

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION
2 Corinthians: God's Pattern For Victory Over Severe Ministry Opposition
Part III: Closely Following Scripture To Overcome Satan's Wiles
(2 Corinthians 2:5-11)

I. Introduction

- A. Sometimes the spiritual warfare we face takes a sudden, entrapping turn where Satan shifts from opposing our commitment to doing what is right to try to lure us to misapply that commitment unto acting in sin.
- B. We thus must be aware of our need always to **FOLLOW God's OBJECTIVE Word** on what is right and wrong and **not** rely on our **own human instincts** of what is righteous that we overcome the Evil One's wiles, and 2 Corinthians 2:5-11 illustrates this truth (as follows):

II. Closely Following Scripture To Overcome Satan's Wiles, 2 Corinthians 2:5-11.

- A. In our last lesson out of 2 Corinthians 1:12-2:4, we learned that the Apostle Paul had changed his itinerary to cut his plan to make two visits to Corinth into making just one visit, for he had need to stay away until the Church had taken appropriate discipline against one of its members. That way, Paul would not have to come and use his more severe apostolic authority to discipline in greater severity, causing great sorrow.
- B. What had created the crisis was that a man in the Church had likely challenged Paul's authority as an apostle, which challenge actually threatened to hurt the Church's "spiritual well-being," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 558.
- C. The Corinthians had initially thought this issue involved merely a personal problem between Paul and his foe when it actually lured the Church away from trusting Paul, thus negatively impacting the body, Ibid.
- D. Accordingly, Paul had written that the Church take disciplinary action to counter the man's challenge that the body might continue to be truly edified through Paul's ministry unto them.
- E. Well, all of these circumstances created a huge angelic conflict challenge for all the people involved:
 - 1. First, the church discipline of the offender had left him vulnerable to becoming so introspective that he might become self-accusative and depressed, Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 2 Corinthians 2:11.
 - 2. Second, "as long as the matter was not settled, Satan kept Paul and the church estranged", and that estrangement was used by Paul's other critics to try to discredit him to the church, 2 Cor. 1:15-17; Ibid.
- F. Thus, to **overcome** the wiles of Satan that aimed to take the sense of **righteousness** the Corinthians had developed into an **unbiblical application**, once the offender **repented**, Paul urged **quick reconciliation**:
 - 1. Since the offender had since repented, Paul noted that the punishment had been effective, that it was thus time to cease punishing and forgive and comfort the former offender versus continuing to punish him lest he be swallowed up with sorrow by Satan's wiles, 2 Corinthians 2:5-7, 11.
 - 2. Paul thus urged the Corinthians to change their action from one of **past righteous punishment** to one of **present righteous forgiveness**, that they confirm their love toward the repentant man, 2 Cor. 2:8.
 - 3. This can be difficult for a believer if he has strongly channeled his emotional energy to make himself be intolerant of sin, for, failure to think clearly can cause him to misapply his well-meant intolerance!
 - 4. For this reason, Paul wrote that though he knew the body had accepted his authority in regard to the punishment of the sinner, he wanted to make sure they heeded His word in all things, that they not rely on their own strong bent to punish the offender to the point that they left no Biblical room to accept his change of heart once he repented, confessing his sin, Ibid., ftn. to 2 Corinthians 2:9!
 - 5. Paul affirmed that he was united with the body in forgiving the offender, that Paul had exercised this Biblical attitude of forgiveness for the sake of the body in the sight of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 2:10 NIV.
 - 6. Thus, Paul warned the body to watch out for Satan's wiles, that they not go so far in applying an initially right action that would become an evil if it was no longer Biblically applicable! (2 Cor. 2:11)

Lesson: Paul urged the Corinthian believers to keep their **OWN ATTITUDE of INTOLERANCE for SIN DIRECTED by BIBLICAL GUIDANCE** that they **OVERCOME Satan's intent to MISAPPLY such RIGHTEOUS ANGER to become SINFUL ABUSE once a wrongdoer has TRULY REPENTED!**

Application: May we **FOLLOW God's OBJECTIVE Word VERSUS RELYING on our OWN instincts of right and wrong, for our OWN INSTINCTS can become UNBIBLICALLY APPLIED by Satan!**