

Second Corinthians VI How Are You Building Your Spiritual Life?

(2-Cor. 6)

Develop the character of gold, silver and precious stones

Fred R. Coulter—June 23, 2018

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to Sabbath services! We've been making pretty good progress in the Epistle of Paul, his second epistle to the Corinthians. It is quite an epistle. There are many things we need to think about when we're going through here. We're going to see some very interesting things as we go along.

We're trying to get through all of these so we can have them as Transcript Study Books with the CDs to go with it. That makes for a very good combination in being able to study the Bible.

2-Corinthians 6:1: "We then, working together *with Him*... [*Christ*; it all works together with God's Spirit] ...are also exhorting you not to **receive the grace of God in vain.**"

What does that mean? *I think one of the ways that you can see very easily is to watch some of the programs on TBN!* They take the grace of God very lightly and they preach their fake Christianity, though they quote the Scripture. If you listen carefully, they really don't quote it most of the time as it should be. There are some few who do a pretty good job. However:

- you need the whole Bible
- you need to love God
- you need to keep His commandments
- you need to keep at it through thick and thin regardless of what happens

Let's look at some Scriptures concerning how not to take the grace of God in vain. One of the ways is to continue living in sin; **then you are taking the grace of God in vain!** I think you look at it today, this is the way a lot of people look at it. But here's the Truth of God:

- we must love God
- we must obey Him
- we must keep His commandments

Isn't it interesting that in 2-Cor. 6:1 *we find the answer to what it means to take the grace of God in vain*, and find that also in Rom. 6. So, Paul says:

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound?... [*that's taking the grace of God in vain*] ...MAY IT

NEVER BE!... [here's the reason why]: ...**We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein?"** (vs 1-2).

How do we die to sin? *Dying to sin is through the operation of baptism by full immersion in water!* That is a symbolic death:

- you're not to *live* in sin
- you're not to take the grace of God in vain by being *willfully* sinning

Let's see what Paul wrote concerning that. Quite a warning, because of what God does:

Hebrews 10:15: "And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said, "This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days," says *the* Lord, "I will give My Laws..." (vs 15-16).

That's through grace! It takes the grace of God to have the laws of God put in your heart and mind.

"...into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds; and their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again" (vs 16-17).

This is what is so fantastic about it. Grace means that *we have the ability to approach God the Father directly through prayer!* We pray to God and when we study, His Word teaches us and helps us so that our minds are cleansed and that we can come to God with a pure heart, through Jesus Christ. That's the whole purpose of grace.

It's a continually ongoing thing because we are overcoming. We are going toward perfection. We are not yet perfect, but God:

- through Christ
- through His Spirit
- through His love
- through our zealouslyness in doing our part

is going to perfect us! The final perfection will be the resurrection! Amazing! He's explaining it here in Hebrews:

Verse 18: "Now, where remission of these *is*, it is no longer *necessary to offer* sacrifices for sin. Therefore, brethren, **having confidence to enter**

into the true Holiest by the blood of Jesus” (vs 18-19)—*right before God!*

Think about that the next time you pray. That’s why we say: *Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven!*

On earth means *all the prophecies to be fulfilled*. That means *working with each one of us individually through the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to teach us and help us*, so we can grow in grace and knowledge and move toward that perfection, and grow in the love of God. ***That’s the whole purpose of everything that God is doing with us!***

“...to enter into the true Holiest by the blood of Jesus... [that’s an amazing thing] ...by a new and living way, which He consecrated for us through the veil (that is, His flesh), and having a great High Priest over the house of God” (vs 19-21).

The whole Church—wherever they are—scattered or in fellowship groups, large or small, it makes no difference, ***God knows who has His Spirit!***

- He loves each one of us
- He cares for us
- He wants us to grow and overcome

Here is how we can approach God in our prayers, in our thoughts, and everything; v 22: “Let us approach **God with a true heart...** [that comes with the washing of the water by the Word] **...with full conviction of faith...**”

Hebrews 11:1 talks about faith: “Now, faith is *the substance of things hoped for, and the conviction of things not seen.*”

This is *the spiritual substance* that comes from God’s Spirit. So, when we approach God, ***with full conviction of faith:***

- knowing that it is true
- knowing that His Word is true
- knowing that His promises are true
- that whatever God has said He will do

Remember what Jesus said, ‘If you love Me, keep the commandments, namely Mine and whatever you ask in My name, I will do.’ *That is if it’s according to the will of God!* So, you can see all these Scriptures come together like this.

