

ALL FILTHINESS OF THE FLESH

2 CORINTHIANS 6:11 – 7:1



~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God is in the middle of a chapter that reveals God's comfort in all circumstances of our ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ. In our last report, the apostle Paul turned the contemporary ministering man of God wrong-side out with Scriptural thinking. We considered three sets of nine ways that define and characterize any genuine man of God – and I am sure most of us found those ways absolutely foreign. We covered the physical, the mental, and the spiritual attributes of a true Christian man who actually believes God and trusts Christ with every minute detail of his life. If you have not read our last report, I suggest you go back and do so now, because it is critical to understanding a right relationship with God.

As we begin this leg of our expedition, the tender-loving heart of Paul is opened, and utterly laid bare in this second letter to the Corinthian church. As your safari guide I have, likewise, laid my heart bare in these reports – but not like I am going to in this report. I hope I can stir hearts to actually realize that if I didn't love the Lord Jesus Christ – and *Y-O-U* – then I wouldn't be laying my life down to bring you these reports. I understand that I seem most unlovely to most readers. Pray for me, friends. Paul almost seems to break down in this chapter and the next; and if you are going to proclaim the entire Word of God to the entire world, I have some news for you: God is going to break you, too. If you really stand for God, it will cost you something; and that something is everything. There's no question about that. You can write that down, too — again and again and again....

VI

¹¹ O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.

¹² Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,

18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

~ Some interpretations of this passage render it as hard as nails – unyielding and unloving. However, this comes from the heart of a man whose loving and caring heart was literally broken as he wrote. Paul had a great concern for the church in Corinth; and he only wanted the best for each of their lives. Abuse of this section of the Word of God relegates it to a legalistic system that, ultimately, declares merely walking past a liberal church constitutes being unequally yoked. Well, that’s not what the apostle is talking about here. This specifically refers to worldliness and the sins of the flesh.

Unfortunately, we have many so-called “*separated Christians*” who are, actually, as worldly as they could possibly be. God gave the Mosaic Law to His people, who were largely engaged in agriculture, and He told them not to yoke an ass and an ox together; which are a clean and an unclean animal, by the way. When Paul says that, he is referring to the Mosaic System; but this primarily refers to the marriage of a believer and an unbeliever; although it also speaks of business relationships, and even personal

relationships. Those relationships are always very real problems, and they *ALWAYS* end in disaster — for the believer.

However, unequal yoking *NEVER* refers to a temporary, or casual, relationship. If we attempt to separate ourselves from the unbelieving world, then we can never witness for Christ to them. We will end up being religious nut-case screwballs — for lack of a better term. That does *NOT* mean we accept their sinful lifestyle as being “okay” — and it does *NOT* mean we look the other way regarding their sin; but, if we want to witness to the lost, we are going to have to be their friend *FIRST* — or there will never be another opportunity to tell them about the death, burial and resurrection of our Savior and Lord.

Remember, Paul began teaching in the synagogue. I cannot imagine a place that would be more opposed to the Gospel of Christ than that. Well, I think Paul was proper to teach there, because God led him that way; but he didn't join the synagogue and become their Rabbi — because that would have been wrong. It's one thing to be ‘yoked’ permanently with an unbeliever or a liberal; but something altogether different to make a friendship with the intent of witnessing the Word of God to them properly, correctly and completely. Now, I belabor that point because to simply sit in judgment won't make a convert for the Lord Jesus Christ — it isn't going to happen that way.

In verse sixteen, Paul begins to address idolatry. Of course, the temple of the Spirit of God today is the human body of the believer. Idolatry and infidelity are completely different issues, and we are never to be identified with either. We can befriend the lost man and have a relationship that doesn't include indulging in the things of the world. I have friends — and even family who are not believers — but I don't shut them out completely — but I'm not going to participate in their worldliness, either.

Some believers refuse to fellowship with other believers that don't believe the exact same way they do. I don't agree with that extreme. On the other hand, there are believers who fellowship with people whom I wouldn't even talk to. Either way, let's not sit in judgment — even when we know they are wrong — because that's not what Paul is talking about here. Paul is

talking about the worldliness that has crept in unawares to the church and is affecting the hearts and lives of genuine believers who say they are separated unto Christ. When Joshua took Jericho, God gave him the victory by faith — and Jericho speaks of worldliness. However, when Joshua made an attempt at Ai — which speaks of the flesh, and seemed as if it would be so easy to destroy — Joshua experienced the defeat of his lifetime. Many Christians brag about not doing this or that; but they have the meanest gossiping tongue in town. That makes them extremely worldly. They are typically vain to the core regarding dress, and are generally compulsive gluttons; and there are a whole lot of them around the church.

When we speak of the things of God, and declare how we love the Lord Jesus Christ, we need to be extremely careful about our judgment of others. We are typically guilty of doing the same things — probably worse. If we talk about how Jesus satisfies, then you better make sure Jesus really does satisfy. Some people speak as if they are expounding the mind of Christ one moment, but their mouths are as profane as any unsaved Navy Sailor the next. That's the reason we have so many rank unbelievers who tune out all things church from Jump Street — and won't even consider the Word of God. The lost world knows that most people who proclaim "*Jesus satisfies*" aren't satisfied with life at all. That produces cynicism and skepticism that cannot be shaken off. Let's make sure we aren't contributing to that, friends. Don't be a Christian unless you mean it. Let's be sons who actually honor our Father in Heaven. Come out from among them, and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing.

God wants to be a Father to us. However, if we're hypocritical and disobedient in our lives, He isn't going to be able to speak to us as a loving Father would. You may still be a child of God — but you can become so alienated from fellowship with the Father that He won't be able to treat you like a son, either. God doesn't want to take us to the woodshed for a whipping every day — but He will if we force Him to. We have a lot of Christians who receive whippings within an inch of their lives every single day. They wonder why their Christian lives are so terrible. Well, we better just move along now — I think I may have overstated the obvious....

VII

¹ Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

~ Our Spiritual Safari ends this leg of our expedition through the entire Word of God beginning the final section of Scripture concerning the comfort of the Holy Spirit; and this will be where we see God's comfort in the heart of Paul the apostle. Going forward, we're going to learn about holy living; and revisit the man in the church at Corinth who had been living in gross immorality. Remember, Paul told them that if they didn't deal with that problem, then he would – and the church in Corinth did deal with it; resulting in genuine repentance and confession of sins by that man.

Well, the promises Paul is referring to in verse one are the promises made in chapter six at verse seventeen. We need to get a grasp on what it means to cleanse ourselves. We know we cannot cleanse our own conscience from the guilt of sin. Only the death of Christ and the shedding of His Blood on the cross can accomplish that. To have our consciences cleansed, our hearts are going to require a daily cleansing. That can only come by faith in the Word of God. When we receive the Word of God in faith, and ACT upon it, then we cleanse ourselves of all filthiness of the flesh – and of the spirit.

There is a definite distinction between the filthiness of the flesh and the spirit revealing two classes of sin. All sin is filthy, but sins of the flesh refer, naturally, to sins of the body. We're going to examine this in our next report. Most people take their physical hygiene seriously; but how seriously do we take our spiritual hygiene? How often are we in the Word of God, allowing it to cleanse us with His truth? How often does the water of the Word of God rinse over you? When Jesus said, "*sanctify them through thy truth*" — this is what He was talking about. It's important – maybe more important than our physical hygiene! Do you take a bath every day? Well, we need a spiritual bath in the Word of God every day, too. The best soap to clean up with is this book called the Bible! It will remove stains from our life that can never otherwise be washed as white as snow ~

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