

A RESPONSE TO THE CRITICS

2 Corinthians 1:12-24

OUR LIVES SHOULD AFFIRM OUR CONFESSION AS FOLLOWER OF JESUS

- *“Indeed, this is our boast: The testimony of our conscience is that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you, with godly sincerity and purity, not by human wisdom but by God’s grace. 13 For we are writing nothing to you other than what you can read and also understand. I hope you will understand completely— 14 just as you have partially understood us—that we are your reason for pride, just as you also are ours in the day of our Lord Jesus.” (2 Corinthians 1:12-14)*
- *“So don’t judge anything prematurely, before the Lord comes, who will both bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts.” (1 Corinthians 1:5)*

Our Lives Should Be Marked By:

- 1) Godly Sincerity
 - 1) Purity
 - 2) Spiritual Integrity
- **When you are living faithfully for Jesus, people will try to find fault with you, but your life testimony should squash any accusations.**
 - *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)*
 - *“Let us walk with decency, as in the daytime: not in carousing and drunkenness; not in sexual impurity and promiscuity; not in quarreling and jealousy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires.” (Romans 13:13-14)*
 - **Even when you are living and testifying of the Lord faithfully, some people will ‘hear’ you without ‘understanding’ you.**
 - *“For we are writing nothing to you other than what you can read and also understand. I hope you will understand*

completely— 14 just as you have partially understood us—that we are your reason for pride, just as you also are ours in the day of our Lord Jesus.” (2 Cor. 1:13-14)

- **Sometimes the very people you invest the gospel in, and disciple, are the people who turn on you due to their lack of spiritual maturity. (vss. 13-14)**

WHEN PEOPLE DON’T MEET OUR EXPECTATIONS, WE NEED TO REMEMBER THAT GOD’S PROMISES ARE TRUSTWORTHY

- *“Now when I planned this, was I of two minds? Or what I plan, do I plan in a purely human way so that I say ‘Yes, yes’ and ‘No, no’ at the same time? 18 As God is faithful, our message to you is not ‘Yes and no.’ 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you—Silvanus, Timothy, and I—did not become ‘Yes and no.’ On the contrary, in Him it is always ‘Yes.’ 20 For every one of God’s promises is ‘Yes’ in Him. Therefore, through Him we also say ‘Amen’ to the glory of God.” (2 Corinthians 1:17-20)*
- **We should live our lives so committed to Christ that we can confidently say our word is a mirroring of God’s faithfulness.**
- **People may question your faithfulness, but the words you speak should be a reminder that God is always faithful!**

THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST ARE SEALED BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT GUARANTEEING THAT WE ARE HIS CHILDREN FOREVER

- *“Now it is God who strengthens us together with you in Christ, and who has anointed us. 22 He has also put his seal on us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a down payment.” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22)*
- **In biblical times the seal placed on something, or someone, indicated ownership, security, and authenticity.**
- *“In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. 14 The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.” (Ephesians 1:13-14)*

- **When God guarantees something, NO ONE has the power to revoke His guarantee.**
- *“My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.” (John 10:27-29)*
- *“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)*
- *“I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:6)*
- **When everything else seems to be collapsing around you, remember that as a Christian you are guaranteed your place in God’s eternal kingdom!**

****CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION ON BACK****

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION

Observation:

- What testimony does Paul give about how he and his companions conducted themselves among the Corinthians? (vss. 12-14)
- How does Paul describe God's faithfulness, and what does he say about God's promises in Christ? (vss. 17-20)
- What actions has God taken for those who belong to Christ? (vss. 21-22)
- Why does Paul explain that he delayed his visit to Corinth. How does he describe his relationship with the believers? (vss. 23-24)

Understanding

- Paul says he lived with sincerity and integrity before others. What are some practical ways Christians can maintain a consistent witness in a culture that often expects hypocrisy?
- Have you ever been misunderstood or criticized even when you were trying to honor God? How did you respond, and what did that experience teach you?
- Why is it important that our private character matches our public profession of faith? Where is that most challenging for you?
- Paul points the Corinthians away from his circumstances and toward God's unchanging promises. When people disappoint you, what helps you continue trusting God instead of becoming cynical or discouraged?
- Paul reminds believers that God has sealed them with the Holy Spirit. How does knowing your salvation rests on God's work—not your performance—change the way you face failure, temptation, or suffering?
- What practical difference should the assurance of your eternal security make in your everyday decisions, priorities, and relationships?

Loving Outward:

- Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
- Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
- Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?