Hebrews 10:22: “...our hearts having been purified... [constantly, day-by-day] ...from a wicked conscience, and our bodies having been washed with pure water.... [that’s baptism] ...Let us hold fast

without wavering *to the hope that we profess, for He Who promised is faithful*” (vs 22-23).

That’s something we need to really do. Let’s grasp the greatness of the calling of God. Now then, turn the coin to the other side:

Verse 26: “For if we willfully go on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins.”

This is not where we go along and sin, then repent and overcome; *that’s part of the grace of God!* But this is taking the grace of God in vain ***if we are living in sin!*** Let’s see another example of taking the grace of God in vain. Paul was writing this to the whole Church.

Sidebar: The reason why Paul didn’t put his name here is because if it had gone to Jerusalem, there were so many zealots there—as you see how they came against Paul—that they probably would have burned it on sight. His name is not in here, but we have a lot of indications that it was Paul who wrote it and probably Luke who penned it.

Here’s what we need to do; Hebrews 6:1: “Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ... [yes, he wants us to go on] ...we should go on to perfection; not laying again *the* foundation of repentance from dead works, and *of* faith in God.”

Paul says here, because if we do this, then we are going to be using the grace of God *profitably*, not in vain. Then he gives another warning here:

Verse 4: “For *it is* impossible for those *who were* once enlightened, and who personally obtained **the heavenly gift...** [the Holy Spirit] ...and became partakers of *the* Holy Spirit, and who have tasted *the* good Word of God, and *the* powers of *the* world to come, if they have fallen away, to renew *them* again unto repentance; *seeing that* they are crucifying the Son of God for themselves, and are publicly holding *Him* in contempt” (vs 4-6).

But he said, ‘Brethren, we expect greater things than that from you.’ *Yes, indeed!* Let’s go forward and look at some things we need to do with this.

2-Corinthians 6:2: “(For He says, ‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, and **in a** day of salvation I have helped you.’....” Note: the *King James Version* says **the** day of salvation.

This is where the Protestants get the doctrine that if you’re not saved right now, according to their doctrines, you’re all going to burn in hell forever. Because it is *the day*, they say, as the *King James Version*. But it is in the Greek ***a day***. We’ll look at

the prophecy in Isa. 49 in just a minute and see it's the same thing here.

"...Behold, now *is* an acceptable time. Behold, now *is* **a day** of salvation" (v 2).

Isa. 49—I'll have to bring a message with that as a central theme of it; that has to do with Jesus Christ as being our Savior, being called to do this. Let's take a look at it and let's read this prophecy and see that in 2-Cor. 6:2 that it has been translated properly.

Isaiah 49:7: "Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, *to Him* whom man despises, *to Him* whom the nation hates, the Servant of rulers... [that's what it's going to be in the Millennium] ...'Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship because of the LORD Who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, and He shall choose You.'" ***That means Christ!***

Verse 8: "Thus says the LORD, 'In a favorable time I have answered You, and in a day of salvation I have helped You; and I will preserve You, and give You for a covenant of the people, to restore the earth, to cause them to inherit the wasted inheritances.'" ***This is talking about Christ!***

- How does our salvation come? *Through Christ!*
- What was the day that that would begin? *It began on the Passover week when He was crucified, shed His blood—that's the sacrifice!*
- then the salvation began when He was resurrected from the dead, ascended to heaven, to be accepted by the Father
- then He came back and spent 40-days and 40-nights with the apostles, teaching them
- on the 40th day He ascended to heaven and said to them, 'You wait in Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high'

Pentecost then becomes the beginning, that ***day of salvation***. You might liken it now that the Church is in the day of Pentecost, from the time of the giving of the Holy Spirit until the time of the resurrection at Pentecost. It all connects together with all the brethren down through the ages.

A day of salvation means today is a day of salvation for us through Christ, Who was crucified, died, shed His blood, and was resurrected. So, He's our High Priest in heaven right now. It is ***a*** day of salvation. ***Our day is today!***

Paul talks about his ministry. When we get toward the end of 2-Cor. I'm going to put all these

things that Paul had to do and are recounted in 2-Cor. Almost all of them are there. That's quite an amazing thing.

2-Corinthians 6:3: "We do not give offense to anyone in anything, so that the ministry may not be blamed; but in everything we are confirming ourselves as servants of God..." (vs 3-4).

How is that being confirmed? Remember, there were many false prophets coming around with fake Christianity back then.

Let's see about Paul's calling. We will see, as we go along and go through 2-Cor. that Paul did indeed suffer perhaps more than any of the other apostles. ***Quite a thing to understand!***

Here's Saul in Acts 9. This becomes important because Christ prophesied of what he would suffer for the glory of the preaching that he would do.

