



A COMPANION WORKBOOK FOR 2 CORINTHIANS

THE JOY OF FEARING GOD

*Pleasing Jesus, surrendering to love,
and persuading others by grace*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-21

GRACE POINT CHURCH

THE BIG IDEA

The fear of man is poison, and the only antidote is the fear of the Lord. If we truly fear the Lord, we will persuade others.

Fear of man makes us live by appearances, seek identity on the world's terms, and fit the gospel into our preferred categories. Fear of the Lord lifts our focus to Christ until pleasing Him matters more than protecting ourselves or winning approval.

KEY SCRIPTURE

"Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:11

Where am I more controlled by the fear of people than by the desire to please Jesus?

REFLECT AND RESPOND

FEAR THE LORD

The fear of the Lord is more than reverence and more than anxiety about judgment. It shifts our concern from what God might do to us to what our unbelief or disobedience might do to Him. It says yes to whatever brings Him glory.

FEAR OF MAN

- Protects self and reputation
- Lives by outward appearance
- Needs approval to obey

FEAR OF THE LORD

- Trusts whatever God decides
- Lives for His glory and praise
- Says yes before asking what

Whatever God wants, I want. Whatever God decides, I trust Him. Whatever brings Him glory, I will live for.

What explanation, plan, preference, or guarantee do I think God owes me before I say yes?

SAYING YES FOR HIS GLORY

A HEART THAT PLEASES JESUS

The fear of the Lord grows in a heart that values what God sees over outward appearance. It is willing to be misunderstood by the world, yet it also works patiently so others can understand the gospel and refuses to abandon Christ's church.

"If we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:13

A GOSPEL-SHAPED HEART

1

VALUES THE HEART

It lives before the God who knows motives, not for outward applause.

2

ACCEPTS MISUNDERSTANDING

It refuses to trade faithfulness for the world's approval.

3

LABORS FOR UNDERSTANDING

It serves people patiently and keeps loving the Bride of Christ.

Where am I tempted to manage appearances, avoid misunderstanding, or give up on people instead of pleasing Jesus?

WHAT GOD SEES IN MY HEART

CONTROLLED BY CHRIST'S LOVE

We are always controlled by something. Paul rejoices that the love of Christ controls him because only surrender to that love produces true and lasting joy. Jesus died and rose so that those who live would no longer live for themselves.

"The love of Christ controls us... that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:14-15

SELF-PROTECTION → SURRENDER

LIVING FOR SELF → LIVING FOR JESUS

FEAR OF PEOPLE → JOY IN CHRIST'S LOVE

What is controlling me right now? What would joyful surrender to the love of Christ change?

SURRENDERING TO HIS LOVE

SEE THROUGH NEW-CREATION EYES

The gospel changes how we see Jesus, ourselves, and everyone else. We no longer reduce people to appearance, category, failure, politics, or usefulness. In Christ, the old has passed away and a new heart begins to see as God sees.

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

A NEW HEART IS

1

PURCHASED

By the death of Jesus and secured by His resurrection.

2

CONTROLLED

By the love of Jesus rather than fear of His enemies.

3

COMMITTED

To the Bride of Jesus and whatever brings Him glory.

Whom am I still regarding according to the flesh? How would the gospel reshape the way I see and treat that person?

LOOKING WITH A NEW HEART

AMBASSADORS OF RECONCILIATION

Once we have been made new, we cannot remain safely silent. God reconciled us, entrusted us with the message and ministry of reconciliation, made us ambassadors, and now makes His appeal through ordinary people like us.

"We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us."

2 CORINTHIANS 5:20

1

OWN OUR NEED

Stand beside sinners and be honest about our own need for grace.

2

NAME THEIR NEED

Love people enough to speak honestly about sin and reconciliation.

3

INVITE THEM TO JESUS

Believe God can save anyone and invite them to receive His grace.

Who needs me to stand with them, speak honestly, and invite them to be reconciled to God?

MY MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION

DISCUSSION & PRAYER

- 01 Where does fear of man most often influence your identity, judgment, or obedience?
- 02 How is fearing the Lord connected to pleasing Jesus rather than fearing punishment?
- 03 What does it mean to say yes to God before asking what He wants?
- 04 How does Christ's controlling love produce freedom and joy rather than bondage?
- 05 Whom are you tempted to regard according to the flesh?
- 06 How can honesty about your own need for grace strengthen your gospel witness?

PRAY: Confess where fear of people has replaced the fear of the Lord. Thank Jesus for the great exchange, ask His love to control you, and pray for courage to persuade others with grace and truth.

NOTES AND PRAYER

SAY YES & PERSUADE

For our sake, God made Jesus to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

The great exchange is the heart of the gospel: Jesus took our sin and gave us His righteousness. This is the grace that frees us to fear God joyfully and persuade others lovingly.

1

WHERE IS GOD CHALLENGING ME TO SAY YES FOR HIS GLORY?

Name the place where fear, preference, or uncertainty has made you withhold obedience.

2

WHO IS GOD LEADING ME TO PERSUADE BY HIS GRACE?

Name one person and choose one honest, loving next step toward reconciliation.

All this is from God. We simply get the joy of taking part.

MY NEXT STEP OF GOSPEL COURAGE