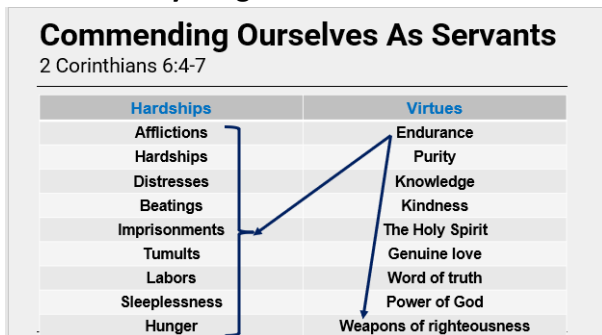


1. Context:

- a. Paul's concern that the saints in Corinth might "receive the grace of God in vain". (2 Corinthians 6:1)
  - i. Continuing the theme of ch. 5 & "reconciliation" to God through Christ. (5:17-21)
  - ii. Need for ongoing devotion to Christ and the gospel message as **we are to be "working together"!** (vs. 1; cf., 5:19-20; cf., Philippians 2:13)
  - iii. Don't turn back to carnal wisdom!
- b. The urgency of remaining in God's grace.
  - i. **"Now Is The Acceptable Time"** (2 Corinthians 6:2)
  - ii. Messianic quotation from Isaiah 49:8
  - iii. "In His Time" (Galatians 4:4; Romans 5:6)
  - iv. **That "time" continues to each day God gives.**
  - v. A **sense of urgency in "now"** staying reconciled. (Acts 17:30)
  - vi. The focus on his/our **ministry & service.** (vs. 3)

2. **"Commending ourselves as servants"** (2 Corinthians 6:4)

- a. Those who attempted to discredit Paul as an evangelist and apostle of Christ. (3:1-2; 4:1-2; 12:11)
- b. **Paul points to those changed by the gospel & not his own merits.**
  - i. **"Commending"** - "to recommend, to commend, to give approval to; to show, to prove, to demonstrate." (Thayer)
- c. Not by **human standards**: (10:12, 18) or **nor through boasts or claims** but through **our response to God's word in times of "afflictions" and "hardships"**.
- d. By **the impact God's word has in our lives!** (7:11; cf., 3:2-3) and **continuing to preach** the message of reconciliation.
- e. Commendation through **not shrinking in the face of reproaches and tribulations...** (Hebrews 10:32-39)
- f. **God's favor** to those who **"patiently endure"** suffering for righteousness' sake. (1 Peter 2:19-20)
- g. **"As servants of God"** in **"everything..."**; "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master"
  - i. **Through proactive service**
  - ii. **Through reactive perseverance in adversity.**
  - iii. **When are we servants of God? What days? What situations? Should it not be "always" and in "everything"?**



- h. **"Endurance"** - **"cheerful, hopeful constancy"**; **"sustaining"** (Hebrews 12:1; James 1:3-4; 2 Peter 1:6)
  - i. This is the common thread through all challenges and trials in this context.
  - ii. To laud Paul or demonstrate God's power being perfected in weakness? (12:7-10)

- j. **"Afflictions"** - "a pressing, pressing together, pressure" (Thayer). "Crush, press, compress, squeeze... to break." (Romans 5:3-5; 8:35; Hebrews 10:33)
- k. **"Hardships", "Needs"** (NKJV), **"Necessities"** (ASV; KJV);
  - i. The conflict of **"external circumstances" w/ "inward pressure"** from **duties & obligations.** (2 Corinthians 12:10)
- l. **"Distresses"** - "narrow spaces from which we cannot very well escape... **walls closing in around us"** (Romans 8:35; 2 Corinthians 12:10)
- m. **"Tumults"**, "instability, a **state of disorder, disturbance, confusion**" (Thayer) (James 3:16)
- n. **"Labors"**, lit. **"wearisome effort"**, (2 Cor. 11:23; 1 Thess. 1:3; 1 Cor. 15:58; Revelation 14:13)
- o. **Virtues:**
  - i. **"Purity"** -. upright, unbowed by the wickedness of the world. Free of defilement. (Philippians 4:8; 1 John 3:3)
  - ii. **"Knowledge"** - Knowledge of God's will & what pleases Him. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Col. 1:9-10; ever growing, 2 Peter 1:6)
  - iii. **"Kindness"** - from another word meaning "usefulness" (Strong). **"To furnish what is needed"** <sup>(Zodhiates)</sup>
    - 1. Focus on the proactive spiritual wellbeing of others. (Ephesians 2:7; Titus 3:4; Romans 2:4)
  - iv. **"In the Holy Spirit"** - with a **spirit of holiness... between "kindness" and "love"**... in contrast to carnality and impurity. Note 6:14-7:1
  - v. **"In genuine love"** - sincere & not hypocritical. (Romans 12:9; 1 Peter 1:22)
  - vi. **"In the word of truth"** - (4:1-2; maybe unskilled and contemptable but truthful; cf., 10:10; 11:6)
  - vii. **"In the power of God"** - His adequacy, strength and power come from God and His word. (3:4-5; Philippians 4:13; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5) - Spiritual and not fleshly. (12:7-10)
- p. **By a series of fleshly vs. spiritual paradoxes:** (Glory vs. dishonor; Evil report vs. good report; Deceivers vs. true; Unknown vs. known; Dying vs. living; Punished vs. alive; Sorrowful vs. rejoicing; Poor vs. rich
  - i. **How does man look at things vs. God?** 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
- q. **By our relationship with the world and all the wickedness in it.** (6:14-7:1)
  - i. **No agreement, harmony or fellowship... Come out and be separate** (John 17:13-19)... **Continual pursuit of God's holiness in complete reverence.** (1 Peter 1:13-17)
- r. **At all times in all ways in everything we do.**
  - i. **We need to find joy in being a servant every day!** Constantly, consistently, continually! (Psalms 86:4; 101:6)
- s. **Why is this so important?**
  - i. **To be with the Lord.** (John 12:26; cf., Mark 10:45)
  - ii. **It is what heaven is about!** (Revelation 7:14; 22:3)
  - iii. **Only all the impediments to our service that Paul identified in 2 Corinthians 6 will no longer challenge our continual service. ("No longer be any curse")**