

LESSON SEVEN
2 CORINTHIANS 6: 1 - 7:1

The reason Paul wrote this letter was an overflow of emotion knowing the problems had been solved. Also, he had to respond to the false accusations made against him by his opponents. Paul tries to vindicate himself. In 5:12 Paul spoke of himself to give his friends the information they needed to defend him. As you read 2 Corinthians you get the feeling that the Corinthians did not appreciate Paul, and the work he had done. They should have defended him instead of forcing him to defend himself. The Corinthians seem to have boasted of the Judaizers who had invaded the church, and yet the Judaizers had done nothing for them. So, Paul reminds them of all he has done for them and what his ministry gave them. His life was governed by the love of Christ, and he acted as His Ambassador. As such he was a fellow worker with God, and he exhorted men not to receive the grace of God in vain (vs. 1-2). To avoid allowing anyone an excuse to blame him or his ministry, he avoided any kind of offense (vs. 3). He proved his sincerity and fidelity as a minister of God, by the patient endurance of all kinds of trials (vs. 4-5). He also used all the tools available to him to help him endure these trials (vs. 6-7). It didn't matter what circumstances he was under, or what people did against him, or thought about him, he proved himself to the Corinthians (vs. 8-10).

He then reveals his heart to them - it is open wide (it has been enlarged). There is enough room for all of them. If there was any lack of appreciation, or love between them, it was their fault and not his (vs. 11-12). He begs them to love him as he loves them (vs 13), and to not allow themselves to be involved in any relationship or alliances with the wicked (vs 13-18).

KEY PHRASES:

1. “receive the Grace of God in vain” - There could be several meanings to this expression. (1) Paul affirms the possibility of falling from grace. In 1 Cor. 15: 2 & 10 Paul uses basically the same expression referring to “holding fast to the gospel” and the fact that he was chosen by God to be an apostle. (2) We are all chosen by God when we became Christians. God chose us all, the saved, the church (not the individual but the plan). Therefore, by not accepting the gospel we receive it (hear it) in vain.

2. “Now is the acceptable time” - Now is the golden time to obey the gospel that will never come again.

3. Paul divides his sufferings into three categories;

A. Hindrances - Tribulation, Needs, and Distresses.

B. Violent Opposition - Strips, Imprisonment, and Tumults.

C. Hardships - Labors, Sleeplessness, and Fasting.

4. “Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers...”

Good	There can be no	Evil
Righteousness	Fellowship	Iniquity
Light	Communion	Darkness
Christ	Accord	Belial (Satan)
Believer	Part	Unbeliever
Temple of God	Agreement	Idols

5. “Come ye out” - An act on our part.
6. “Living God” (Vs. 16) - He is not just a god who lives, but the God of life.

APPLICATION:

1. Appreciate Each other (vs 1-10).
2. Set the Right Example.
3. The Fruits of the Spirit can help us endure afflictions.
4. We must separate ourselves from evil.

A. Avoid every kind of evil, Cling to that which is good. We are to avoid all relationships that may endanger our faith.

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we receive the grace of God in vain?
2. Why did Paul not want to give an offense (vs 3)?
3. What is Paul trying to do in verses 1 - 10?
4. Why does Paul list the trials he went through?
5. What is the difference between “Patience” and “Long-suffering”?
6. Be ready to explain verses 11 -13.
7. What does it mean to not be “Unequally Yoked”?
8. What kind of relationships is Paul referring to.
9. What are we to separate from?
10. Think back to ancient Israel, when did they have peace and prosperity? When did they have war and afflictions?