the Lord in conduct as well as in word.

wide-sweeping ramifications, but they are to be considered with all sobriety. Any time sin is introduced, seriousness and alertness are called to the table.

DAMAGE BY US IN NOTHING

“ . . . that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.” Other versions read, “that you might suffer loss from us in nothing,”^{NKJV} “in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us,”^{NASB} and “so were not harmed in any way

by us,”^{NIV} “so that you might undergo no loss by us in anything,”^{BBE} “that in nothing ye might be injured by us,”^{DARBY} “so that ye received no detriment from us,”^{MRD} “so you have come to no kind of harm through us,”^{NJB} “so that I need not come to you with harshness,”^{LIVING} “So we didn’t need to discipline you at all,”^{IE} “which prevented you from receiving injury from us in any respect,”^{WEYMOUTH} and “and not merely to make you offended by what we said.”^{PHILLIPS}

In this expression Paul conveys the idea that his purpose was not to hurt them, or cause pain. **That is, the sorrow was not the point, but the repentance to which it led.** It was not that he desired the Corinthians to be in a state of misery. He rather sought their reclamation and restoration to Divine favor. Thus, what appeared to be most harsh at the first, actually proved to be a most timely expression of godly love and concern. Restoring Divine fellowship is wonderful.

GODLY SORROW VERSUS THE SORROW OF THE WORLD

“ ¹⁰ For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

The distinctiveness of “godly sorrow” is seen in its effects. It is part of a God-ordained process in which the Lord

salvation,”^{NJB} and “For godly grief and the pain God is permitted to direct, produce a repentance that leads and contributes to salvation and deliverance from evil.”^{AMPLIFIED}

Sin in any form is like a robber

sin, **WILL** take place. It is not possible to perceive sin as God sees it without an eventual change of mind taking place.

Repentance is from God

The true origin of repentance cannot be questioned. Even though it takes place within man, and involves both his heart and his mind, **it does not originate with man.** The Scriptures are remarkably clear on this matter.



Himself is prominent, and His will is the standard.

**GODLY SORROW WORKS
REPENTANCE UNTO SALVATION**

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation . . .” Other versions read, “godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation,”^{NKJV} “For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance . . . leading to salvation,”^{NASB} “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation,”^{NIV} “For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation,”^{NRSV} “For the sorrow which God gives is the cause of salvation through a change of heart,”^{BBE} “causeth repentance unto salvation,”^{GENEVA} “For, sorrowing on account of God, worketh a conversion of the soul,”^{MRD} “For to be distressed in a way that God approves leads to repentance and then to

that removes things that must be restored. No person can indulge in sin without this loss occurring. Behold a confirmation of this in the words of this text. A godly attitude toward sin is lost when it is committed. That is why a sinner must experience a change that leads out of his current frame of mind and into an acceptable one: from “godly sorrow” to “repentance.”

Previously, the text states that godly sorrow leads into repentance: i.e. “Sorrowed to repentance,” or “sorrow led to repentance”^{NKJV} (7:9). Here, however, repentance is seen as the result of sorrow’s work – as in producing a product, or bringing forth a harvest. In other words, if “godly sorrow” is not aborted by some expression of self-justification, repentance **WILL** occur, and “salvation,” or deliverance from the

- “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).
- “In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim 2:25).
- “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:26).
- “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).

Sin has such an enslaving nature, that deliverance from it must be accomplished by God. Jesus once said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (John 8:34). You may be sure that one who is “the servant of sin” cannot

extricate himself from sin's dominion. He cannot simply change his mind as an act of his will, **for sin has dulled and stunted the will, so that it has no power in matters involving eternity.**

However, in the granting of "repentance," God works within the heart of the sinner, bringing about a certain willingness that can openly be produced by His power. It is written of the day of salvation, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power" (Psa 110:3).

One might counter with the argument that men themselves are required to repent (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20). and therefore it must originate with them. However, this is not solid spiritual reasoning. What of some of the commands issued by Jesus to those who were in certain forms of bondage?

- To a man with a withered hand: "Stretch forth thy hand" (Lk 6: 10).
- To a paralyzed man on a pallet: "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk" (John 5:8).
- To the entombed body of a man who had been dead for four days: "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:43).

When those commands were obeyed, who is the person who will for one moment question the source of the power that enabled the obedience? Is there a single student of Scripture in all of the world who will postulate that the man with the withered hand stretched forth his hand by his own strength? Is it possible that a paralyzed man really had a secret reservoir of strength that enabled him to pick up his bed and walk? Did Lazarus walk out of the grave according to his own power?

Neither, indeed, do men repent under their own power. When it comes to matters of the heart (and both "sorrow" and "repentance" have to do with the heart) man possesses no power of his own. That is why he needs a Savior, an Intercessor, and a Divine Helper!

"Unto Salvation"

"Salvation" is certainly not a subject for speculation. **In this text, we see the effects of sin – that it thrusts one**

away from salvation, so that it must again be appropriated. Now, I approach this subject with great caution, for I have no desire to suggest a person flops in and out of salvation, so that he is "saved" one day and "lost" the next.

There are at least two things that must be seen in this text.

- First, this is addressed to those within the church, and not to those who are without.
- Second, it regards the kind of iniquity that excludes one from entrance into the kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:9-10) – in this case, "fornication," and a tolerance of its presence within the church.

Whatever one may choose to think about salvation, security, safety, and the likes, **there is no spiritual safety of any sort in transgression.** The edge of conviction must not be dulled with the notion that sin is in any way condoned or tolerated by God. That is precisely what moved Paul to say, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at (overlooked ^{NKJV}); **but now commandeth all men every where to repent**" (Acts 17:30). Prior to Jesus putting away sin "by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb 9:26), God appeared to be tolerant of sin, allowing sinners to continue without utterly removing them. However, what appeared to be Divine tolerance was actually God's longsuffering – patiently waiting until His Son would take "away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Once that was accomplished, and a way was provided for God to be "just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," sin at once became intolerable. Whatever one might think of God Himself, once He has provided an atonement, a message that declares it, and a means of appropriating it, **sin can no longer be excused!**

Therefore, the Corinthian church was told that their "sorrow" produced "repentance," and their "repentance" led to "salvation." **Among other things this confirms that after we**

are put into Christ by God Himself (1 Cor 1:30), salvation does not cease to be an issue. Those who are in Christ are told:

- Our salvation is "nearer than when we believed" (Rom 13:11).
- We are "succored" in "the day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2).
- We are to "work out" our own salvation "with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12).
- God has appointed those in Christ Jesus "to obtain salvation" (1 Thess 5:9).
- God's great salvation can be "neglected" by those who possess it (Heb 2:3).
- Jesus will appear "the second time" for salvation (Heb 9:28).
- While we are being "kept by the power of God through faith," we are to understand that our salvation is "ready to be revealed" (1 Pet 1:5).
- Presently, although we do not see Jesus, yet believing, we rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls" (1 Pet 1:9).

