

2 Corinthians 6

(New International Version)

1 As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. 2 For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you."

I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

3 We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. 4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; 5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; 6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; 7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; 8 through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; 9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; 10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

11 We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. 12 We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. 13 As a fair exchange I speak as to my children open wide your hearts also.

14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

"I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

17 Therefore, Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.

18 And, "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

Study Notes

2 Corinthians 6:1

How could the Corinthian believers reject God's message? Perhaps they were doubting Paul and his words, confused by the false teachers, who taught a different message. The people heard God's message but did not let it affect what they said and did. How often do you reject God's message?

2 Corinthians 6:2

God offers salvation to all people. Many people put off a decision for Christ, thinking that there will be a better time but they could easily miss their opportunity altogether. There is no time like the present to receive God's forgiveness. Don't let anything hold you back from coming to Christ.

2 Corinthians 6:3

In everything he did, Paul always considered what his actions communicated about Jesus Christ. If you are a believer, you are a minister for God. In the course of each day, unbelievers observe you. Don't let your careless or undisciplined actions be some person's excuse for rejecting Christ.

2 Corinthians 6:8-10

What a difference it makes to know Jesus! He cares for us in spite of what the world thinks. Christians don't have to give in to public opinion and pressure. Paul stood faithful to God whether people praised him or slandered him. He remained joyous and content in the most difficult hardships. Don't let circumstances or people's expectations control you. Be firm as you stand true to God, and refuse to compromise his standards for living.

2 Corinthians 6:11-13

"Our hearts are open to you" means that Paul had told the Corinthian believers his true feelings for them, clearly revealing how much he loved them. The Corinthians were reacting coldly to Paul's words, but Paul explained that his harsh words came from his love for them. It is easy to react against those whom God has placed over us in leadership, rather than to accept their exhortations as a sign of their love for us. We need an open rather than a closed heart toward God's messengers.

2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Paul urges believers to not form partnerships with unbelievers because this might weaken their Christian commitment, integrity, or standards. It would be a mismatch. Earlier, Paul had explained that this did not mean isolating oneself from unbelievers (see 1 Corinthians 5:9, 10). Paul even urges Christians to stay with their unbelieving spouses (1 Corinthians 7:12, 13). He wanted believers to be active in their witness for Christ to unbelievers but not lock themselves into personal or business relationships that could cause them to compromise their faith. Believers should do everything in their power to avoid situations that could force them to divide their loyalties.

2 Corinthians 6:14, 15

For those who have discovered God's light, there can be no fellowship or compromise with darkness (1 Corinthians 10:20, 21).

2 Corinthians 6:17

Separation from the world involves more than keeping our distance from sinners; it means staying close to God. It involves more than avoiding worldly entertainment; it extends to how we spend our time and money. There is no way to separate ourselves totally from all sinful influences. Nevertheless, we are to resist the sin around us, without either giving up or giving in.