

Second Corinthians 7

Introduction:

1. This chapter closes out the first half of the epistle, for Paul will take up two different topics before concluding the book.
2. There are two primary lessons in this chapter – the opening summary (1) and the definition of true repentance (9-11).
3. There is also a great lesson for pastors, husbands, father, and managers in how to deal with sensitive and touchy people.

Outline of Chapter 7

- 1 Exhortation from God's promises (6:14-18)
- 2-3 Return to request for respect (6:11-13)
- 4-7 Nature and effect of report by Titus
- 8-11 First epistle had fruit of true repentance
- 12-16 First epistle had proven their obedience

7:1 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.

- A. This is one of the most concise statements of practical salvation and true Christianity in the Bible.
1. **Having**, by virtue of its present tense, teaches that these promises are in our possession now. We are not waiting for precious promises from God, for He has already given them to us. Since we have the promises, and they are conditional, they should lead to the appropriate actions.
 2. **Therefore**, indicates a conclusion is being made from the things just previously written, where Paul specified most clearly the separation God requires and the promises He offers in reward.
 3. **These**, points out a specific plurality of items previously described for our consideration, which are easily identified in the preceding context, where seven individual promises are clearly seen.
 4. **Promises**, are commitments God made to us, and He cannot lie or repent! What glory it is for saints to have offers, commitments, and promises from the great God! If there is any deficiency in your relationship with God, it is due to your compromise and sins straitening the relationship.
 5. **Dearly**, is an adjective explaining the degree of something in the context, God's love for us, which is based on His offer to be our Father and make us His own special sons and daughters.
 6. **Beloved**, is our position before God as the adopted objects of His everlasting and powerful love, which results in a practical relationship of God being our very own loving Father in heaven.
 7. **Let**, states an imperative choice and decision we must make in response to what was offered, which is to perform the conditions stated in order to obtain the promises offered.
 8. **Us**, is a pronoun for focus on ourselves rather than others within or without our church, for the great issue of holiness and righteousness is our own lives, not those of others. And, furthermore, the pronoun includes our apostle, who had no illusions he had maximized his walk with God.
 9. **Cleanse**, is the verb of our verse, which is to wash thoroughly to make completely clean. Cleansing requires examining everywhere, washing everywhere, and being thorough. Soul cleansing needs examination, repentance, repudiation, restitution, and reformation. This is cleansing of the practical phase of salvation, not redemption, regeneration, or vital sanctification.
 10. **Ourselves**, is another pronoun requiring self-cleansing rather than other-condemning. It is our nature to seek cleansing of others' motes while we are blinded with beams regarding our own. Our passion and rhetoric can go ballistic about others' failures, while we miss or excuse our own.
 11. **From**, is a preposition that we are getting rid of things rather than obtaining things. Cleansing is getting rid of dirt, so we must deny ourselves and give up sins we have previously chosen. We must be satisfied with the time past of our lives to have been wasted in lascivious carnality. It is now time to put off the old man and keep ourselves unspotted from the world.
 12. **All**, is used here as an adjective – a despised adjective – to condemn any partial cleansing to protect our favorite sins. We cannot hold on to any idol in our heart or hands and truly be clean.