Acts 9:1: "Now Saul, still breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, asking him *for* letters *to take* to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who were of that way..." (vs 1-2).

Sidebar: true Christianity is ***a way of life***, and is based upon everything that God wants us to do. As Jesus said: ***We are to live by every Word of God:***

- plus the Holy Spirit
- plus the grace of God
- plus access to God
- plus God intervening in our lives
- plus the great reward that lies ahead of us in ruling the world under Christ

Paul got the letters and he's going to bring them back to Jerusalem.

Verse 3: "But it came to pass while he was journeying, as he drew near to Damascus, that suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him. And after falling to the ground, he heard a voice say to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?'" (vs 3-4).

Isn't that interesting? ***If you are persecuted, they are persecuting Christ!*** Why? ***Because Christ is in you!*** The Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of the Father are in you. So, this is how Christ looks at it. The Church is called the Body of Christ. If you persecute those who are in the Body of Christ, you are persecuting Christ.

Verse 5: "And he said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, Whom you

are persecuting. *It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.*”

You’ve seen those long spikes that are on that vine; those are the pricks. You kick against that, and what’s going to happen to you? *That’s going to be a disaster indeed!* So, Paul’s behavior to Christ was like the same thing.

Verse 6: “Then, trembling and astonished, he said, ‘Lord, what will You have me to do?’ And the Lord *said* to him, ‘Get up and go into the city, and you shall be told what you must do.’ Now, the men who were traveling with him stood speechless; *for* they indeed heard the voice, but they saw no one. Then Saul arose from the ground... [he was led into the city] (v 9): *But for* three days he was not *able* to see, and he did not eat or drink” (vs 6-9). Then it talks about Ananias and God called him.

Verse 10: “Now, there was in Damascus a certain disciple named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Behold, *I am here*, Lord.’ And the Lord *said* to him, ‘Arise *and* go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in *the* house of Judas for *one* named Saul from Tarsus; for behold, he is praying, And he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming and putting *his* hands on him, so that he may receive sight.’ Then Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many *people* about this man, how many evil things he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And *even* in this place he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name” (vs 10-14).

Here’s the Lord’s answer. This helps us understand many of the things that Paul went through in suffering:

Verse 15: “But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for this *man* is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before *the* Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel; for **I will show him what great things he must suffer for My name**” (vs 15-16). *And he did suffer great, great things!*

Today, our sufferings are entirely different than it was back then for Paul or for the early New Testament Church. Let’s see what Paul says about his ministry. This is quite enlightening. I’m sure that every minister, and even you yourself have had these contradictions come against you. So, here are the extremes:

2-Corinthians 6:4: “But in everything we are confirming ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses... [these are plural] ...in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings,

in fastings, in pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in *the* Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned” (vs 4-6).

That tells you an awful lot what Paul had to go through. In modern vernacular that would be the good, the bad and the ugly, if you want to look at it that way.

Here’s why, v 7: “*The Word of Truth*, in *the* power of God; through the armor of righteousness on the right hand and *on the* left, through glory and dishonor... [this has happened to all of us; you can say goodness or dishonor, glory in that sense] ...through evil report and good report, as deceivers and true” (vs 7-8).

I look back at some of the things that we’ve done here in the Christian Biblical Church of God, and over the years, and a lot of these things have come to us the same way. Having left WCG, I’ve been denounced as whatever by so many different ones. Even one minister, who has since died, disfellowshipped me three times, even though I was never in his organization.

“...as deceivers and true” (v 8). The Jews would look upon him as deceiving the people. You need to go to Jerusalem. You need to have Judaism.

Verse 9: “As unknown and well known; as dying, but behold, we are alive; as chastened, but not put to death; as sorrowful, but always rejoicing; as poor, but enriching many; as having nothing, yet, possessing all things” (vs 9-10)—*that are necessary!*

There are times when Paul was hungry. There are times when they were chasing him. Remember when he was thrown in the prison there in Philippi? Quite a thing! So, he says:

Verse 11: “O *you* Corinthians! Our mouths have been opened to you, and our hearts have been enlarged *toward you*. You are not suppressed by us, but you are restricted in your own hearts” (vs 11-12).

What Paul is telling them is that here’s an illusion to those false prophets who were coming in and they were taking tithes. Paul took nothing from them, *not a thing!* He wanted them to know the truth and sincerity of his ministry to them as compared to the ‘hutzpa,’ of those false prophets coming in saying how great they were.

