

2 Corinthians 7:5 - 8:24

Day 1

The Corinthians' Repentance. Read 2 Corinthians 7:5-10

1. What picture does Paul's description in 7:5 give you of the stress and sorrow of his ministry? Cf. 11:28

FYI: "On the **outside**, Paul was constantly in conflict with enemies of the gospel and worldly minded Christians. On the **inside**, Paul daily battled with the stress and anxiety of ministry."
- David Guzik

2. What is the first way God comforted Paul? 7:6 (What state had he been in without Titus? 2:13)

3. What is another way Paul was comforted? 7:7a

Digging Deeper

For a similar incident with the church at Thessalonica see 1 Thessalonians 3:5-8.

- List the ways the Corinthians had responded. 7:7b

4. How did Paul feel at first, after he wrote the letter of correction to the Corinthians? 7:8

- What insight does this give into the normal emotional difficulties of confronting someone even if done in love?

FYI: "How human the apostle Paul is! After he sent that earlier letter, he had second thoughts about it. 'I don't regret it now,' he says, 'but I felt terrible about it at the time...Paul knew his letter would cause pain, but he believed that it would be a surgical kind of hurt, intended to heal, not harm. If you love someone, then speak the truth in love..."

Paul faithfully confronts these people whom he deeply loves. He tells them what's wrong in order to draw them to repentance."
- Ray Stedman (351)

"My letter' refers... to a letter no longer extant that was written after 1 Corinthians and Paul's "sorrowful visit" and was delivered by Titus. From the report of Titus Paul had learned for the first time that his letter had caused the Corinthians considerable distress, at least for a period."
- The Expositor's Bible Commentary

5. Why was he able to feel joyful about it later? 7:9a

- List the phrases that define the kind of sorrow the Corinthians had.

6. What things did their godly sorrow protect them from experiencing? 7:9b,10a (Review his intent in 2 Corinthians 2:4.)

Repentance NT:3341 *metanoia* ; compunction [feeling] (for guilt, including reformation); by implication reversal (of [another's] decision)

"From *meta*, meaning 'after,' and *noeo*, meaning 'to think.' *Metanoia* suggests that a person has come to a place where he thinks differently after committing a sin and therefore changes his mind, his consciousness, his heart, and his way of life."
- Ray Stedman (349)

"One can be *sorry* for their sin without *repenting* from their sin. **Sorrow** describes a feeling, but **repentance** describes a change in both the mind and in the life."
- David Guzik

"What was it that the Corinthian Christians had to repent of? Take your pick! It could have been any number of things, but no doubt it also included this: There were probably some "anti-Paul" people who criticized the absent apostle severely and unfairly, and the Corinthians did not defend their godly spiritual father before these detractors."
- David Guzik

7. What two kinds of sorrow did Paul describe? Where do they lead or what do they produce? 7:10

FYI: godly sorrow. "This response proved the genuineness of their salvation....The "sorrow of the world," on the other hand, is not sorrow for the sin itself, but sorrow over its consequences"
- Henry Morris

8. From Psalm 51 - David's prayer of repentance and forgiveness:
- On what attributes of God did David base his cry for mercy? 5:1
 - What did David ask for? 5:2,9
 - What did he acknowledge? 5:3-5
 - What kind of restoration did he seek? 5:7,8,10,12
 - What was the only thing he could give God? 5:17

Applying the Word: *Can you think of things in your life that you felt sorry about but had a hard time turning away from or changing your behavior? What thinking or focus or actions has helped you to truly repent and "go in the opposite direction"?*

Day 2

The Corinthians' Response to Paul's Letter. Read 2 Corinthians 7:11-16

9. What responses had godly sorrow produced in the Corinthians? 7:11

- At the end of the list, what judgment did Paul make?
- How would Paul's careful acknowledgement of their reactions have made them feel about themselves? *What would this have communicated to them about Paul's understanding of the situation? What would this clarity do to their relationship?*

FYI: "Paul isn't writing about a *fear of God* here as much as a *fear of sin*, and fear of our own weakness toward sin.