13. **Filthiness**, is a noun describing any sin that stains, blemishes, or soils our Christian life. It is here used in its broadest spiritual sense to mean any pollution of sin in our total lives.
14. **Of the**, are a preposition and article showing where filth may be found in our cleansing process. You do not have to look far or analyze carefully, the problem is in your flesh and spirit.
15. **Flesh**, is a noun referring to our outer person – our bodies and their appetites, which have lusts and sins galore. Our bodies crave many things, which our minds must overrule. Consider sexual lusts, gluttony, drunkenness, diligence at work, poor sleep habits, unguarded speech, and so on.
16. **And**, will not let us escape by cleansing merely our outward conduct like the Pharisees. It is not enough to clean the outside of the platter, for the inside must also be cleansed. It is a deceitful lie of hypocrites to guard their outward conduct that no mere man can discern their wicked heart.
17. **Spirit**, is a noun referring to our inner person, where we have thoughts, desires, and fantasies that are sinful. The Lord is looking for a poor, contrite, and pure spirit. It is in spirit that we hate, lust, love, fear, emulate, envy, grudge, surmise, despise, and other sins too numerous to mention. To our holy God, even the thought of foolishness is sin.
18. **Perfecting**, further modifies our cleansing and sets the standard for the degree of holiness we must achieve. Measuring ourselves among most Christians, surely today, is not clean enough. The God we serve is perfectly holy, and we are to be holy as He is holy.
19. **Holiness**, is being without sin as measured by the Holy God, for He is holy and requires our holiness. Holiness is purity and the absence of absolutely anything that displeases Him. He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity approvingly. Holiness is the beautifying character of our God.
20. **In the**, is another preposition-article combination giving further instruction as to our motivation in this cleansing effort. Paul began with promises, but now he uses fear as the incentive to obey.
21. **Fear**, in this context is dreading the displeasure of another, but rather craving their approval. It is awesome reverence of a great Being and the excited and trembling desire and need to please.
22. **Of**, is a preposition telling the object of our fear, which is the great and dreadful God, our Father.
23. **God**, is to be the object of our fear and dread, rather than the fear of peers, loss, or pain. Any fear but the fear of God is a snare to the soul, but the true fear of God will work righteousness in us.

7:2 *Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man.*

- A. Having pressed the church with their duty to separated living (6:14 – 7:1), Paul now returned to his earlier arguments for the members at Corinth to accept and acknowledge him as their father (6:1-13).
- B. The church at Corinth had false teachers trying to discredit Paul and touchy members hearing them; it goes without saying that these teachers were trying to accuse Paul of wrongdoing to discredit him.
- C. Paul had done nothing to wrong, corrupt, or defraud any man at Corinth to justify their cold spirits.
 1. This does not mean that Paul was perfectly sinless, but there were no outstanding offences by which the church at Corinth could excuse themselves from hearing and accepting him.
 2. He had not used his office, his teaching, or his personal life to take advantage of any (Acts 20:33-35), which is comparable to Moses' defense in the face of opposition (Num 16:1-15).
 3. This boast should primarily be understood in light of his rebukes in the first epistle, in particular his censure of the church for harboring the fornicator, which he dealt with now in this context.
- D. No minister is perfect or lives long without accusations and offences (I Kgs 8:46; Prov 20:9; Ecc 7:20; Rom 7:21; II Cor 11:29; James 3:1-2).
 1. Peter had wronged the Lord Jesus Christ and corrupted the Jews from Jerusalem (Gal 2:11-21).
 2. The cure and remedy for Peter and all ministers is repentance and conversion, which clears men.
 3. It is in the context that Paul will teach the total clearing of godly sorrow and repentance (7-9-11).
 4. When repentance, conversion, and repayment have been completed, any sin can be forgiven.
 5. Not a single sincere saint has a problem reading David or Peter and loving their every word, and if they were here in the flesh would happily fellowship with them and submit to them.

7:3 *I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you.*

- A. Softening his rebuke of the previous verse, Paul reminded them of his great love for them (6:11-13)!
 - 1. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we can see here the gentle and tender words used to soften a rebuke.
 - 2. His words had not been to condemn them for their coldness, but to exhort them to love him back.
 - 3. He carefully avoided charging them by letters for any personal matter, so he qualifies his words.
- B. His affection for the cold Corinthians was so great he could have spent the rest of his life with them.
 - 1. Though the words are “die and live,” there is no reason to make this more than a known idiom.
 - 2. Throughout this epistle is a degree of ministerial affection that condemns every ordinary man.

7:4 *Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.*

- A. Paul’s boldness of speech was his strong words of deep affection for them (II Cor 6:11-13; 7:3).
- B. Paul’s great glorying were his boasts to others of the Corinthian faithfulness (II Cor 1:14; 9:2-4).
- C. There were good things about the believers at Corinth, and Paul had been comforted much by them.
 - 1. In spite of great ministerial responsibilities and difficulties, they had filled him with comfort.
 - 2. In spite of great tribulations and trials, he had reason to rejoice exceeding by their faithfulness.
 - 3. The comfort he is describing was obtained by the coming of Titus to tell Paul about the church.