If it is true that godly sorrow leads to repentance, which is "unto salvation," then the sin that necessitated



the sorrow and repentance necessarily took the people away from salvation –

else there could not be such a thing as “unto salvation.” Sin does, therefore, to say the very least, introduce a risky or perilous situation.

Anywhere and everywhere in Scripture that sin is addressed, it has to do with driving a wedge between men and God, and advancing toward perdition. It is never represented as a tolerable technicality that has no bearing upon ones standing with God. Safety is never associated with sin. Thus repentance, which has to do with turning from sin, is said to be “unto salvation.” No reasoning must be allowed among the saints that diminishes their view of the seriousness of sin, or makes it more tolerable and less offensive to them.

NOT TO BE REPENTED OF

“. . . not to be repented of . . . ”

Other versions read, “not to be regretted,”^{NKJV} “without regret,”^{NASB} “and leaves no regret,”^{NIV} “and brings no regret,”^{NRSV} “in which there is no reason for grief,”^{BBE} “never to be regretted,”^{DARBY} “which is not reversed,”^{MRD} “We will never regret that kind of sorrow,”^{NLT} and “and it never brings regret.”^{AMPLIFIED}

This expression might seem to be saying that salvation is the thing “not to be repented of.” However, this is not the case, for salvation is not something we

salvation,” there are no regrets associated with it. The salvation of God is rich with benefits and abundant satisfaction. It does not produce sorrow, but rather brings great joy. It is for this reason that we read such marvelous expressions about the effects of salvation.

☛ “Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isa 12:3).

☛ “And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, saith the LORD” (Jer 31:14).

☛ “And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the LORD your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and My people shall never be ashamed” (Joel 2:26-27).

☛ “As it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed” (Rom 9:33).

It only takes a taste of the Lord –

people fall into sin – as did the Corinthians – and are required to make their way back to God? If those who believe in Him have no regrets, and if when we taste of the Lord we lose an appetite for the world, how is it that sin can even be found within the church?

The caveat in this whole matter is that the justified ones “live by faith” (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38). That is, it is not by tasting once that we live, but by continually feeding on the good things of God. Believing does not continue perpetually of itself. It can be subdued when attention is given to other things. Thus Jesus spoke of those who “for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away” (Luke 8:13). In great subtlety, Satan, working through the allurements of this world, turns the attention of the spiritual sluggard to this world. Although the Tempter does not know this with proper understanding, he is aware that Jesus is precious to a person only while He is being beheld. Once the attention of a person is diverted from Christ – whatever the object of attention may be – the Savior is no longer perceived as He really is.

Salvation is so designed that all of its inestimable benefits at once cease to be perceived and valued when other priorities dominate the mind. For Judas, thirty miserable pieces of silver completely offset all of the advantages that could have been his through keeping company with Jesus (Zech 11:12; Matt 26:15-16). For Ananias and Saphirra, the notion of some temporary financial advantage completely washed from their minds the glories of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus “with eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10).

Thus, the “repentance” that is “not to be repented of” is kept alive by walking in the light of Divine fellowship. No one who walks in that light ever regrets that he is doing so. The ONLY people who are sorry they came to Jesus are those who are occupied with “this present evil world,” and thus cannot even recall the benefits of being “in Christ Jesus.”

There may be some poor soul who imagines they can play with the world without losing their affection for the Lord

It is not possible to love Jesus and remain aloof from Him! A person cannot value salvation while neglecting it. Jesus cannot possibly be perceived as “precious” if the world has captured one’s attention. As soon as men fail to deliberately and intently hold the truth in their hands, it leaves them, no longer being in their minds or hearts.

do, and hence we cannot possibly repent of it. This refers to the “repentance” into which godly sorrow leads. That is, those who experience this repentance have no regrets about the change of their mind, and the subsequent change in the manner of their life. They do not bewail the fact that they have returned to the Lord.

Because repentance is “unto

the genuine ingesting of His Person – to confirm His goodness, and that He is to be preferred above all else. As it is written, “O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him” (Psa 34:8). Peter also says, “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious” (1 Pet 2:3).

Why, Then, Do Some Fall Into Sin?

How is it, then, that some of the

Jesus. Or, perhaps there are those who think they can “neglect” this salvation, giving little or no attention to it, and yet still think of it as valuable. But such thoughts are nothing more than imaginations, and there is not an ounce of truth in them. **It is not possible to love Jesus and remain aloof from Him!** A person cannot value salvation while neglecting it. Jesus cannot possibly be perceived as “precious” if the world has captured one’s attention. **As soon as men fail to deliberately and intently hold the truth in their hands, it leaves them, no longer being in their minds or hearts.** There is no person strong enough to avoid these realities. God will not allow a person who has no heart for Him to maintain any form of enlivening association with Him. That is simply the way it is, and it explains a lot of otherwise confusing circumstances.

THE SORROW OF THE WORLD

“... but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” Other versions read, “but the sorrow of the world produces death,” ^{NKJV} “but worldly sorrow brings death,” ^{NIV} “but worldly grief produces death,” ^{NRSV} “but the sorrow of the world is the cause of death,” ^{BBE} “but the worldly sorrow causeth death,” ^{GENEVA} “it is the world’s kind of distress that ends in death,” ^{NJB} “But sorrow without repentance is the kind that results in death,” ^{NLT} “For godly grief and the pain God is permitted to direct, produce a repentance that leads and contributes to salvation and deliverance from evil,” ^{LIVING} “But the sorrow of the world finally produces death,” ^{WEYMOUTH} “But the world’s pain works death,” ^{MONTGOMERY} and “but worldly grief (the hopeless sorrow that is characteristic of the pagan world) is deadly [breeding and ending in death].” ^{AMPLIFIED}

There are examples of “the sorrow of the world” in Scripture, and they have been placed there for our learning. This is a shallow sorrow that does not go deep into the heart. It is something like having regrets that one has been caught in his sin, or that suffering resulted from a foolish choice. However, “the sorrow of this world” is **not** attended by any change – “repentance unto salvation.”