What vehement desire/longing: "This is a heart that really desires purity and godliness and does not want to sin any more. *'Happy is that man who has had enough of the smart of sin to make it sour and bitter to him all the rest of his days; so that now, with changed heart, and renewed spirit, he perseveres in the ways of God, never thinking of going back...'* (Spurgeon)" - David Guzik

Some think this "*matter*" is referring to issues addressed in 1 Corinthians, especially chapter 5, or in 2 Corinthians 2:4-9 or the issue of not defending Paul or his message against his attackers.

10. Rather than supporting one side or the other, what was Paul's main concern? 7:12

- How did he feel about their response? 7:13

11. What had Paul communicated to Titus about the Corinthians? 7:14 Why was Paul pleased?

- How did Titus feel about the Corinthians after meeting with them? Why? 7:15

FYI: "Paul had 'hopefully' boasted to Titus that the Corinthian Christians would respond well to the severe letter. Probably Titus was not so sure! But Paul's **boasting to Titus was found true**...Probably Titus saw a lot of ugliness among the Corinthian Christians...So Paul wants them to know that after he saw and reported their repentance, Titus loved them more than ever." - David Guzik

12. List the words that describe Paul and Titus' feelings in 7:13-16

13. How would Paul's conclusion about the Corinthians response, have made them feel? (Compare Philippians 1:6.)

FYI: "In everything I have confidence in you." (7:16) "Paul is not saying that there are no more problems in the Corinthians church. What he is suggesting is that a good relationship with the Corinthians has been restored. Now he feels that his coming visit will be the occasion for resolving the remaining problems and completing unfinished tasks. These subjects encompass the remainder of the epistle." - Irving Jensen (41)

Applying the Word: *Imagine living and traveling in the world of Paul's day. What would these small groups of believers have meant to Paul?*

REPENTANCE

"In the gospel the knowledge of our acceptance in Christ makes it easier to admit we are flawed (because we know we won't be cast off if we confess the true depths of our sinfulness).

Our hope is in Christ's righteousness, not our own—so it is not so traumatic to admit our weaknesses and lapses...The more accepted and loved in the gospel we feel the more and more often we will be repenting. And though of course there is always some bitterness in any repentance, in the gospel there is ultimately sweetness....The more you see your own flaws and sins, the more precious, electrifying, and amazing God's grace appears to you...the more aware you are of God's grace and acceptance in Christ, the more able you are to drop your denials and self-defenses and admit the true dimensions of your sin. The sin under all other sins is a lack of joy in Christ."

—Timothy J. Keller, excerpts from *Counterfeit Gods* (New York: Dutton, 2009), 172.

Prayer for Repentance and Restoration by Rebecca Barlow Jordan

"Lord Jesus, I'm tired of the sin struggle in my life. I feel distant from You. My choices have not led me into the right places. I've listened to the whispers of my enemy instead of Your words in Scripture, and the result has been disastrous...Disappointment and discouragement have taken their toll on me. So today I'm confessing my desperate need for You....I want to turn around and head another direction—back to You, Lord. But I need Your help.

Just as You created the world out of nothing, Lord, create a clean heart out of my "nothingness." You paid for my sin with your own death. Restore my life and the fellowship we once shared together. You don't condemn me, and You won't disown me; I am Your child forever...Lord, root out the darkness and light up my life with Your holy presence. Help me understand what went wrong. Show me how my destructive patterns first began. What did I allow to become more important than loving and honoring You? Why did I seek satisfaction in others or other things than You? You are the only One Who provides all my needs. You fill up the soul with deep down joy and peace beyond all understanding.

Lord, may your restoration include new boundaries around my life. I can't flirt with sin and not be hurt. In restoring me, teach me how to say no again to things which could harm myself or my testimony. If my actions have wounded others, show me where and to whom I need to ask forgiveness or how to make amends...

Knowing that You don't hold our sins to our account—You remember them no more—and that You place them as far as the east is from the west both humbles me and fills me with amazement and gratitude. ..You place grace next to my regrets and give me hope for a new future.

