

THE JOY WE CAN ALL EXPERIENCE

2 Corinthians 7:2-16

THE INTEGRITY OF A GODLY LEADER DISPELS FALSE ACCUSATIONS

- “Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, corrupted no one, taken advantage of no one.” (2 Corinthians 7:2)
- **You cannot always control what people say about you, but you can live in such a way that your character contradicts their accusations.**
- “Do not fear them or be intimidated, 15 but in your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you. 16 Yet do this with gentleness and reverence, keeping a clear conscience, so that when you are accused, those who disparage your good conduct in Christ will be put to shame.” (1 Peter 3:14b-16)
- “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the perversity of the treacherous destroys them.” (Proverbs 11:3)
- **When your reputation is under attack, one of your strongest defenses is a life of consistent integrity.**

GODLY LEADERS JOYFULLY EMBRACE AFFLICTION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CHURCH

- “I don’t say this to condemn you, since I have already said that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. 4 I am very frank with you; I have great pride in you. I am filled with encouragement; I am overflowing with joy in all our afflictions.” (2 Corinthians 7:3-4)
- **We need to be careful to not be so focused on what areas people miss the mark, that we don’t celebrate the times when people show godly repentance and progress.**
- **Godly leadership is willing to endure personal pain when that pain produces spiritual progress in the people God has called us to serve.**

GOD COMFORTS US AND GIVES US JOY WHEN OTHERS RESPOND TO GODLY INSTRUCTIONS

- “In fact, when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest. Instead, we were troubled in every way: conflicts on the outside, fears within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the arrival of Titus, 7 and not only by his arrival but also by the comfort he received from you. He told us about your deep longing, your sorrow, and your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.” (2 Corinthians 7:5-7)
- **Sometimes God doesn’t remove the trouble around you; He sends encouragement that renews the joy within you.**
- “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our affliction...” (2 Corinthians 1:3-4a)
- **Those who are in Christ experience the beneficial blessings of joy and comfort that only come from God!**

THERE IS A TIME TO REJOICE IN SOMEONE’S GRIEF

- “For even if I grieved you with my letter, I don’t regret it. And if I regretted it—since I saw that the letter grieved you, yet only for a while— 9 I now rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance. For you were grieved as God willed, so that you didn’t experience any loss from us. 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death. 11 For consider how much diligence this very thing—this grieving as God wills—has produced in you: what a desire to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what deep longing, what zeal, what justice! In every way you showed yourselves to be pure in this matter. 12 So even though I wrote to you, it was not because of the one who did wrong, or because of the one who was wronged, but in order that your devotion to us might be made plain to you in the sight of God.” (2 Corinthians 7:8-12)
- **Godly grief doesn’t leave you drowning in guilt; it drives you toward repentance, restoration, and the grace of God.**
- **We must be careful in today’s “church culture” to remember that we have the whole counsel of God contained in the 66 books of the Bible, and to test what others say against the Bible.**

- “GODLY grief is focused on what your sin did to God (or someone else); WORLDLY grief is focused on what your sin did to you.” – JD Greear
- Sometimes the pain we desperately want God to take away is the very pain He is using to turn our hearts back toward Him.
- When godly grief leads to repentance we can rejoice in the restored relationship with God and each other.

WE ALL CAN REJOICE TOGETHER WHEN WE WALK IN OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST

- *“For this reason we have been comforted. In addition to our own comfort, we rejoiced even more over the joy Titus had, because his spirit was refreshed by all of you. 14 For if I have made any boast to him about you, I have not been disappointed; but as I have spoken everything to you in truth, so our boasting to Titus has also turned out to be the truth. 15 And his affection toward you is even greater as he remembers the obedience of all of you, and how you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice that I have complete confidence in you.” (2 Corinthians 7:13-16)*
- **Disobedience to the word of God (Bible) leads to division in the Church.**
- **When God’s people walk together in obedience to Christ, one person’s spiritual victory becomes a reason for the whole church to rejoice.**

****Connect Group Discussion on Back****

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION

Observation:

- How does Paul describe his conduct with the Corinthians, his relationship with them, and his attitude toward them despite the difficulties they had experienced? (vss. 2-4)
- What difficulties was Paul experiencing in Macedonia, and how did God bring him comfort and joy through Titus and the news Titus brought from Corinth? (vss. 5-7)
- What is the difference between godly grief and worldly grief, and what evidence showed that the Corinthians' grief had produced genuine repentance? (vss. 8-12)
- What caused Titus and Paul to rejoice, and what role did the Corinthians' obedience play in producing that joy? (vss. 13-16)

Understanding

- Why are we often tempted to defend our reputation immediately when someone misunderstands or falsely accuses us?
- Why can it be easier to notice what is still wrong with someone than to celebrate the ways God is changing them?
- Question to ponder: Is there someone in your family, church, small group, or life whose spiritual progress you need to recognize and encourage rather than focusing primarily on where they still fall short?
- What is the difference between correction motivated by love and restoration and criticism motivated by frustration, superiority, anger, or a desire to control?
- Can you think of a time when God did not immediately change your circumstances but used another person to strengthen, encourage, or comfort you? Share if you are comfortable doing so.
- What does genuine repentance look like beyond simply saying, “I’m sorry”?
- How can you become more receptive when Scripture exposes an attitude, behavior, relationship, or habit that God wants to change?
- What would change in our church and Connect groups if we became as excited about repentance, obedience, and spiritual growth as our culture becomes about achievement and success?

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?