This also has to do with tithes and offerings. They were restricted in their own hearts. They gave to the false preachers, but they weren’t giving to Paul. So, Paul said, ‘*All right, I’m not going to take a thing from you, just to show you the difference between the Truth and what these false ministers are teaching you!*’

Verse 13: “Now in return *for our ministry to you* (I am speaking to you as to children), you should also enlarge *your hearts toward us*.” That is in illusion to giving funds and food and things to him. Every one of these things tell us that these were happening in Corinth:

- How bad was Corinth?
- How depraved had it become?
- How easily falling away from the Truth, slipping away from it and getting involved in all sorts of things that weren't right?

We'll go through some of these things and see exactly what it was that they were doing and up against. All of this is in a contradiction to being the children of God and receiving salvation. We will also see just about all these same things we find in Protestantism; certainly find them in Catholicism, without a doubt.

Verse 14: “Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers....” Paul also wrote in 1-Cor. that there will be situations where a husband will be called, but not the wife; or the wife will be called, but not the husband. That is not being yoked to unbelievers in the sense that this is talking about. Paul said, ‘Who knows, O man; or who knows, O woman, whether your conduct will help your husband or your wife to be converted?’ Unbelievers are people out in the world. This could be in business. This could be in other things. Yoked means *bound together with unbelievers!*

“...For what do righteousness and lawlessness have in common?....” (v 14). ***Nothing, absolutely nothing!*** They are as far apart as the east is from the west.

The righteousness that God wants us to develop is *the righteousness that comes from Him*. That righteousness is based on faith, hope, love, and steadfastness in everything that you do. ***That righteousness cannot have any companionship whatsoever with lawlessness!*** What is lawlessness?

1-John 3:4: “Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness.” The *King James Version* says sin is the transgression of the Law. That's an acceptable translation, but lawlessness is more precise.

The important thing concerning lawlessness that men have that they do, which is they substitute *their own* teachings, *their own* traditions, and put them together with the Word of God. That's why Paul is saying, **‘For what do righteousness and lawlessness have in common?’** *It doesn't!* That's precisely what we see in worldly Christianity today.

Then Paul also says, 2-Corinthians 6:14: “...And what fellowship *does* light have with darkness?” ***It doesn't!***

Let's come here to John 3 and let's see something very important concerning light. Christ is called ***the Light of the world***. He says so three times. The Word of God is also called *Light*. Let's begin with a verse we all know and then we'll go on beyond that, because this becomes an important thing for us to realize and understand.

John 3:15: “So that everyone who believes in Him **may not perish...**” This shows there are conditions to it, as I've said many, many times. Perish means *to have no existence at all and no hope of resurrection!*

“...but **may have** everlasting life” (v 15).

- What is that going to be like?
- What is it going to be like to have a spirit body and a spirit mind?
- What is it going to be like to be perfected in the spirit?
- What's *everlasting life* going to be like?

All of this is going to be after the resurrection!

Verse 16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.”

This one verse encapsulates the whole of the plan of God in that one verse. The Bible expands it out.

Verse 17: “For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the world... [at that time] ...but that the world might be saved through Him. The one who believes in Him is not judged...” (vs 17-18)—*for your sins, because you repent of your sins!*

When you repent of your sins, they're removed from you as far as the east is from the west, so there is no judgment coming upon you because you repent. Let's understand a very simple thing: This is why the model prayer shows we are to repent every day. *Perfection is day-by-day, bit-by-bit*, as we go on. So, that's a wonderful thing to know and understand.

“...but that the world might be saved through Him” (v 17). What other verses comes to mind with this?

- none can come to the Father, except through Me

- none can come to the Son, except the Father draw Him
- I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life

See how all the Scriptures come together with these things?

Verse 18: “The one who believes in Him is not judged, but the one who does not believe has already been judged because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment: that **the Light**... [Christ and the Word of God] ...has come into the world, but men loved darkness **rather than the Light** because their works were evil” (vs 18-19).

This is why you can't mix darkness with light. Another way of putting it is this: You cannot take the ways of the world, the religions of the world, and combine them with the Scriptures, and combine them with your beliefs, and say that light and darkness are compatible. *They are not!* It's the Word of God.

What did Jesus say? *‘Man (and woman) shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God!’*

Verse 20: “For everyone who practices evil hates the Light... [can't stand it] ...and does not come to the Light, so that his works may not be exposed.” *Doesn't want to reveal all the evil that's he's doing so he keeps it all in the darkness and hidden!*

Verse 21: “But the one who practices the Truth... [that's what we do] ...comes to **the Light**...” *That is Christ!* How? Day-by-day through prayer, study and the Word of God.