[May] Your Spirit to give me a heart...that seeks You and wants to live for You the rest of my life. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for Your sweet forgiveness and promised restoration."

- <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/prayer/prayers/a-prayer-for-repentance-and-restoration.html>

Day 3

Grace-filled Giving. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-9

The Macedonians' Example

14. From 8:1-5:

- What did Paul connect with the issue of giving 8:1?

- Under what conditions did the Macedonians give? 8:2 (See 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 2:14)
How can difficulties motivate giving?

- What attitude did they have? 8:2

- What phrases in 8:3 describe how they gave? 8:3

- Instead of viewing giving as an obligation, how did they regard it? 8:4

- What precipitated their giving? 8:5

FYI: Macedonia "These churches were at Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. We note that before making any money gift to the Lord's work they first gave themselves to Him. [The Lord] first wants us, before our money, and then He is pleased to use what we possess and joyously give Him as an expression of our love and obedience."
- Stuart Allen (230)

"The poverty of the Macedonians is confirmed by secular history. The Romans took most of their wealth when they conquered this former homeland of Alexander the Great."
- David Guzik

"The Old Testament decreed that a tithe should be given - that is, a 10 percent religious tax. This tax was levied on the people for the support of the priesthood, people who made their living by religious service [See Numbers 18:21,24]...The New Testament never legislates a tax on believers... Giving is a privilege we partake of to express the gratitude of our hearts for God's grace...The Old Testament mindset was 'Ten percent is the Lord's, and 90 percent is mine.' The New Testament mindset is 'One hundred percent belongs to the Lord, I am merely a steward, holding these things in trust on behalf of the Lord.'
- Ray Stedman (359,360)

Appeal to the Corinthians

15. What part did Titus have in the Corinthians' giving? 8:6 What does the word "finish/complete" indicate about the Corinthians original intentions?

- How might knowing about the Macedonians' (who were poor by comparison) have moved the Corinthian church?

16. What blessings had the Corinthians received? 8:7 (How did Paul connect that with giving?)

FYI: "Note that giving and sharing of one's means is called a "grace"(vs. 7,8) —just as faith, love, etc...It is a "grace," and is a measure of one's love for Christ."
- Henry Morris

17. What instruction had Paul given in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 (about a year earlier)? To whom was this money going? (See Romans 15:25,26)

18. From Acts, what reasons do you see for why the Christians in Jerusalem were in need?

- Acts 8:1
- Acts 11:28,29

19. Why didn't Paul command the Corinthians to give? 8:8 (See 1 John 3:17)

Food for Thought: "Generosity is the natural result of sincere love." - The Nelson Study Bible (1957)

"When you give yourself totally to the Lord, giving your time, talents, or treasures is part and parcel of that commitment. You don't have to be convinced or manipulated or coerced. You give freely, with an open hand and an open heart."
- Charles Swindoll (ME 4)

20. What other example did they have to follow? 8:9 (How much did Christ give up? Why did he give? How much did we receive?)

21. How rich was Christ? John 1:1-3; 16:15; 17:5

- How poor did he become? Luke 2:7; 9:58; Philippians 2:6,7

22. Paul uses the words "grace/gracious" (8:1,6,7,9,19) several times in connection with giving. How is giving a reflection of God's grace?

FYI: Grace Strong's NT:5485 *charis*; graciousness...(abstract or concrete; literal, figurative or spiritual; especially the divine influence upon the heart, and its reflection in the life; including gratitude)

"The subtle implication is that our giving should come from a context of grace - not guilt..."[When] you are reluctant to give, count your blessings, call to mind a few testimonies of those who have given faithfully, and consider Christ's gift to you. You'll find your grip a little looser, and your worries a little less significant."
- Charles Swindoll (ME 5,11)

"We can never repay God. We can just serve Him and love Him in return."
- David Guzik

Applying the Word: *When are you most able to give joyfully to the Lord? Why? What motivates you?*

Day 4

The Corinthians' Giving. Read 2 Corinthians 8:10-24

23. How did Paul need to encourage the Corinthians about their giving? 8:11 (Why may their enthusiasm have waned in the process?)