Here are some common examples of this kind of sorrow.

• **CAIN.** After murdering his righteous brother, Cain was confronted by the Lord Himself. There was not an ounce of godly sorrow in him. He first asked his Maker, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Then, when told of the judgment he would bear, he cried out, “My punishment is greater than I can bear!” Yet, there was no repentance found in him – no cry for forgiveness or plea for mercy. Cain “went out from the presence of the Lord” with no apparent regrets for murdering Abel (Gen 4:9-16).

and turn again with me, that I may worship the LORD” (1 Sam 15:25). His sorrow was not what the Lord required, and Samuel therefore refused to hearken to the king (1 Sam 15:13-26).

• **AHITHOPHEL.** Here as a man who sided against the Lord’s anointed, David, counseling David’s own son, Absalom, on how he could defeat his father and seize the kingdom. When his counsel was overthrown, and David escaped with all of his men,

As soon as men fail to deliberately and intently hold the truth in their hands, it leaves them, no longer being in their minds or hearts. There is no person strong enough to avoid these realities. God will not allow a person who has no heart for Him to maintain any form of enlivening association with Him.

• **ESAU.** Although he owned the birthright of his family, he “despised” it, willing to trade it for as single meal of lentils. Later, when that inheritance seemed more important to him, he wept and pled with Isaac to bless him. Yet, in the midst of all of his tears, he could find no place for repentance, and thus had no real change of mind (Heb 12:17).

“the sorrow of the world” came over Ahithophel. It is said of him, “And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father” (2 Sam 17:15-23).

• **SAUL.** When king Saul was commanded to destroy the Amalekites, he saved the king alive, and also many of the sheep, which also were to be destroyed. Confronted with his iniquity, he at first insisted that he had carried out the word of the Lord to the finest detail. Then, he said the people had taken of the spoil, still refusing to acknowledge his sin. When Samuel told him the Lord had rejected him, he was gripped with “the sorrow of the world.” He said he had really “feared the people,” and lamented, “And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words: because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice. Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin,

• **JUDAS.** And, who can forget Judas, also called “the traitor” (Lk 6:16), who agreed to betray the Lord Jesus into the hands of His enemies for thirty pieces of silver – thus fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah (Zech 11:12; Matt 26:15). What a miserable deed he committed against Christ! When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned, he “repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.” The “sorrow of the world” then gripped him, and he “cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself” (Matt 27:3-5).

The discovery of sin within the church is tragic. The report of recovery is glorious— by Given O. Blakely

It is time for the people of God to rise up and thrust these pretentious teachers out of the church. They are to the church what the moneychangers and sacrifice-sellers were to the Temple. They are not doing the work of the Lord, and thus their names and services ought to be stricken from the church records.

There remains a lot of this kind of sorrow – even within the professed church. Because the church is under the ever-tightening grip of religious psychiatrists, it is promoting a sort of simulated recovery from sin that is accompanied by “the sorrow of the world.” Their twisted teaching and Babylonish jargon tells the people they are to “learn to forgive themselves.” That it is one thing to be forgiven by God, but quite another to forgive yourself. All of

this is nothing more than carnal gibberish. **The reason people are said to not be able to “forgive themselves” is because they have been motivated by the wrong sorrow.** That is why their sorrow pushes them down even further into the pit of despair – it is a sorrow that “worketh death,” taking from the individual all hope, rather than leading one to repent, which, in turn, leads to salvation. As for the merchants of psychiatry, this is the only kind of sorrow

they can promote.

It is time for the people of God to rise up and thrust these pretentious teachers out of the church. They are to the church what the moneychangers and sacrifice-sellers were to the Temple. They are **not** doing the work of the Lord, and thus their names and services ought to be stricken from the church records.

Do not suppose for a moment that these words are too strong, or that they evince an ungodly intolerance of modern church practices. The truth of God has been declared in this text, and it is wholly right. Godly sorrow leads to salvation, that is not to be repented of, produces “a repentance that leads and contributes to salvation and deliverance from evil, and it never brings regret; but worldly grief (the hopeless sorrow that is characteristic of the pagan world) is deadly [breeding and ending in death].”
AMPLIFIED That is the absolute truth!

YOU SORROWED AFTER A GODLY SORT

^{41a} *For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort . . .*

Paul now confirms that the church in Corinth had realized genuine godly sorrow – the kind that works repentance that leads to salvation, and concerning which there are no regrets.

Let it be clear, **when there is a real recovery from sin within a church, the traits that follow will be evidenced.** Where these things are not found in the wake of transgression, there has been no recovery that is recognized in heaven. It makes no difference what men may say.

BEHOLD THIS SELFSAME THING

“For behold this selfsame thing . . .” Other versions read, *“For observe this very thing,”* ^{NKJV} *“For behold what earnestness this very thing,”* ^{NASB} *“See what this,”* ^{NIV} *“For behold, this same thing,”* ^{DARBY} *“Just look at this present case,”* ^{NJB} *“For behold this very same thing,”* ^{RWB} *“For mark the effects of this very thing,”* ^{WEYMOUTH} *“Note the results,”* ^{MONTGOMERY} and *“For [you can look back*

now] observe.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

It is as though the apostle takes a spiritual magnifying glass and places it over the response of the Corinthians. **He will carefully examine what has taken place among them, ignoring none of the details.** True spiritual recovery will be confirmed under the most detailed examination. The working of the Lord is not flawed, and thus will not fall apart under the most careful scrutiny. **Any professed work of God that cannot be confirmed by godly examination is spurious.**

It ought to be said that this examination is not a quest to find flaw, but **a search for the good and wholesome effects of Divine workings.** The thing that is being sought is fruitage – results that

glorify God and minister comfort to the oppressed.