“...so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by *the power of God*” (21). *The only way you're going to live God's way is with the power of God!* We'll see that here in just a little bit. That's something.

Here's another thing to keep in mind: ***Those who come to the Light, but then begin leaving it...*** It's just like headlights on a car. If you're standing in front of the headlights, and you're looking at the lights, then you turn around and you start walking away into the darkness, as you go there's still a lot of light around you.

We can kind of compare this to worldly Christianity. They still have some things which are pretty good, but the further you go the dimmer the light gets. After you go completely into the darkness, *there's no light left*. So that also fills in with *don't take the grace of God in vain*.

Let's see what else that God told Paul or Saul, what he was called before he was renamed Paul. He explains all about it here. Paul adds some interesting things. Doesn't that happen with you? You tell something and in your mind you bring out certain things that are important at that time. Then later you might explain it again and there are some things that you may have forgotten and that you fill in this time. If you take a transcript of both...

Sidebar: This is what the FBI is famous for doing: if your testimony is not exact, word-for-word, you're lying. No, you're not lying. It just is you don't remember all the facts at every particular time. You do that; I do that. So, when Paul was explaining here to King Agrippa, he was talking about coming on the road again:

Acts 26:13: “When I saw on the road at midday, O king, a light from heaven, surpassing the brightness of the sun, shine around me and those who were traveling with me. Then all of us fell to the ground... [didn't say that in the first account, but here it is] ...and I heard a voice speak to me, saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is hard for you to kick against the pricks.*’ And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting. Now arise, and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose...’” (vs 13-16).

Not mentioned back in Acts 9. He told him this, but it isn't recorded back in Acts 9.

“...to appoint you *as* a minister and a witness both of what you have seen and what **I shall reveal to you**... [notice the importance of the calling of Saul, who became Paul] ...**am personally selecting you from among the people and the Gentiles, to whom I now send you**” (vs 16-17).

This is why he says in 2-Cor. 6, ‘What compatibility is there with Light and darkness?’

Verse 18: “To open their eyes, that *they* may turn from darkness to light, and *from* the authority of Satan to God ... [that's amazing] ...so that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified through faith in Me.” **What is that inheritance?**

- to be resurrected in the first resurrection
- to be kings and priests with Christ
- to serve and save the world

(go to the next track)

Very interesting things and very important things for us to understand in 1st & 2nd Cor., since they cover many of the problems that face the Church and face each of us. It's not quite as

inspiring as some of the other Epistles of Paul, but these are all necessary for us to understand concerning:

- ourselves
- the world
- the Church
- people in the world
- people in the Church

Through all of that it comes back and focuses on the very purpose of our calling in quite a spectacular way. We just finished with darkness.

2-Corinthians 6:15: “And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial?...” Belial are those men of worthlessness.

Who can you think of concerning that? *Simon Magus* (Acts 8)! He was a sorcerer deceiving the people. He was baptized, but his baptism was worthless, because he wanted the Holy Spirit and he wanted to pay the apostles for it so he could give the Holy Spirit to other people. Peter told him in no uncertain terms: *You take your money and you go to the place of ever-burning, the theological place!* In other words, it will never happen!

Paul ran into it on the first evangelistic tour that he took with the Apostle Barnabas and they came to the island of Pathos. There they met the governor and there was Elymas, named Bar Jesus, a false prophet. We don't know what he was teaching the governor. Remember, Paul told him that he had nothing to do with this, and he went blind for a short time. The governor believed! There were some different things going on in the first century that are really quite fantastic. That was one of them.

Nor with Belial: that includes all of the false prophets that he talks about in 1st and 2nd Cor. and the other ones. Some of them he names in 1st and 2nd Timothy, *sons of Belial*.

“...Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever?... [impossible] ...And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God a And what agreement *is there between* a temple of God and idols?...” (vs 15-16).

Look at what Manasseh did back there in 2-Chron. What did he do? *He put idols in the temple of God, right there!* He also had booths for homosexuals, all around there. How desecrating was that? This is why God sent Jeremiah to warn them that if they didn't repent and if they didn't change, God was going to send them into captivity. He was going to destroy the temple in Jerusalem, *which He did!*

God is loving, kind and forgiving. *Great!* That's what it has to be and we need that, all of us do. ***But God does not compromise with evil,*** to let it become joined with what He is doing. Think about that with the fake Christianity in the world and that answers the question.

“...For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said...” (v 16).

