

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

2 Corinthians: God's Pattern For Victory Over Severe Ministry Opposition

Part X: Responding Victoriously To Severely Opposed Godly Ministries, 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:16

1. Choosing To Fellowship With The Godly Instead Of With The Ungodly (2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1)

I. Introduction

- A. The Apostle Peter charged Christians to be holy like God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16), that is, to be separate from evil, but such separation often affects our relationships with other people.
- B. Paul presented a situation in 2 Corinthians where his Christian readers were obliged to make a choice of whether to fellowship with him and his godly ministry team or with the ungodly, unsaved false teachers who stridently opposed Paul's team, 2 Corinthians 6:11-13, 14-7:1. We view the passage for application:

II. Choosing To Fellowship With The Godly Instead Of With The Ungodly, 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1.

- A. In 2 Corinthians 1:12-6:10, Paul had defended himself and his ministry team as godly versus the charges of the false teachers who had told his readers that Paul's team was evil, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 570.
- B. Thus, at 2 Corinthians 6:11-13 and at 6:14-7:1, Paul urged his readers to make a choice regarding their circle of fellowship, to fellowship with him and his team versus fellowshiping with the false teachers:
 1. First, Paul called his readers to fellowship with him and his godly ministry team, 2 Cor. 6:11-13:
 - a. By his statement that the "mouth" of his ministry team was "opened" to his readers, and that their "heart was enlarged" meant their speech was candid and their heart was disposed to fellowship with his readers, 2 Cor. 6:11; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., fn. to 2 Cor. 6:11.
 - b. It was not Paul and his ministry team that was restricted in its warmth toward the Corinthians, but rather the readers were the ones whose affection was "restricted," Ibid., fn. to 2 Corinthians 6:12.
 - c. Paul then urged his readers to "open wide" their hearts to fellowship with his team, 2 Cor. 6:13.
 2. Yet, to fellowship with Paul logically required a break in fellowship with the unsaved false teachers who opposed him, so Paul called his readers to break fellowship with these lost men, 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1:
 - a. There could be no fellowship with believers and the unsaved, so Paul called his readers not to be "unequally yoked with [such] unbelievers," 2 Corinthians 6:14a (brackets ours).
 - b. This call is often applied to a wide variety of relationships like marriage, business partnerships and church associations, and properly so in view of the rhetorical questions Paul raised on the logical lack of concord between the godly and ungodly in 2 Corinthians 6:14b-16a.
 - c. Yet, in this context, the command of separation applies to church relationships, 2 Cor. 2:17 et al.
 - d. Nevertheless, Paul's rhetorical questions are worth reviewing, for they apply to any questionable relationship (as follows), 2 Cor. 6:14b-16a: (1) believers and the unsaved should not be unequally yoked in fellowship since righteousness and unrighteousness are opposites, 2 Cor. 6:14b; (2) neither does light have communion with darkness, 2 Cor. 6:14c; (3) Christ also has no concord with "Belial," or to Satan, and the unsaved are spiritual children of Satan, Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to 2 Cor. 6:15; John 8:44; (4) also, there is no grounds of spiritual fellowship between the believer and the unsaved, 2 Cor. 6:15b; (5) finally, believers are part of God's temple, the Body of Christ, of what the lost have no part, and they often hold to intolerable "idols," be they pagan idols or intangible gods like materialism, entities that have no place in the spiritual Church of God, 2 Cor. 6:16a,b; Col. 3:5.
 - e. Accordingly, Paul alluded to portions of various Old Testament passages to call his readers to come out from fellowship associations with the lost and to separate from them, not touching the unclean thing, and God would accept them for fellowship, 2 Corinthians 6:17; Ibid., B. K. C., N. T., p. 571.
 - f. Furthermore, this decision would be followed by God's figuratively becoming a parental Father unto them as they became His sons and daughters in terms of practical fellowship, 2 Corinthians 6:18.
 - g. In summary, Paul urged his readers to rely on such promises of God so as to cleanse themselves from all pollutions, perfecting themselves in separation from sin in reverence for God, 2 Cor. 7:1.

Lesson: *The believer is obliged to cease trying to fellowship with those with whom he has no spiritual grounds for fellowship that he might enjoy God's holy, edifying fellowship in living.*

Application: *May we be holy as the Lord our God is holy, and that in our relationships, 1 Peter 1:15-16.*