

ZOOM

"GOOD GRIEF"

2 CORINTHIANS 7:2-16

This Week's Core Competency

Salvation by Grace – I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God. John 1:12, *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

Salvation is the term we use to refer to a collection of doctrines implicit in and entailed by the death of Jesus "for all" (2Co 5:14). Paul speaks specifically about the doctrine of *reconciliation* in 2 Corinthians 5:11-6:2, and in 7:2-16, an intensely personal passage, he alludes to the doctrine of *sanctification*.

In another letter, Paul tells us that believers, all of whom God foreknew, are "predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son" (Ro 8:29a), so that Christ "might be the firstborn among many brothers" (v. 29b). In a nutshell, God wants to change us to be like his Son Jesus, which means he wants us to have a familial relationship to him like Jesus has. We aren't *incarnate* sons, but we are *adopted* sons for sure, and as his adopted sons, we have a familial relationship to our Father and can bear the likeness of our brother Jesus. However, our transformation toward Christlikeness doesn't occur all at once; it occurs incrementally over a lifetime. It's a process. We use a number of terms to describe this process we go through to become like Jesus. If we view the process in terms of teaching and training, we call it *discipleship*. If we view the process in terms of growth and development, we call it *spiritual formation*. If we

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret but worldly sorrow brings death.

– 2 Corinthians 7:10

view the process in terms of increasing holiness, we call it *sanctification*. The allusion to the doctrine of sanctification in 7:2-16 is implicit in what Paul has to say about the fruit of godly sorrow and repentance.

After an initial unpleasant visit to Corinth to address issues that had arisen in the church and upon hearing afterward that these issues remained largely unresolved, rather than risk another "painful visit," Paul wrote a "tearful letter" in what proved to be a successful last ditch effort to settle matters. On these events one commentator writes: "Paul's next step, in dealing with the situation in Corinth, was to send a 'severe letter' from Ephesus by the hand of Titus and another unnamed brother (2:3-4; 7:8-12; 12:18). He apparently directed this letter, now lost, at the party opposed to him and particularly its leader . . . Paul evidently intended to receive Titus' report, concerning the effects of this 'severe letter,' in Ephesus. However, persecution there made it expedient for Paul to leave that city earlier than he had anticipated (Acts 20:1). He found an open door for the gospel to the north in Troas. Eager to meet Titus, who was taking the land route from Corinth back to Ephesus, Paul moved west into Macedonia (2:12-13). There Titus met him and gave him an encouraging report (7:6-16). Most of the church had responded to Paul's directives, and the church had disciplined the troublemakers (2:5-11)" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on 2 Corinthians," 2017 ed., 1, www.sonlight.com; see detailed list of Paul's contacts with the Corinthians in *The Scrolls*, vol. 19, no. 23 [June 4, 2017]: 1-2, 4).

Paul mentions his "severe letter" in 7:8. He writes: "Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became

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sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret . . . See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done" (7:8-11a).

Sanctification or spiritual formation is both *intentional* and *incidental*. Intentional transformation involves deliberate involvement in activities that the Spirit uses to transform us, such as prayer, Bible study, worship, giving, etc. Intentional formation is disciplined, orderly, and more predictable. Incidental transformation involves unintentional involvement in what everyday life brings our way, such as encounters with friends and foes, unscripted conversations both positive and negative, attendant circumstances related to transitions in life, unexpected illnesses, job losses and the like. The Spirit also uses these unscripted things in life to transform us. However, more often than not, incidental transformation is undisciplined, helter-skelter, and less predictable—more reactive than active. Unintentional transformation that turns out for the best often entails godly sorrow and repentance. That was the case with the Corinthians. Paul had become the object of a bitter personal attack mounted by some particular individual in the church, perhaps the man whom he had condemned for taking his father's wife (1Co 5:1; see Colin G. Kruse, *2 Corinthians*, TNTC, 42-43). What's more, when Paul made his second visit to the city, church members did not come to his defense as he had expected, but stood by as others questioned his authority. But when admonished by the apostle in his "severe letter," the Corinthians responded with godly sorrow that brought repentance, resulting in them being reconciled to Paul and incrementally transformed to be like Jesus.

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

2 Corinthians 7:2–16

2 Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. 3 I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. 4 I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

5 For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

8 Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—9 yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God

intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. 12 So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. 13 By all this we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. 14 I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. 15 And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. 16 I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

* Bracket "make room for us in your hearts" in v. 2.

* Circle "condemn" in v. 3.

* Box "that" indicating *purpose* in v. 3.

* Underline "live or die" in v. 3.

* Circle "confidence" in vv. 4, 16.

* Circle "conflicts" in v. 5.

* Circle "sorrow" in vv. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

* Circle "letter" in v. 8.

* Highlight v. 10.

* Underline "earnestness," "eagerness," "indignation," "alarm," "longing," "concern," and "readiness" in v.11.