Let's look at some other Scriptures concerning this. It also shows how important our own activity in our own salvation really is. God is the only One Who can save us; we can't save ourselves, that is true. God wants us to have our whole being wrapped up in salvation and growing and overcoming, because He wants to bless us, He wants to give us great rewards at the resurrection.

This is why He emphasizes and brings this out in 1-Cor. 3. It's very interesting, because we'll see some of this when we get into 2-Cor. 7, but especially 2-Cor. 8. This would be good for a study to show that *we're all to work together:*

- there is to be order
- there is to be service
- there is to do the things that needs to be done

Just like Jesus said that *the ministers are not to be overlords!* The ministers are not to merchandize the people.

Here we find this concerning how Paul viewed himself and Apollos in serving the people. They were arguing back and forth. ‘Well, who's the best minister; who is the greatest?’ Paul said, ‘You are carnal. We all follow Christ. That's what it has to be.’

Paul says, 1-Corinthians 3:4: “When someone says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another one *says*, ‘I am of Apollos,’ **are you not carnal?**” That's bringing together:

- the things of the world
- the ways of the world
- the thoughts of the world
- and the ways of God, looking to the man

Verse 5: “Who then is Paul?... [he always remembered who he was] ...And who *is* Apollos? *They are* but ministers through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one. I planted *and* Apollos watered, **but God gave the increase**” (vs 5-6).

It's just like we're doing right here today. We're studying the Word of God. I'm reading the Word of God, we're looking at what Paul wrote, and

we're seeing how it applies. We're seeing how other Scriptures interface with it and how it brings out a more full meaning and understanding of the Word of God.

Christ is the One Who has given the Holy Spirit. Those of us who are elders, ministers and teachers, do that which is *to help you grow*. We're not some sort of halfway saints between God and men. **No!** We're just men, like other men, but as Paul brings out—as we have covered there in 2-Cor. 4—to serve the people of God. That's the way God has designed it.

“...whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one” (v 5). So, as we teach—and you learn—who gives that learning to you? **God! If it comes from the Word of God, that means you're taught of God!** That's how ‘all shall be taught by God,’ *through His Word and through His Spirit. An amazing operation! Yes, indeed!*

Verse 7: “Therefore, neither is he who plants anything, nor he who waters; for *it is* God Who gives the increase.” *He says it twice!*

Whatever your growth is, God gives that to you. It comes from His Spirit; it comes from His Word. **But:**

- you have to work
- you have to apply
- you have to pray
- you have to study

everyone of us do! Ministers are not in a category that we can say, ‘We have done this so long that Satan has no more interest in us.’ **That's nonsense!**

- the more we study, *the more we learn*
- the more we learn, *the more we pray*
- the more we pray, *the more we study*

All of this all together, so that we can learn what God wants us to teach all the brethren. The goal is that we all attain to the Kingdom of God.

God gives the increase! We're going to see in a minute, with the Spirit of God the Father in you and the Spirit of Christ, for the mind of Christ, then all of that works together with what we're doing.

Verse 8: “Now, he who plants and he who waters are one, but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.” *You can apply this in two ways:*

1. to the one who is teaching, or watering
2. to all the brethren who are learning

Verse 9: “For we are God's fellow workers; *and* you are God's husbandry, *even* God's building.” ***You belong to God!*** You don't belong to any minister. You are God the Father's and Jesus Christ's. ***You belong to Them!*** That's an amazing thing to think about.

Verse 10: “As a wise architect, according to the grace of God that was given to me, I have laid *the* foundation, and another is building upon *it*. But let each one take heed how he builds upon *it*.”

How are you building your spiritual life?
Think about that!

Verse 11: “For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ.” ***He is the Rock!***

Jesus Himself said we're to build on Him. He is called the Chief Cornerstone. We're to build on Him. Everything has to do that we build and Christ energizes us and God the Father teaches us. There we go!

Verse 12: “Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones...” Those last through the trials of fire and, in fact, they're generally improved. So, you might kind of examine yourself and say:

- What am I doing?
- How am I building?
- What is my building material?
- Is my building material gold, silver and precious stones?

That's in a parable! Gold is the highest quality of character. Silver is next; precious jewels are next. But all of those are part of what it's going to be in the Kingdom of God. Let's go on from here.

Take heed how he builds. That's also interesting, because God has told through Paul, and also Peter, that the ministers are to *take heed to themselves!* Watch out for your own self. Same way with everybody who has the Spirit of God. ***We're all to take heed in what we are doing!***

Are we doing it the way God wants? ***If we are, there are blessings: gold, silver, precious stones!*** If you're kind of halfway in between, taking the grace of God in vain, but still not doing it, then you build with:

“...wood, hay *or* stubble” (v 12). Some wood takes a long time to burn. Some burns up rather quickly. Hay: POOF! Stubble could almost just explode just in heat, if it gets too hot. It's unstable, not able to endure.