SORROW AFTER A GODLY SORT

“ . . . that ye sorrowed after a godly sort . . .” Other versions read, *“that you sorrowed in a godly manner,”* ^{NKJV} *“this godly sorrow,”* ^{NASB} *“this godly grief,”* ^{NRSV} *“that ye were made sorry after a godly sort,”* ^{ASV} *“this very sorrow of yours before God,”* ^{BBE} *“your being grieved according to God,”* ^{DARBY} *“that you were made sorrowful according to God,”* ^{DOUAY} *“that ye were distressed on account of God,”* ^{MRD} *“your being made to feel distress in the way that God approves,”* ^{NJB} *“your being made sorry toward God,”* ^{YLT} *“this grief from the Lord,”* ^{LIVING} *“God’s type of sorrow,”* ^{IE} *“this very sorrow, suffered in accordance with the will of God,”* ^{WILLIAMS} *“this pain which God*

He will carefully examine what has taken place among them, ignoring none of the details. True spiritual recovery will be confirmed under the most detailed examination.

permitted,"^{MONTGOMERY} and "see how the hand of God was in that sorrow."^{PHILLIPS}

Paul removes all question concerning the validity of their recovery, and what a comfort it must have been to

them! He is speaking particularly of the matter of the fornicator. Their sorrow was the kind that is honored in heaven – "godly sorrow." It is the kind that works repentance, resulting in a God-glorifying change of life. There is a very real

recovery from the snare of the devil by those who were "taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim 2:26). This is a sorrow that results in "salvation" – true deliverance that consummates in being restored to Divine favor.

THE RESULTS OF GODLY SORROW

^{11b} . . . *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!*"

What follows is the insightful recognition of the nature of God working in someone "both to do and to will of His

earnestness it has called forth in you,"^{MONTGOMERY} "what eagerness and earnest care."^{AMPLIFIED} and "how it has stirred up your keeness for the faith."^{PHILLIPS}

The word "carefulness" is pregnant with meaning. It means "haste, earnestness, diligence, earnestness in accomplishing, striving after anything, and interest oneself most

written, "And from the days of John the Baptist until the present time, the kingdom of heaven has endured violent assault, and violent men seize it by force [as a precious prize—a share in the heavenly kingdom is sought with most ardent zeal and intense exertion]"^{AMPLIFIED} (Matt 11:12).

A casual and delaying spirit is always evidence of carnality and a departure from God. Spiritually drowsy people are dangerously close to being removed from the Vine, for fruit cannot be produced in such a state (John 15:2,6). Those who cannot get to the business of serving and pleasing God, and doing His will, are under the powerful grip of the devil. Until they have "godly sorrow" for their condition, they will only sink deeper into the mire of iniquity, and further from the hope of deliverance.

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IT WROUGHT CLEARING OF YOURSELVES

" . . . yea, what clearing of yourselves . . ." Other versions read, "what vindication of yourselves,"^{NASB} "eagerness to clear yourselves,"^{NIV} "and apologizing,"^{MRD} "and very anxious to get rid of the sin I wrote you about,"^{LIVING} "How ready you are to clear yourselves,"^{ISV} "how concerned to clear yourselves,"^{WILLIAMS} "to explanation and clear yourselves [of all complicity [in condoning incest],"^{AMPLIFIED} and "how eager it made you to prove your innocence."^{PHILLIPS}

Sin is an offense to God, and is attached to the sinner. This attachment is not only in the form of guilt, but in the matter of indebtedness also. A debt is created by sin that must be cleared. The record of the debt does not fade with age, or gradually diminish with the passing of time. Unless cleared, it remains permanently attached to the individual,

good pleasure" (Phil 1:13). This is not the outline of a recovery program, or of the installation of carefully crafted procedure that is thoughtfully monitored by a professional. Rather, these are what godly sorrow "works!"

IT WROUGHT CAREFULNESS IN YOU

" . . . what carefulness it wrought in you . . ." Other versions read, "What diligence it produced in you,"^{NKJV} "what earnestness,"^{NASB} "what earnest care,"^{ASV} "see what care was produced in you,"^{BBE} "what solicitude it wrought in you,"^{MRD} "What concern,"^{NJB} "You no longer shrugged your shoulders, but became earnest and sincere,"^{LIVING} "You are now eager,"^{IE} "How ready you are,"^{ISV} "What

earnestly,"^{THAYER} "with haste, in a hurry, zeal, eagerness,"^{FRIBERG} "eagerly,"^{UBS} "to do something hurriedly with the implication of associated energy – to hasten to, to hurry to, to do quickly,"^{LOUW-NIDA} and "zeal, earnestness, seriousness . . . a serious engagement, with great exertion."^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

Once the Corinthians received Paul's letter, they were so touched that they immediately set out to correct the matter of a fornicator among them. They went about it zealously, with much intention, and with great eagerness. They saw the implications of the sin, and at once set out to purge the church of defilement. The circumstance was seen as a most serious matter, and delay could not be tolerated. This is an example of seizing the kingdom with violence – a trait of the true spiritual life. As it is

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like the betrayal of Judas remains with him until this day.

In this case, “clearing” themselves required the expulsion of the fornicator (1 Cor 5:4-7). No mere apology for offending God would suffice. It was not enough to have a deep regret that they had allowed this man to remain among them, just as though he had done nothing wrong. In order to clear the record, the man had to be expelled, and an appropriate report made of it to Paul – as it was through Titus. There could be no doubt about their sincerity in this matter. This involved the admission of guilt, resolute action, and the report of that action.

IT WROUGHT INDIGNATION

“ . . . yea, what indignation . . . ” Other versions read, “*what wrath against sin,*”^{BBE} “*displeasure,*”^{YLT} “*it made you upset,*”^{IE} “*how indignant,*”^{ISV} and “*what indignation [at the sin].*”^{AMPLIFIED}

The word “*indignation*” involves vexation, being angry, and expressing extreme displeasure; to be irritated, annoyed, and discontent with what has been done.

This is indignation against sin. In it, sin becomes exceedingly displeasing to the one who has committed it. A revulsion for that transgression is obtained that assists the soul in avoiding any future involvement in such a thing.

Asaph, after having been envious of the wicked, went into the sanctuary of God. His values were adjusted, and he saw the wicked as they really were. He then said of his former envy, “*Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee*” (Psa 73:21-22). **That is indignation!** David also referred to his sins as “*my foolishness*” (Psa 69:5). Agur once said of his conduct, “*Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy*” (Prov 30:2-3).

