

2 CORINTHIANS: DEFENDING GOD'S SERVANT TO HIS CRITICS

Part XIII: The Call For Believers To Purify Their Circle Of Fellowship

(2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1)

I. Introduction

- A. 2 Corinthians was written "to defend the authenticity of" Paul's "apostleship and his message" to a church of believers who were susceptible to heeding false teachers who critiqued him, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 552.
- B. These false teachers were unsaved men, apostates, so Paul's believing readers stood in need of correcting their circle of fellowship in opening up to Paul but breaking fellowship ties with the false, unbelieving teachers.
- C. Paul called for this correction in 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1, what supplies significant applications for us:

II. The Call For Believers To Purify Their Circle Of Fellowship, 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1.

- A. Having explained in his epistle thus far the validity of his ministry versus that of the false teachers who were trying to discredit Paul before them, Paul called for his Corinthian readers to open wide their hearts unto Paul and his ministry team, to fellowship with them without restraint, 2 Corinthians 6:11-13.
- B. However, the circle of true fellowship is a **select** one, it does **not** include the lost world under Satan's rule as seen by Jesus' statement in John 17:11, 14-17. Accordingly, Paul urged his readers to part company with the unsaved false teachers they faced and instead be blessed by God's fellowship, 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1 (Ibid., p. 570):
 1. Paul's 2 Corinthians 6:14a command not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers is "often applied to various sorts of alliances (e.g., mixed marriages, improper business associations)," and rightly so, but the **CONTEXT** reveals Paul's main aim was for his readers "to separate from the false apostles," Ibid.!
 2. His **reasons** lay the foundation for all separation from the lost in the realm of fellowship, 2 Cor. 6:14b-16a:
 - a. First, Paul rhetorically asked what "sharing, participation" (**metoche**, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 516) did righteousness have with lawlessness (**anomia**, Ibid., p. 71) (2 Cor. 6:14b), the expected answer being "nothing!"
 - b. Second, Paul rhetorically asked what "association, communion, fellowship" (**koinonia**, Ibid., p. 439-440) did light have with darkness (2 Corinthians 6:14c), the expected answer being "nothing!"
 - c. Third, Paul rhetorically asked what "harmony, agreement" (**sumphonosis**, Ibid., p. 788) did Christ have with "Belial," generally meaning "worthless person" but here applied to Satan (2 Cor. 6:15a; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 571), and the expected answer was "nothing!"
 - d. Fourth, Paul rhetorically asked what "share, portion" (**meris**, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 506) did a believer have with an unbeliever (2 Corinthians 6:15b), the expected answer being "nothing!"
 - e. Fifth, Paul rhetorically asked what "union" (**sugkatathesis**, Ibid., p. 781) did God's temple have with idols, noting that his readers were God's temple, with the expected answer being "nothing" (2 Cor. 6:16a)!
 3. Paul then alluded to several Old Testament passages to call his readers to separate from the godless unsaved teachers that they might enjoy fulfilling fellowship with a Holy God, 2 Corinthians 6:16b-18:
 - a. Paul referred to Isaiah 52:11 and Ezekiel 20:41 that spoke of Israel's redemption from "pagan bondage," that they come out from the pagan realm and be separate, touching no unclean thing that would defile them, and God would then accept them, 2 Corinthians 6:16b-17b; Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T.
 - b. Referring to Isaiah 43:6 where God called His people whom He was gathering from pagan lands His "sons and daughters," Paul taught that separation from evil fellowship gains not only God's acceptance (v. 17b), but also His fulfilling spiritual fellowship as a real Father unto His people, 2 Corinthians 6:18; Ibid.
 4. Paul's argument then concluded with the claim that if we are armed with such promises of spiritual fellowship blessing for holiness, we must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness in parting fellowship ties with unbelievers that we perfect separateness in relationships in reverence for the Lord, 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Lesson: *Though we believers are to love and seek to evangelize the unsaved for Christ (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:19-20), we have no mutual participation, fellowship, agreement, share or union with them, no grounds for fellowship with them. We must thus leave their realm of fellowship to enjoy fulfilling spiritual fellowship with a holy God. In practical terms, this will include avoiding marriage, business partnerships and church associations with the lost while joining in fellowship with fellow believers who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, 2 Timothy 2:22.*

Application: *There are no grounds for believers to experience spiritual fellowship with unbelievers, so God calls us Christians to part fellowship ties with the lost and fellowship instead with true believers and the Lord for spiritually fulfilling fellowship. This will affect who we marry, our business partnerships and church associations.*