Verse 13: “The work of each one shall be manifested; for the day of *trial* will declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one’s is.”

1-Peter 4:12_[transcriber’s correction]—Peter wrote: Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial among you...” We will have trials. Why?

1. because of our human nature
2. because we live the world
3. because of things around us and what we do and how they affect us

We’re going to have those trials. We don’t know what it’s going to be like when they start clamping down on Christianity. They’re already doing it in Canada.

1-Corinthians 3:14: “If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet, as through fire” (vs 14-15).

Now here’s the key, why it’s important: ***All of these things have to do with conversion and what takes place in our minds, as well as our actions that we do!***

Verse 16: “Don’t you understand that you are God’s temple, and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you?”

Stop and think about that for a minute! God destroyed the temple in Jerusalem so that all of those who are called, and answer the call, and repent and are baptized, and receive the Spirit of God are then a temple of God. Because ***God, through His Spirit***—the Father and Christ both (John 14)—***are dwelling in us!*** That’s an amazing thing, too, isn’t it?

The Bible, when you really understand the calling and what God is doing is so awesome and so great and so marvelous, that this is what we have been called to.

Paul gives a warning, v 17: “If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him because the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are.”

Let’s see how this comes out back here in 2-Cor. 6. There are a lot of things going on—*mentally, spiritually, physically*—and as we go down through time different experiences and trials help us to grow and overcome.

Ephesians 2:16: “And *that* He might reconcile both to God... [Jew and Gentile] ...in one body through the cross, having slain the enmity by it. Now when He came, He preached the Gospel—peace to you who *were* far off and to those who *were*

near. For through Him...” (vs 16-18)—***through Christ!***

That’s why we pray in His name. That’s why there is grace. *We receive grace upon grace* (John 1). The grace upon grace that we receive is being able to have that direct access to God the Father and Jesus Christ. That is an awesome, amazing thing!

You go back and you read Rev. 4 & 5 about God’s throne, about the innumerable multitude of angels that are there, about God the Father and Jesus Christ. That’s quite a thing! Then you read in Rev. 8 that our prayers go up like incense to God.

- He hears them
- He answers them
- He is dwelling in us by His Spirit

Verse 18: “For through Him we both have *direct* access by one Spirit to the Father... [that’s Jew and Gentile] ...So then, you are no longer aliens and foreigners; but *you are* fellow citizens with the saints, and *are* of the household of God” (vs 18-19).

What did Jesus say? ***You believe in God; believe also in Me. I am going to go, but I’m coming back again, and I’ll prepare a place for you. In My Father’s house there are many abodes or dwelling places!*** That’s reference to New Jerusalem.

If you get kind of down and out and sort of discouraged, go read Rev. 20, and what it’s going to be like for New Jerusalem. Think about this: ***we will live there!*** That’s something! We’ll talk more about that during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Verse 20: “You are being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone in Whom all the building, being conjointly fitted together, is increasing into a Holy temple in *the* Lord; in Whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in *the* Spirit” (vs 20-22).

That’s a marvelous thing to contemplate. When you know and understand every Word of God is true and every prophecy and promise of God will be kept to the fullest, that is wonderful to contemplate.

1-Peter 2:3: “If you yourselves have indeed tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.” ***He is gracious, merciful, kind and forgiving for all of us!*** That’s why we have the Psalms; that’s why we have things like this written down, ***so we know that God will deal with us.*** He understand our weaknesses, but we have to grow and overcome, and ask God to help us

overcome them so we can develop the character of gold, silver and precious stones.

Verse 4: “To Whom coming, *as to* a living Stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, *and* precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up *as* a spiritual house—a Holy priesthood—to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (vs 4-5).

What a promise that is! We are going to be a Holy nation, a priesthood. We’re going to serve the people of the world. We’ll talk about that during the Feast of Tabernacles coming up here.

Based on that, let’s see what we need to do. We have all these promises and they’re going to take place. We must work at them. Here’s what we need to do, so that we don’t get captured back into the world. It’s so easy today.

1-John 2:15: “**Do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world.** If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him, because everything that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious pride of physical life—is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world and its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God abides forever” (vs 15-17).

Tremendous promise! We have to live *in* the world, as Jesus said, but we’re not to become *of* the world, nor love the world. God can love the world in the way He needs and will reserve many for salvation through the second resurrection. This is the kind of attitude and approach that we need to have here.