David once expressed this kind of vexation most eloquently. “*There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an*

heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart” (Psa 38:3-8). **That is “indignation!”**

Such responses are rarely heard in the modern church. That is why this language has such a strange sound in the ears of many. However, where these

things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb 4:13), fear falls upon him – **a wild alarm that unsettles all complacency and indifference.** When, for example, Ananias was struck dead for his sin, “*great fear came on all them that heard these things*” (Acts 5:5). The same thing happened upon the death of his wife Saphirra (Acts 5:11). This is why David confessed, “*My flesh trembleth for fear of Thee; and I am afraid of Thy judgments*” (Psa 119:120).

Once again, we ought to note that

But sin is always deliberate, willing, and offensive to God. It is always the result of yielding to the devil and resisting the Holy Spirit. That is why sorrow and repentance were accompanied by “fear” among the Corinthians.

kinds of expressions are **not** found in the heart and mouth of transgressors, **there has been no godly sorrow.** There has been no repentance, and there has been no recovery from the sin. What may appear to be recovery is only a worthless form of self discipline that is not honored in heaven. A real cleansing, in such a case, has not occurred.

IT WROUGHT FEAR

“ . . . yea, what fear . . . ” Other versions read, “*what alarm,*”^{NIV} “*You became frightened about what had happened,*”^{LIVING} and “*how afraid!*”^{PHILLIPS}

This is a fear of provoking Divine judgment. Although “*there is no fear in love*” (1 John 4:18), involvement in iniquity is evidence of an absence of love for God, profession notwithstanding. No person can boast of a love for God who returns to sin like a dog to its vomit, and a sow that was washed to its wallowing in the more. **The love of God must be subdued, and violently thrust away from us in order to commit iniquity.**

When it dawns upon a transgressor that he must give an account of himself to God, and that “*all*

this kind of response to sin is rarely exhibited in our time. “*Another Jesus*” and “*another gospel*” (2 Cor 11:4) is being declared that is lulling sinners to sleep. Sin is being conveniently explained, so that those who commit it are brought to view is as a mere mistake, a disease, an addiction, or some other form of victimization. **But sin is always deliberate, willing, and offensive to God.** It is always the result of yielding to the devil and resisting the Holy Spirit. That is why sorrow and repentance were accompanied by “*fear*” among the Corinthians. Because this is an excellent sign of Divine working, Paul therefore commends them for their “*fear.*”

IT WROUGHT VEHEMENT DESIRE

“ . . . yea, what vehement desire . . . ” Other versions read, “*what longing,*”^{NASB} “*what desire,*”^{BBE} “*ardent desire,*”^{DARBY} “*how great desire,*”^{GENEVA} “*and yearning,*”^{NAB} “*such longing to see me,*”^{NLT} “*fervent mind,*”^{TNT} “*longing desire,*”^{YLT} “*longed for me to come and help,*”^{LIVING} “*You yearned to do something,*”^{IE} “*how full of longing,*”^{ISV} and “*Look how it made you long for my presence.*”^{PHILLIPS}

A “*vehement desire*” is a “*great*

There must be no delay in dealing with the matter, for sin grows worse and worse while compromising “Christians” ponder what they ought to do. While men hesitate to deal with the transgressor, the influence of his sin is creeping throughout the church, defiling and causing corruption wherever it goes.

longing, or earnest desire,”^{FRIBERG} and “to long for something, with the implication of recognizing a lack.”^{LOUW-NIDA}

This longing appears to be to see Paul once again, and have him among them. It equates to his expression in verse seven: “*your fervent mind toward me.*” It can also mean a strong and increasing desire to rid themselves of the sin amongst them. There is no doubt a sense in which both of these desires are resident in this expression. It is as though they had a compelling desire to rid themselves of their sin, and for Paul to be with them and behold that this had, in fact, been done according to his word.

Sin is a robber that takes much from us. **It removes a sense of God’s disapproval.** It also causes those who labor for the Lord to lose any value in the eyes of the transgressor. A “*vehement desire*” is a pressing determination to resolve those matters.

IT WROUGHT ZEAL

“... *yea, what zeal* . . .” Other versions read, “*what concern,*”^{NIV} “*what serious purpose,*”^{BBE} “*what enthusiasm,*”^{NJB} “*a fervent mind,*”^{TNT} “*You went right to work on the problem,*”^{LIVING} “*You were excited,*”^{IE} “*what jealousy,*”^{WEYMOUTH} “*how determined,*”^{WILLIAMS} “*What fervor.*”^{MONTGOMERY} “*what zeal [to do justice to all concerned],*”^{AMPLIFIED} and “*how ready it made you.*”^{PHILLIPS}

Behold what marvelous fruit comes from the tree of godly sorrow and repentance! “**Zeal**” is not mere hype – like a bull thrashing about in a china shop. It is not jumping up and down, waving the arms, and shouting uncontrollably. “**Zeal**” is driven by insight, and fueled by purpose. It is an aspect of understanding

– spiritual understanding.

This was a zeal to put away sin, to restore purity, to please God, and to correct their miserable treatment of Paul, through whom they had believed.

Because of the debilitating effects of sin, it requires a great deal of “zeal” and ardor to recover from it. Because of this a slothful soul will inevitably be dominated by sin, being unable to escape from its clutches. This is why doctrines that diminish the seriousness of sin, and provide all manner of explanations for its presence, are so lethal. They are like chains that bind the soul to sin, making escape well nigh impossible.

IT WROUGHT REVENGE

“... *yea, what revenge!*” Other versions read, “*what vindication,*”^{NKJV} “*what avenging of wrong,*”^{NASB} “*what readiness to see justice done,*”^{NIV} “*what punishment,*”^{NRSV} “*such a readiness to punish the evil doer,*”^{NLT} “*punishing the man who sinned,*”^{LIVING} “*You wanted to make it right,*”^{IE} “*what meting out of justice,*”^{WEYMOUTH} “*how determined to punish the defender,*”^{WILLIAMS} “*What punishment of wrong,*”^{MONTGOMERY} “*what readiness to mete out punishment [to the offender],*”^{AMPLIFIED} and “*how ready it made you to punish the offender!*”^{PHILLIPS}

This word cannot be understood by “*the mind of the flesh.*” On the surface it sounds too harsh, **for unspiritual souls have no sense of the very real and extensive offensiveness of sin.** It is easy for those who live aloof from God to entertain great sympathy for a believer who has sinned in spite of God’s provision to avoid it. But holy men of God will not allow such insipid feelings to defile their minds and contaminate

their hearts. When a man within the church chooses to live with his father’s wife, something must be done about it. There must be no delay in dealing with the matter, for sin grows worse and worse while compromising “*Christians*” ponder what they ought to do. **While men hesitate to deal with the transgressor, the influence of his sin is creeping throughout the church, defiling and causing corruption wherever it goes.** That is the nature of sin – it is like creeping leaven (1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9), a pervading root of bitterness (Heb 12:15), and a spreading and consuming cancer (2 Tim 2:17). It gnaws and eats at the vitals of the soul, removing the good and replacing it with evil. Those who are naive about sin will surely be destroyed by it!

