

2 Corinthians 6

And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—²for He says, “At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.” Behold, now is “the acceptable time,” behold, now is “the day of salvation”—³giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited. **2 Corinthians 6:1-3 NASB**

Laboring together [as God’s fellow workers] with Him then, we beg of you not to receive the grace of God in vain [that merciful kindness by which God exerts His holy influence on souls and turns them to Christ, keeping and strengthening them—do not receive it to no purpose]. **2 Corinthians 6:1 AMPC**

- Paul reminds them, and us, that we are co-laborers, coworkers with Him in the kingdom.
 - He exhorts us not to receive God’s grace in vain...with no purpose...empty.
 - How do we avoid this from happening?

¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf. ¹⁶Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer. ¹⁷Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. **2 Corinthians 5:14-21 NASB**

- We are challenged to recognize what has happened to us and live our lives for Him.
- Now is the day of salvation...until Jesus returns...now is the day to pray things up and live them out!

- Paul, consequently, is fiercely committed to speak the truth and live the truth but do so without being offensive or discrediting their ministry.

⁴but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, ⁵in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, ⁶in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, ⁷in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, ⁸by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true; ⁹as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, ¹⁰as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things. ¹¹Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. ¹²You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. ¹³Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide *to us* also. **2 Corinthians 6:4-13 NASB**

- In the pressure cooker of their culture in that day, Paul consistently led his team in an honorable fashion regardless of the ‘wiles of the enemy’ and the difficulties of the work.
- This is quite a list (see **v4-13**)
 - Much need for endurance, afflictions.
 - Hardships, distresses, beatings
 - Imprisonments, tumults, labors
 - Sleeplessness, hunger, sorrowful
 - Punished, unknown, near death
 - Poor, rejected, weary, evil reports
 - And at the same time...rejoicing unrestrained in their love and concern for others.
- So Paul tells the church, “We have been wide open to you...open your hearts to us.”

¹⁴Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, “I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

¹⁷“Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord. “AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; and I will welcome you. ¹⁸“And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,” Says the Lord Almighty. **2**

Corinthians 6:14-18 NASB

- Paul is concerned at several levels...he is aware of the false teachers that have weaseled their way into the church and aim to ‘yoke’ people to empty ideas and concepts that will make unity very hard to maintain.
 - He is concerned about their spiritual unity as well as their marital oneness.
 - The enemy has been trying to tempt and lure people away from the Truth that is in Jesus and in so doing wreck their faith marriages and families.
 - Paul warns about being un-equally yoked.
 - Believers should marry believers.

“Paul’s sensitivity to criticism from the Jewish Christian quarter on this matter was, perhaps, intensified by a failure of Gentile believers in Corinth to make a clean break with temple worship. It is possible, in fact, that there had been some recent lapsing back into pagan worship. ‘Many’, he wrote later, ‘...have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery’ (**12:21**) If Athens was a city ‘full of idols’, so too was Corinth. A century later in his description of Corinth, Pausanias mentions, in addition to the temples of Apollo and Aphrodite, some twenty images ‘in the open’, six other temples of the Greek gods and five precincts for the Lords’ of the mysteries. Corinth was, in Paul’s words, a city of ‘many “gods” and many “lords.”’ Small dining rooms accommodating a dozen or so people formed part of these temple complexes. It was customary for hosts to invite friends to a meal in the name of a god. Prayers to the god would then occur during the banquet.”

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¹³No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. ¹⁴Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. ¹⁵I speak as to wise men; you judge what I say. ¹⁶Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Since there is one bread, we who are many are one body; for we all partake of the one bread. ¹⁸Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the

sacrifices sharers in the altar? ¹⁹What do I mean then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? ²⁰No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons. ²¹You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. ²²Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? We are not stronger than He, are we? ²³All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. ²⁴Let no one seek his own *good*, but that of his neighbor. ²⁵Eat anything that is sold in the meat market without asking questions for conscience' sake; ²⁶for the earth is the Lord's, and all it contains. ²⁷If one of the unbelievers invites you and you want to go, eat anything that is set before you without asking questions for conscience' sake. ²⁸But if anyone says to you, "This is meat sacrificed to idols," do not eat *it*, for the sake of the one who informed *you*, and for conscience' sake; ²⁹I mean not your own conscience, but the other *man's*; for why is my freedom judged by another's conscience? ³⁰If I partake with thankfulness, why am I slandered concerning that for which I give thanks? ³¹Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³²Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; ³³just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the *profit* of the many, so that they may be saved. **1 Corinthians 10:13-**

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¹³For no temptation (no trial regarded as enticing to sin), [no matter how it comes or where it leads] has overtaken you *and* laid hold on you that is not common to man [that is, no temptation or trial has come to you that is beyond human resistance and that is not adjusted and adapted and belonging to human experience, and such as man can bear]. But God is faithful [to His Word and to His compassionate nature], and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted *and* tried *and* assayed beyond your ability *and* strength of resistance *and* power to endure, but with the temptation He will [always] also provide the way out (the means of escape to a landing place), that you may be capable *and* strong *and* powerful to bear up under it patiently.

¹⁴Therefore, my dearly beloved, shun (keep clear away from, avoid by flight if need be) any sort of idolatry (of loving or venerating anything more than God).

1 Corinthians 10: 13-14 AMPC