7:5 *For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears.*

- A. Paul, allowing Corinth more time with his first epistle, had gone to Macedonia (1:15-17; 2:1-13).
- B. Paul was not describing his first visit to Philippi and time in the jail there; this was a different visit.
- C. Paul declared the comfort and joy Corinth had given him (7:4); now he explained the circumstances.
 - 1. He and his ministerial colleagues had no physical rest, from preaching, persecution, and worry.
 - 2. There were troubles on every side, likely not from the church, for their epistle is very positive.
 - 3. There were fightings without, as their enemies sought to get him killed or thrown out of the city.
 - 4. There were fears within, as Paul was in fear for his life and those of his ministerial companions.

7:6 *Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus;*

- A. Titus, whom they had not met when expected (II Cor 2:13), came to Philippi and comforted Paul.
- B. God can comfort men by His Holy Spirit, and He can comfort men by natural means, like Titus.
- C. A minister worrying about young believers, ministerial companions, and himself in tribulation would be comforted somewhat by the mere arrival of a trustworthy brother and more by his good news.

7:7 *And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.*

- A. Paul, ever the wise serpent and harmless dove, had sent Titus to inquire of the attitude and actions of the church at Corinth following his first epistle (II Cor 2:13; 8:6; 12:18; I Thess 3:5).
- B. Not only was Paul comforted by the presence of this faithful brother in the ministry, but he was also comforted by hearing the excellent report of Corinth’s submission to Paul’s correction and rebukes.
 - 1. The church at Corinth had an earnest desire to do all those things Paul had instructed and taught.
 - 2. The church also mourned their neglect of gospel order in judging their fornicator (I Cor 5:2).
 - 3. And the church also had a fervent mind toward Paul for his abundant labors and sound reproofs.

4. Why did Paul then write this epistle to seek their love? He wisely pressed forward to confirm their affection, for Titus also had reported the wicked teachers that were fomenting rebellion.
- C. Far beyond Titus's presence that comforted Paul, the great report about Corinth truly cheered Paul.

7:8 *For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.*

- A. Paul's first epistle had made them sorry, for it was filled with rebukes, and especially a sharp rebuke regarding the incestuous fornicator; he was not now repenting for their sorrow, though he had some doubts, fears, and misgivings about how they would respond to it at the time of the sending of it.
 1. Paul had done what should have been done, but he had worried a little about its effect on some.
 2. Your own pastor has expressed several times to you, "I am sorry, but I am not very sorry."
 3. Have you ever told children anything like this: "This is very hard for me to do, and it hurts me."
- B. Paul had no reason to repent, for their sorrow was to godly repentance, and only for a short time.

7:9 *Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.*

- A. His purpose was not merely to make them miserable for their ungodliness, but rather to make them miserable for the goal of godly repentance.
- B. The sorrow they felt at the reception of his first epistle resulted in godly sorrow and true repentance, which was no damaging result at all, but rather their salvation and clearing of themselves. Glory!

7:10 *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*

- A. The salvation here is not election, justification, regeneration, or glorification, but rather conversion.
- B. Godly sorrow brings about salvation from a sinful course of life, without regret or rejection: there is no damage in godly repentance that causes a converted person to regret or withdraw repentance.
- C. Paul did not teach that godly sorrow brought about perfect conversion with no further such sins.
- D. Worldly sorrow brings death by mere sadness at getting caught and the fear of loss or punishment.

7:11 *For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*

- A. Here is the inspired definition of godly repentance that has no peer in Scripture or anywhere else.
- B. If you are seeking the evidence of whether a person has been truly converted or not, come here!
- C. The "selfsame thing" is that the Corinthians illustrated the very thing described – godly sorrow working salvation not to be repented of – in contrast to the sorrow of the world leading to death.
- D. The seven things that wholly cleared this church from their sinful compromise form a holy standard.
 1. What carefulness! Anxious, concerned, fearful, and worried efforts to reform their error and sin.
 2. What clearing of yourselves! Total reversal of spirit and actions proving very different character.
 3. What indignation! Anger at the foolishness and profanity of the sin and their protection of it.
 4. What fear! Intimidation and reverence of God's holy standards and the need to correct things.
 5. What vehement desire! They were passionately inflamed and adamant to set things straight.
 6. What zeal! They had intense commitments and conduct without procrastination to do right.
 7. What revenge! They did anything and everything necessary to make up for their weak failure.