The idea here is that as soon as the Corinthians saw the error of their way, they set out to punish the offender as Paul had enjoined. They approached wickedness among the Corinthians as Moses did sin among the camp (Ex 32:27), and Joshua did Achan among their camp (Josh 7:24-26). They seriously and intently purged the “*old leaven*” from their presence. Paul had told them to:

- Come together and deliver the transgressor to the devil for the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor 5:5).
- Purge out the old leaven of wickedness in order that they might keep the feast (the Lord’s Supper) with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor 5:7-8).

Under the New Covenant, the ultimate objective of such purging is of a higher order than realized under the Law: “*that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*” (1 Cor 5:5). **Nevertheless, it was to be attended with a sense of urgency, for eternal issues were at stake – both for the sinner, and for entire church at Corinth.** They had allowed sin in their presence, and now they perceived that they had to rid themselves of its presence.

I personally long for the time when the professing church will be noted for its genuine hatred of sin, and its refusal to tolerate the expression of sin among its members.

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APPROVING YOURSELVES

“^{11c} *In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this*

have done everything you could.”^{NLT}

This refers to “all things” associated with the case of the fornicator.

- They mourned the very existence of the sin amongst them.
- They determined to do something about it, according to Paul’s instructions.
- They gathered together to address the problem.
- They delivered the man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.
- They confronted the man with his grievous transgression.
- They purged out “*the old leaven,*” expelling the transgressor from their assembly.

“*ye have proved yourselves pure in this matter,*”^{ASV} “*you have made it clear that you are free from sin in this business,*”^{BBE} “*you have showed yourselves to be undefiled in this matter,*”^{DOUAY} “*you cleared yourselves of blame in this matter,*”^{NLT} “*You have done everything you could to make it right,*”^{LIVING} “*You have completely wiped away reproach from yourselves in this matter,*”^{WEYMOUTH} and “*At every point you have proved yourselves cleared and guiltless in the matter.*”^{AMPLIFIED}

Here, as always, there is a vast chasm between the ways of the world and the ways of the Lord. In the world, a person or persons are cleared of guilt when they are proved innocent – when it is confirmed that they had not committed the offense charged against them. Here, however, the **GUILTY** are “cleared” and the **TRANSGRESSORS** are “approved.”

This is a most marvelous circumstance, confirming the greatness of the salvation that is “*in Christ Jesus.*” In the case of the Corinthians, **their actions confirmed something very real had occurred in them.** Paul no longer had any question about them on this matter, and thus he would blame them no longer. They had shown by incontrovertible evidences that they were no longer participants in this transgression.

A PRINCIPLE TO BE SEEN

There is a principle to be seen here. **Those who condone sin participate in the guilt with ones committing it.** All of the Corinthians did not commit fornication – **only one** of their number did. Yet, because of their indifference toward that sin, they became a part of it, and had to be cleared from that guilt.

It was in this sense that Paul wrote to Timothy, “*neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure*” (1 Tim 5:22). There is also a “*fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness*” which is strictly forbidden to us. In this case, the opposite of fellowshiping with such works is the reproofing or exposing of them (Eph 5:11). **When sin is condoned, and the saints remain quiet**

THE EFFECTS OF GODLY SORROW



matter.”

Godly sorrow is productive. It brings about fruit that glorifies the Lord, and does so consistently. Kingdom manners are not erratic or inconsistent because they reflect the nature of God Himself. **The Lord is resident and active in every valid work of faith, being excluded from none of them.** Regarding the matter before us, there is no recovery from sin that lacks Divine influence. It is owing to that influence that godly sorrow obtains its effectiveness.

Where the fruit of godly sorrow is lacking, it is only because the sorrow itself is not present, and thus God is not at work. In other words, the individual is left to himself – a condition that induces hopelessness.

IN ALL THINGS

“*In all things . . .*” Other versions read, “*In everything.*”^{NASB} “*At every point,*”^{NIV} “*in every way,*”^{DARBY} and “*you*

They did all of this with great haste (“carefulness”), and a determination to clear themselves of guilt. They were indignant against sin, as well as the person who so willingly involved himself in it. Fear took hold of them as they became acutely conscious of the way in which God regards the presence of immortality within His church. Their desires were refocused, making the interests of the Kingdom primary. Their obedience was accomplished with great zeal, and certain judgment against the sinner. In every way, they had conducted themselves in a godly and commendable manner.

APPROVED AND CLEARED

“*. . . ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*” Other versions read, “*you have proved yourselves to be clear in this matter,*”^{NKJV} “*you have demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in this matter,*”^{NASB} “*you have proved yourselves guiltless in this matter,*”^{NRSV}

The discovery of sin within the church is tragic. The report of recovery is glorious– by Given O. Blakely

about it, they become participants in the transgression, and, by their silence, join the ranks of darkness. This, of course, is

exactly what the Corinthians had originally done. Now that they saw the error of their way, and made the

necessary corrections, they were no longer identified with the transgressor. They were disconnected from their sin.

WHY PAUL HAD WRITTEN TO THEM

“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.”

