

"Paul's Partnership with the Gospel"

Part 8

2 Corinthians 6:1-7:1

Introduction: Tonight in our study of 2 Corinthians we have come to a very familiar passage of Scripture. The passage we are about to step into has many applications some of which we shall consider but the passage only has ONE interpretation. As we approach this text we must be sure that we keep it in context in order to understand it properly.

In chapter 6 we could say that Paul has called his readers to a life of service (6:1-3) and to a life of sacrifice/suffering (6:4-10) and now as he continues he will call them to a life of separation (6:14-7:1).

I. The Command to Separate

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:14

Let me first of all say that this is not a command to move into the mountains or to build a shelter and never have any contact with the people of the world.

Matthew 5:13-16

¹³ *Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*

¹⁴ *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*

¹⁵ *Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*

¹⁶ *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

We must be around unbelievers so that they will see the work of God within our lives. When Jesus walked the earth He had many Divine appointments with unbelievers.

John 4:3-7

³ *He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.*

⁴ *And he must needs go through Samaria.*

⁵ *Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.*

⁶ Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

⁷ There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

At this well Jesus met with the woman from Samaria because she was in need of salvation. So this is not a command to separate from all unbelievers.

Notice 2 Corinthians 6:14 again.

When Paul penned this verse he was thinking of Deuteronomy 22.

Deuteronomy 22:10

¹⁰ Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.

When Israel plowed their land they were not to put 2 different animals under the same yoke. Ray Stedman tells the story of being in the Middle East and seeing a farmer plowing with a camel and a donkey under the same yoke. He said it was a sorry sight for the camel's legs were much longer than the donkey's and so the donkey had to run to keep up. The entire time the farmer was beating the donkey to attempt to keep him in stride with the larger camel.

This is why God forbid the yoking together of 2 different animals which had 2 different natures. Now let me set this verse in the proper context. The church at Corinth had been infiltrated with Judaizers who were completely against Paul and his message of grace. Some of the Corinthians had apparently sided with the Judaizers and for this reason the Judaizers had a place of influence within the church. They were permitted to come in and teach their false doctrine. This was exactly why there was a lack of love in the hearts of the Corinthians for Paul.

So this is where the command comes in. They were to separate from these false teachers. The false teachers were NOT to have any authority within the body of Christ. The Judaizers believed salvation was by works and the Corinthians had been taught by Paul that salvation was by grace. So since they were saved by grace they could not come together with the Judaizers who believed salvation was by works. This would be the same as placing 2 different animals with 2 different natures under the same yoke. So the command here in verse 14 is for the Corinthian believers to separate from the false teachers. But there are many applications for our lives as believers and we need to consider some of these applications.

This command pertains to business partnerships, marriage, investment deals and the list goes on and on. It does not mean we cannot work for unbelievers and it does not mean we cannot work with unbelievers. It means we are not to come together with them under the same yoke.

Allow me to address a very popular response many offer in opposition to the command given here. I have heard many times over, "If I join up with this person who is unsaved (either in marriage or in a business partnership) then my life as a believer will influence him or her to turn to Christ." This is one of Satan's most famous lies. My response to this would be, "If that is going to be the end result then why did God give this command here in 2 Corinthians 6?" The reason God gave the command here is because when a believer and an unbeliever come under the same yoke it is going to be a constant struggle because they have 2 different natures and the end result will be the pulling down of the believer. Let me show you a warning which God gave to Israel when He gave them the Military Manual for entering Canaan.

Deuteronomy 20:10-18

¹⁰ When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.

¹¹ And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.

¹² And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:

¹³ And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:

¹⁴ But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

¹⁵ Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations.

¹⁶ But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:

¹⁷ But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

¹⁸ That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sin against the LORD your God.

Israel failed to do as God commanded here and for that reason Israel became involved in the worship of the false gods of the land of Canaan which brought great heartache into the lives of many.

Let me get you back to the command again. When a believer gets unequally yoked together with an unbeliever the 2 will eventually begin to pull in different directions and the believer will become weary and begin to adapt to the ways of the unbeliever which will result in a miserable life. A sad example of this would be Lot. When given the choice he moved toward Sodom and as more time passed he moved into Sodom. Now notice what Peter said about him.

2 Peter 2:6-8

⁶ *And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;*

⁷ *And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:*

⁸ *(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)*

Lot was miserable living among those of Sodom.

Many times when a believer is confronted with the command of 2 Corinthians 6:14 they refuse to walk in obedience because their emotions are so involved and they make choices based upon feelings. Let me show you a prayer of a girl on her wedding day as recorded by Ray Stedman.

"Dear God, I can hardly believe that this is my wedding day. I know I haven't been able to spend much time with you lately with all the rush of getting ready for today, and I'm sorry. I guess too, I feel a little guilty when I try to pray about all this, since Larry still isn't a Christian. But Oh! Father, I love him so much. What else can I do? I just couldn't give him up. Oh! you must save him some way, somehow. You know how much I have prayed for him and the way we've discussed the gospel together. I've tried not to appear too religious, I know, but that's because I didn't want to scare him off. Yet he isn't antagonistic and I don't understand why he hasn't responded. Oh! if only he were a Christian. Dear Father, please bless our marriage. I don't want to disobey you, but I do love him, and I want to be his wife. So please be with us, and please don't spoil my wedding day."

Stedman adds, "It was a sincere prayer, but it was a very sadly mistaken prayer. Though she did not realize it, what she was really praying was something like this:"

"Dear Father, I don't want to disobey you, but I must have my own way at all costs. For I love what you do not love, and I want what you do not want. So please be a good God and deny yourself and move off your throne and let me take over. If you don't like this, all I ask is that you bite your lip and say nothing and don't spoil my wedding day. Let me have my evil."

The words of John Phillips are worthy of our attention:

"Doubtless, in all such cases, a great deal of human rationalization goes on. It is so easy, in the heat of passion, or under the spell of powerful infatuation, or under the pressure of circumstance, or under the influence of some persuasive sophist, or dazzled by the prospect of quick promotion or swift, financial reward to explain away or ignore this clear cut demand of Scripture."

In the book of Ezra there is another very sad example of what happens when God's people refuse to live separated lives. Let me give you the back ground. After the Babylonian captivity there was a remnant of people who returned to Jerusalem and began to rebuild. They built the foundation of the new Temple and after a good start they drifted away. They became caught up in their own affairs and namely their own houses.

Haggai 1:2-5

² *Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built.*

³ *Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying,*

⁴ *Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled houses, and this house lie waste?*

⁵ *Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.*

The prophets then stirred the people and they went back to work and the Temple was finished in 516 B.C. Then 58 years later Ezra brought led more of the Israelites back to Jerusalem and when he arrived he discovered there was a lack of zeal toward God among the people.

Ezra 9:1-3

Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

² For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

³ And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.

This lack of separation brought with it great sorrow.

Ezra 10:10-12

¹⁰ And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.

¹¹ Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and **separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.**

¹² Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do.

That day there were many broken families and it was all the result of ignoring God's commands. This does not mean if you are married to an unbeliever you are to leave them for the New Testament tells us the opposite. I bring all of this out to help us to see the danger of being unequally yoked together with the unsaved.

Conclusion:

I believe separation is taught in the 6 days of creation.

Genesis 1:1-7

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

² *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

³ *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*

⁴ *And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*

⁵ *And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.*

⁶ *And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.*

⁷ *And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.*

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PM Service

When the LIGHT shined on the water it was separated. Some of the water was changed and it was raised up and seated in the heavens as clouds but the rest of the water remained on earth unchanged and continued to follow the natural law which states that water always seeks its "own" level which is the lowest.