- E. The glory of the gospel of the grace of Jesus Christ is its total clearing of repenting and reforming sinners, which puts it in stark contrast to the merciless, long memories of wicked men.
1. Though this church had been notoriously at fault, Paul said they were totally clear of the matter.
 2. The Lord Jesus freely and fully forgave sinners that came to Him in humble repentance for sins.
 3. Whether David or Peter, both great sinners, repentance cleared them for great usefulness.

7:12 *Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.*

- A. Paul explained his goal in writing the first epistle and the sharp 5th chapter about the fornicator.
1. If there were enemies at Corinth, which there were, they would have used his harsh treatment of the fornicator, and the church because of him, to criticize Paul as insensitive and domineering.
 2. His rebuke of the fornicator was not merely to blast the sinner; he had a higher and broader goal.
 3. His reproof of the church for covering it was not for the fornicator's father; he had another goal.
- B. Paul's goal was to show ministerial care for the glory of God, the integrity of the New Testament, and the prosperity of the church at Corinth, which are the goals of every true minister of Christ.
- C. In spite of what most contemporary Christians think today, church discipline is a wonderful part of New Testament practice – glorifying God, defending the gospel, and saving the churches.

7:13 *Therefore we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all.*

- A. Paul's epistle and their holy response had comforted them all, which comforted Paul and Timothy.
1. The church had perceived Paul's care for them (7:12), and they had rejoiced to obey his reproofs.
 2. Godly ministers will rejoice at the obedience of any church for their response to the gospel.
- B. Paul and Timothy had also obtained exceeding great joy for the joy Titus had by Corinth's zeal.

7:14 *For if I have boasted any thing to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth.*

- A. Paul had boasted about this congregation, and he used that fact to provoke them further in obedience.
- B. These words are praising the congregation for fulfilling Paul's highest hope and confidence in them.
- C. Paul preached and wrote the truth to the Corinthians, and his boasting of them was also in truth.
- D. These encouraging and positive words are wisely securing further obedience for other duties.

7:15 *And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.*

- A. Titus grew in love for these converted pagans by their obedience to Paul's epistle, to his own teaching among them, and the fearful and reverential manner in which they had received him.
- B. Every minister ought to be esteemed and obeyed as the ambassador and representative of God, but especially an apostle like Paul or his companion Titus (Mal 2:7; I Thess 5:12-13; Heb 13:7,17).

7:16 *I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things.*

- A. Paul rejoiced by the wonderful report of Titus of the excellent spirit and actions of the Corinthians.
- B. Paul closed out the first half of the book before proceeding into other matters in the next chapter.
- C. The verse is wonderful in its affection and wise in its placement before Paul's next solicitation.
- D. The "all things" are matters of spirit and conduct that he had worried about until hearing from Titus, which includes his great boasting of the Corinthians, which he found to be in truth by the report.

Conclusion:

1. We cannot forget 7:1 and its summary of positive and negative motives to perfect holiness in body and spirit.
2. We cannot forget 7:9-11 and its clear definition of godly repentance for measuring ourselves and others.

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "[Perfecting Holiness](#)," which deals with 7:1 and the promises of 6:14-18.
2. The sermon outline, "[II Corinthians 6](#)," which covers the preceding context and promises for this seventh chapter.
3. The sermon outline, "[Holiness](#)," for learning the definition, nature, and emphasis on holiness from the Bible.
4. The sermon outline, "[The Pleasures of Sin](#)," provides further arguments for perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
5. The sermon outline, "[Playing with Sin](#)," warns of the severe consequences for not choosing holiness for your life.
6. The sermon outline, "[Is Jesus Lord?](#)" provides many ways of looking at whether you truly fear God or not.
7. The sermon outline, "[Your Body Is the Lord's](#)," will detail many different aspects of keeping your body holy.
8. The sermon outline, "[Spiritual Adultery](#)," makes the powerful point that playing with sin is adultery against Christ.
9. The sermon outline, "[Forgotten Sins](#)," reminds us of the many sins no longer feared or understood from the Bible.