2-Corinthians 6:16: “And what agreement is *there between* a temple of God... [each one of us] ...and idols? For you are a temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said.”

Notice what God has said. Everything that God has said is a promise. Remember what Jesus said concerning His words: Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall never pass away. These words are true and they are going to come to pass. I want you to really think about this as we read them, because this is marvelous indeed.

“...‘I... [first person, singular: **God**] ...will dwell in them... [that’s what it’s talking about in John 14, 1-Cor. 3] ...and walk in *them*...’” (v 16).

He’s with you! When you go through a trial, God is with you; Christ is with you. That’s why don’t be discouraged. You may be overwhelmed, because it’s a pretty heavy trial, but don’t be discouraged and down and out, because with the Spirit of God, both the Father and Christ are in you,

and They are there to help you internally: **emotionally, mentally, spiritually, physically!** Keep that in mind.

Remember, when you get down to these times, remember the things that are important. **When all else fails God loves you! All things**—all the trials, all the difficulties, all the ups, all the downs, all the good, all the bad—**work together for good for those who love God, and are called according to His purpose!** Just remember this: at the resurrection, all of this will be over with.

“...‘I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I... [the Father] ...will be their God, and they shall be My people’” (v 16).

Who are the chosen ones today? It says in Rev. 17:14 **that those who are with Christ are the called, the chosen, and the faithful!** That applies to us.

Today—and it has been for a long time—the Jews have said, ‘We are the chosen people.’ They were at one time, but now because of what they have done, they have been *the rejected people* for about 2,000-years. But God is again going to deal with them. In the meantime, **the ones who are really chosen are those who now have the Spirit of God!**

- God loves us
- God works with us
- God dwells in us
- God walks with us

Amazing! That shows He’s with us in everything we do every day.

Verse 17: “‘Therefore, come out from the midst of them and be separate,’ says *the* Lord...” **Come out of her—Babylon the Great—My people, and do not be partakers of her sins, for her sins have risen to heaven** (Rev. 18). *God is going to judge them!*

“...and touch not *the* unclean... [that is do nothing that is contrary to the Word of God] ...and I will receive you” (v 17).

Here’s a promise! You study in some of the Psalms. You come back here and read a couple of these verses; here’s one to read:

Verse 18: “‘And I... [God the Father; that’s why he’s called the Father] ...shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ says *the* Lord Almighty.” *That’s quite a promise, yes, indeed! Fantastic!*

2-Corinthians 7:1: “Now then, beloved, since we have these promises, we should purge ourselves from every defilement of *the* flesh and *the*

spirit, **perfecting Holiness in the fear of God.**
That's what we are to do; that's our part!

- be thankful
- be grateful
- be loving God

Just looking forward to the time when all the struggles, all the trials, all the difficulties, will be over for us. But—as we'll find out during the Feast of Tabernacles—we're going to have to help solve all of the difficulties in the world, and the world's going to be in terrible shape.

All of these things help us to know more about God, the love of God, what He's doing, and how Paul, all the things that he had to suffer, and everything that has been written down, and God has preserved it down through all the years:

- in spite of all of the hatred
- in spite of all of the burnings
- in spite of all of the killings
- in spite of all of the martyrdoms

The Word of God stays forever and is multiplied in the end-times millions of times over so that the whole world will be witnessed to, as Christ says in Matt. 24!

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2-Corinthians 6:1
- 2) Romans 6:1-2
- 3) Hebrews 10:15-22
- 4) Hebrews 11:1
- 5) Hebrews 10:22-23, 26
- 6) Hebrews 6:1, 4-6
- 7) 2-Corinthians 6:2
- 8) Isaiah 49:7-8
- 9) 2-Corinthians 6:3-4
- 10) Acts 9:1-16
- 11) 2-Corinthians 6:4-14
- 12) 1-John 3:4
- 13) 2-Corinthians 6:14
- 14) John 3:15-21
- 15) Acts 26:13-18
- 16) 2-Corinthians 6:15-16
- 17) 1-Corinthians 3:4-6, 5-13
- 18) 1 Peter 4:12
- 19) 1-Corinthians 3:14-17
- 20) Ephesians 2:16-22
- 21) 1-Peter 2:3-5
- 22) 1-John 2:15-17
- 23) 2-Corinthians 6:16-18
- 24) 2-Corinthians 7:1

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 8
- 2 Corinthians 7; 8
- John 14, 1
- Revelation 4; 5; 8; 20
- Revelation 17:14
- Revelation 18
- Matthew 24

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