Now Paul rises to an even higher level, explaining why he wrote his strong first epistle to the Corinthians. **He will confirm that he was not a mere problem solver, and that the resolution of personal difficulties was not his real objective.**

I DID NOT WRITE BECAUSE OF THE FORNICATOR

*“Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it **not** for his cause that had done the wrong. . . .”* Other versions read, *“it was **not** for the sake of the offender.”* ^{NASB} *“it was **not** on account of the one who did the wrong.”* ^{NIV} *“it was **not** for the sake of him that injured.”* ^{DARBY} *“My purpose was **not** to write about who did the wrong.”* ^{NLT} *“my purpose was **more** that to help the man who sinned.”* ^{LIVING} *“it was **not** to punish the offender.”* ^{WEYMOUTH} *“it was **not** for the sake of the wrongdoer.”* ^{MONTGOMERY} and *“it was **not** for the sake and because of the one who did [the] wrong.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Paul had no intention of becoming embroiled in the problems of the fornicator who had committed the offense. He did not jump into his circumstances with both feet, discovering what occasioned this sin, whether or not there was some spouse abuse, and precisely what kind of relationship existed between the son and his father, whose wife he had taken to himself. That kind of approach characterizes much of the counseling of our day, but it is no more right today than it was in the days of Paul. **Discovering why people sin may contribute significantly to the finances and careers of counselors, but it has no place at all in the kingdom of God.**

Paul is writing for the sake of the whole church, not any individual member of it, even though they appear to require very special attention. Paul took much the same position as our Lord did when a young man asked Him to become involved in a dispute he was having with his brother. The inquirer pled, *“Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.”* Refusing to become involved, Jesus replied, *“Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?”* Looking beneath the surface, Jesus took that occasion to instruct the people around Him. *“Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth*

offended,” ^{NASB} *“or the injured party,”* ^{NIV} *“or because of him to whom the wrong was done,”* ^{BBE} *“Nor for the sake of him who received the wrong,”* ^{MED} *“neither for his cause that was hurt,”* ^{TNT} *“or his farther to whom he did the wrong,”* ^{LIVING} *“nor to secure justice for him who had suffered the wrong,”* ^{WEYMOUTH}

The one who “was wronged” was the “father,” whose wife the fornicator had taken to himself. The sin committed by this man was a sin against his father – a sin that doubtless caused great pain. Yet, as important as that “father” was,

Even the correction and restoration of the offending fornicator was not the reason for Paul writing. As important as that was, a larger purpose was being addressed by Paul’s letter – something that would be present long after the issue of the fornicator was resolved.

not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:13-15).

Even the correction and restoration of the offending fornicator was not the reason for Paul writing. As important as that was, a larger purpose was being addressed by Paul’s letter – something that would be present long after the issue of the fornicator was resolved.

I DID NOT WRITE BECAUSE OF THE ONE WHO WAS WRONGED

“ . . . nor for his cause that suffered wrong. . . .” Other versions read, *“not for the sake of him who suffered wrong,”* ^{NKJV} *“Nor for the sake of the one*

Paul did not write on account of him, or to assuage his grief. There was an even higher motive for his epistle – one that extended beyond the narrow boundary of personal interests and welfare.

Paul does not mean to harp on the case of the fornicator, chiding the sinner, or pouring forth endless consolation on the one who was offended. This is not the matter upon which he desires to dwell. He knows very well that the kingdom of God does not revolve around a single individual. Likewise, a church must not fashion its total attention upon only one person, whether an offender to be punished, or a grieved one to be comforted. **The whole assembly is to be considered.** This is the manner in which

God has distributed various gifts and abilities within the church – “to profit *withal*,” or “for the common good”^{NASB} (1 Cor 12:7).

At no point are the various members of the body of Christ to consider themselves the center of attention. The church revolves around Jesus, and it is not right to allow anyone else to capture our attention. As simplistic as that may appear, Satan makes every effort to lead us to believe we are more important than anything else, and that the solving of our own problem, or the comfort of our own spirits, supercedes everything else.

Among other things, this confirms that the primary function of the church is not to solve the problems of people. That purpose is not large enough to require the simultaneous activities of an Intercessor at God’s right hand, the intervention of angels, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the working of the Father. This is not to mention wisdom from above, the grace of God, and Divine strength. Nor, indeed, does the resolution of human difficulties require salvation, reconciliation, peace with God, and an inheritance in heaven. The church must zealously avoid becoming overly involved in matters that extend no further than this present evil world. That will require a sizeable amount of faith and wisdom. Having said all of that, I know full well that it is more than some are presently able to process. **Nevertheless, effort must be expended to see beyond the perimeter of time, and have a perception that sees more than earthly circumstance.** This perspective does not allow for men to ignore difficulties within the church, as this very epistle confirms. It does, however, enable men to set things in proper perspective, and thereby avoid being unduly distracted by the difficulties associated with life in the world.

BECAUSE OF MY CARE FOR YOU

“ . . . but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.” Other versions read, “but that your earnestness on our behalf might be known to you in the sight of God,”^{NASB} “but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are,”^{NIV} “but in order that your zeal for us might be known to you before God,”^{NRSV} “so that the Lord could show how much



you really care for us.”^{LIVING} “it was to find out how loyal you are to us before God,”^{IE} “it was chiefly in order that your earnest feeling on our behalf might be made manifest to yourselves in the sight of God,”^{WEYMOUTH} “that your devotion to us might be made perfectly clear to you before God,”^{ISV} “but in the sight of God for the sake of having your enthusiasm for me made perfectly clear to you,”^{WILLIAMS} “but to make clear to yourselves in the sight of God your earnest care for me,”^{MONTGOMERY} “but in order that you might realize before God [that your readiness to accept our authority revealed] how zealously you do care for us,”^{AMPLIFIED} and “but to let you see for yourselves, in the sight of God, how deeply you really do care for us.”^{PHILLIPS}

This is a most profound text, the meaning of which is most difficult to uncover. Traditionally, men have entertained a narrow view of the text, confining it to one of two meanings.

☛ That Paul wrote to confirm to the Corinthians that **he** did, in fact, have a profound and deep concern for their welfare, and was not detached from them in his heart. The King James, New King James, Darby, Douay, Geneva, Tyndale, Revised Webster, Webster, and Young’s Literal Translation reflect this meaning. His love, therefore, was the point.

☛ That Paul wrote to enable the Corinthians to discover their own respect and affection for Paul – that they really were not as detached from him as their words, attitudes, and manner had suggested. The more modern versions consistently reflect this meaning. Here, the love of the Corinthians was the point.