- What blessing and promise did Paul attach to giving in Philippians 4:17,19?

24. Underline reasons for and blessings connected with giving:

- Proverbs 11:25 A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. NIV
- Proverbs 14:31 He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God. NIV
- Proverbs 19:17 He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what he has done. NIV
- Matthew 25:40 "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' NAS
- 1 Timothy 6:18,19 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. NIV
- Hebrews 6:10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. NIV
- Hebrews 13:16 And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. NIV

25. Record what was their giving was to be measured "by" or "according to":

- 8:11b
- 8:12
- To what other things does this apply? Romans 12:6

Digging Deeper

What examples did Jesus use to teach about giving?
Luke 12:15-21; 21:1-4

FYI: : The Corinthian Christians were not giving so that the Jerusalem Christians would get rich and lazy at their expense. Paul was taking the collection so the Jerusalem Christians could merely survive. The goal was not to *burden* the Corinthian Christians, nor was it to make it *easy* for the Jerusalem Christians.” - David Guzik

“God does not expect us to give out of a blessing we have not received. He doesn’t expect us to deprive our own families of food and shelter in order to provide food and shelter for someone else...we see that God is more interested in the motives of the heart than in the size of the gift. So give according to what you have, not according to some standard that has nothing to do with your own situation. Don’t worry if you can’t give as much as the next person.”
- Ray Stedman (362)

26. What wasn’t Paul seeking? 8:13

- Why would it be so important for believers to help support each other? *Consider the conditions that people lived under in the 1st century. What safeguards and security do we enjoy now that they didn’t? What additional hardships did believers contend with?*

27. How would giving benefit both others and themselves over time? 8:14 (How does this differ from “redistribution of wealth”?)

- What example from the Old Testament did Paul use? Exodus 16:16-20 (What happened with hoarding?)

FYI: “The **equality** Paul mentions here isn’t meant to imply socialism or communism, where all are said to live at the same economic level, and none are supposed to be richer than others are. Of course, communism and socialism themselves are evil, being noble ideas in theory but absolute tyrannies when sharing is commanded at the end of a gun. But this is not the kind of equality Paul means...” we are not bound to such an equality as would make it wrong for the rich to live more elegantly than the poor; but there must be an equality that nobody starves and nobody hordes his abundance at another’s expense.” (Calvin)

“Thus do the Scriptures avoid, on the one hand, the injustice and destructive evils of agrarian communism, by recognizing the right of property and making all almsgiving optional; and on the other, the heartless disregard of the poor by [*teaching*]... the duty of each to contribute of his abundance to relieve the necessities of the poor. At the same time [*teaching*] the poor the duty of self-support to the extent of their ability.’ (Hodge)”
- David Guzik

Paul’s Commends and Sends Fellow Workers

28. List the men that Paul wanted to send to the Corinthians and their qualifications.

- 8:16-17,23
- 8:18-19
- 8:22,23

29. Why was Paul so careful to assure the Corinthians about the character of these men and their collection of money? 8:20,21 (Consider the attacks that may have been made on Paul. See 7:2)

- What kinds of accountability and safety can you see in sending three men? (See also 2 Corinthians 11:26)

30. What would the Corinthians' giving show? 8:24

31. Underline important principals about money or giving:

- Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. This too is meaningless. 11 As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owner except to feast his eyes on them? NIV
- Proverbs 11:24 One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. NIV
- Matthew 6:19-21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. NIV
- Luke 12:15 Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." NIV
- Luke 16:10-11 "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? NIV
- 1 Timothy 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. NIV
- 1 Timothy 6:17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. NIV

Applying the Word: *What is one of your favorite non-money ways of giving?*

Memory Verse:

2 Cor. 7:10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. NIV

Or

2 Cor. 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you, through his poverty, might become rich. NIV