Both of these are true, and yet they must be seen within the greater context of Paul’s writing. **There is a certain nature to sin that must be perceived.** When it breaks forth among God’s people – like a “root of bitterness” springing up and defiling “many” (Heb 12:15) – **it pushes legitimate spiritual feelings downward, so that they are no longer resident in the human conscience.** The chart above portrays the effects of sin upon the conscience, and the effort of Paul to rediscover those feelings to the Corinthians.

Here Is What Happened

When sin broke out in the Corinthian assembly, and was not dealt with appropriately, certain uncomely traits began to spring up.

☛ **A proper regard for their brethren was lost.** Thus divisions were found among them (1 Cor 3:3; 11:18), attempts to exploit their brethren (1 Cor 6:1-8), disregard for the weaker

brethren (1 Cor 8:7-12), uncomely attitudes at the Lord's table (1 Cor 11:30), and doctrinal corruption (1 Cor 15:12).

- **An awareness of Paul's sincere and consistent love for them was lost.** They considered his resolve to come to them as being made lightly, and with no genuine intention (2 Cor 1:17).
- **They lost an awareness of their personal respect for Paul.** They viewed him as being "beside" himself (1 Cor 5:13). They viewed his "bodily appearance" as "weak, and his speech" as "contemptible" (2 Cor 10:10). They even doubted that he was an "apostle" (1 Cor 9:1-8; 2 Cor 12:2).

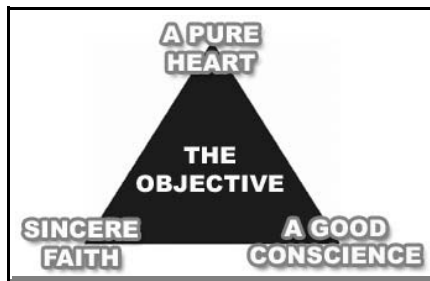
What had happened? **Sin had driven the feelings and perspectives of the "new man" into the background, so that they no longer were capable of sound thought.** Their conscience had thus been weakened, opening the door for improper assessments.

Now, Paul, writes to correct this condition. He aims at bringing them into a state of sound mindedness by rediscovering to them the feelings fostered by faith and sustained by love. He is, in fact, enabling them to "put on the new man" (Eph 4:24) in order that they may think and feel properly. Their tolerance of sin had enabled the "old man" to rise into prominence, for sin is his domain, and he loves to dwell in it.

SOMETHING TO BE SEEN

Spiritual growth and sound attitudes require a "good conscience." That is why it is written, "Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith" (1 Tim 1:5).

Where these three qualities are not found, spiritual growth is not possible. Further, where spiritual growth is not possible, sound thinking and proper attitudes are blocked from prominence. Men cannot rise to the domain of holy thought and spiritual perception while sin sits upon the throne of their heart. The things of God are not apprehended academically, and proper cognitive processes cannot be entered by rote.



There is a penalty to be paid for living in sin, or condoning sin by failing to wage war against it. This very circumstance accounts for the state of spiritual obtuseness that dominates the professing church. **There is sin in the camp**, just as surely as there was in Israel when the inferior army of Ai overcame them, causing the hearts of the

people to "melt with fear" (Josh 7:5).

What Paul did in his first letter was discover the Corinthian sin, and impregnate their conscience with a lively sense of it. Their favorable response to that letter moved valid, but latent, spiritual feelings into their conscience, and thus they were able to perceive the comely traits of the new creation. **Oh, that God would raise up capable laborers for the church of our day – a church that has been pummeled by sin, and abused by shallow and pretentious preachers and teachers!** The church of our day has languished long enough in the cesspool of ignorance and iniquity. It is time to heed the stirring words of the prophet: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (Isa 52:1). To put on those garments, sin must be purged from the church! As long as it is allowed, the garments cannot be found.

In the words of the apostle, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom 13:11-13).

CONCLUSION

The fulness of joy must be preceded by a thorough and consistent judgement of sin within the church. **We are living in a time when spiritual joy is being simulated – pumped up and promoted by professions who themselves do not evidence a hatred for sin and crucifixion to the world.** It is the Corinthian circumstance re-enacted! In the name of brotherly love and concern, transgression is being allowed in the church. Things that ostracize a person

from God Himself are being tolerated in the name of loving interest. Now, "recovery" ministries have taken the place of "godly sorrow" that leads to repentance, which is "unto salvation." Men are being allowed to explain sin, tracing it back to habits, addiction, things hereditary, and physiological traits. Some have us thinking "sin" is the result of certain genes, over which we have no control. Whatever the explanation that is offered, it does not

involve the will, or giving in to Satan, or departing from the living God.

However, sin within the church does involve a departure from God – just as the Scriptures say: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb 3:12). It involves quenching, grieving, and resisting the Holy Spirit of God (Eph 4:20; 1 Thess 5:19). It requires that a place be made for

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Satan (Eph 4:27), that Satan not be resisted (1 Pet 5:8-9), and that the "new man" be ignored (Eph 4:24-25). Hope in Christ must be subdued and cast away from the person before indulgence in sin can take place (1 John 3:3). A person must thus cease working out his own salvation with fear and trembling, choosing instead to indulge in the flesh (Phil 2:12). Because of spiritual dullness, the very escape route that God has made "with the temptation" is passed over, as the heart becomes enamored with the very things from which Jesus died to deliver us (1 Cor 10:13; Gal 1:4). With

deliberation, the purpose for which Jesus died must be ignored – namely that "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor 5:15). **Sin is never innocent!**

In order to sin as the Corinthian fornicator, or allow sin to remain, as did the Corinthians, men must refuse to allow the word of Christ to dwell in them "richly" (Col 3:16). They must "refuse" the One who is speaking from heaven (Heb 12:25), and decline to "walk in the

light as He is in the light" (1 John 1:7). Professing believers who choose to sin, or elect to condone sin, must stop calling upon the name of the Lord, for "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord **shall be saved**" (Rom 10:13).

Thus Paul wrote to awaken the feelings that sin had buried, and it was effective. The reason for the effectiveness was that God was in it. When faith surfaced in the Corinthians, they at once became overcomers, for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 7/22/2005. In this session, we continue our current series of lessons on the Epistle of Second Corinthians. The thirty-second lesson will cover verses thirteen through sixteen of the seventh chapter: "A CAUSE FOR REJOICING." The effect of reports detailing recovery from sin are marvelous. They bring joy and refreshment. They increase inward affection for the brethren, and bring glory to God. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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