* Circle "injured party" in v. 12.

day **2**

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. In 7:2 Paul picks up where he left off in 6:11-13. How so?
2. What do you infer from Paul's three denials in verse 2?
3. When Paul arrived in Macedonia he faced "conflicts *on the outside*, fears *within*." Explain.
4. Paul was comforted by the arrival of Titus. Why?
5. How could Paul *not regret* and *regret* the consequences of his letter?
6. Put the difference between *godly* sorrow and *worldly* sorrow in your own words.
7. Identify the "one who did the wrong" and the "injured party" mentioned in verse 12.
8. The Corinthians made Titus happy. How so?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about Paul's feelings for the Corinthians.

day 3 **EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

2 Corinthians 7:2-16 is *transitional* in two ways. In the first place, verses 2-4 serve as a pivot point. They pick up and complete the appeal in 6:11-13 and more broadly speaking, bring to an end the lengthy section on Paul's apostolic ministry begun in 2:14. At the same time, they mark the beginning of the passage that follows in verses 5-16. One commentator explains: "Thus vv. 2-4 are a hinge on which the two main parts of the letter turn. They bring to an end the apologetic first part of the letter, where Paul been defending his actions (1:12-2:13) and his ministry (2:14-7:4). At the same time they lay an admonitory foundation for the second part, where Paul will prepare the Corinthians for his final visit to them" (Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 358-59). In the second place, 7:5-16 also serves as a pivot point. The same author goes on to say: "This passage resumes that personal apologia from Macedonia (2:12-13). It is not merely resumptive, however, but serves to lead into the remainder of the letter. In the latter part of the letter (chaps. 8-13) he repeatedly speaks of this intention to come to Corinth (9:4; 10:2, 6; 12:14, 20, 21; 13:1, 2, 10; cf. 11:9). The joyous confidence Paul expresses (7:5-16) at the Corinthians' positive response to Paul and to Titus lays the pastoral foundation from which to address matters that the Corinthians must rectify (chaps. 8-13), regarding which he also expects and hopes for positive responses" (365).

The opening and closing paragraphs of 7:2-16 share common ideas. In the first paragraph (vv. 2-4), Paul declares he has "great confidence" in his readers (v. 4), a thought he repeats (v. 16) in the last paragraph (vv. 13b-16). And in the first paragraph he declares he is "greatly encouraged" (v. 4) by his readers, a thought he also repeats (v. 13b) in the last paragraph. However, in the closing paragraph, he makes it clear that they are an encouragement not only to him but to Titus also. Evidently he penned this paragraph—and the closing one—after Titus had returned to him in Macedonia with good news regarding their positive response to his "severe letter." He picks up the thought of 6:11-13 in 7:2, explaining that they have no reason to withhold their affection from

him. He is innocent of charges his critics had brought against him. Contrary to their accusations, he wronged no one, corrupted no one, and exploited no one (v. 2). In fact, his bond of friendship and loyalty is unbreakable. In the last paragraph, he specifies that Titus has been refreshed by their treatment of him, too. Their obedience to Paul and reception of Titus only increased the emissary's affection for them. Without doubt, they lived up to the apostle's boasting about them.

The middle paragraphs are the more applicable in that they document the Corinthians' response to Paul's "severe letter" showing the value of repentance that godly sorrow brings, and its transformative effects. He sent it to admonish those in the church who had wronged him, either by attacking him or by not coming to his defense, when he made his "painful visit" there to put things right, and the congregation sent him packing with his tail between his legs. Its members needed to repent of their treatment of him and be reconciled to the apostle. Although initially confident that they would do what is right, he is filled with fear that they might not, as he waits to hear back from them. But when Titus does return, he is comforted to hear that the Corinthians are filled with godly sorrow, the kind that brings repentance—not just remorse. Moreover, their godly grief produced its manifold fruit in them and thereby demonstrated their true devotion to Paul. Their positive response "produced in them 'earnestness,' or seriousness of purpose, 'eagerness' to clear themselves from blame, 'indignation' at the scandalous action of the person who denigrated Paul, 'alarm' over their behavior and its effects, 'affection' for Paul or longing (epithesis) to see him in person, 'concern' lest he should visit them 'rod in hand' (1 Cor 4:21; cf. 2 Cor 7:15; 13:2), and a 'readiness to see justice done' by the punishment of the offender (cf. 2:6)" (Harris, 364) and earned them Paul's commendation. He writes: "By all this we are encouraged" (v. 12).

The Message of the Passage

*Accept biblical correction with godly sorrow that brings repentance,
which will produce fruit leading to your sanctification.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 *living questions* to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following *living questions*:**

- How is God making himself known to you?

- How does God want to change you?

- How is God calling you to change your world?

notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 2 **make room** "Paul returned to his appeal for the Corinthians' full affection (6:11-13), claiming no fault toward the Corinthians on three counts (v. 2): He had: (1) done no wrong to anyone ('wronged no one'), (2) had not led anyone astray ('corrupted no one'), (3) nor had he deceived anyone for his own advantage ('took advantage of no one'). Paul used the literary devices of anaphora (beginning each of the three clauses with the same word in Greek) and homoiototon (using verbs that have the same ending, here amen). This wordplay added emotional force to his affirmation" (Constable, 77).

v. 3 **condemn** "To mention the charges [against him] was not to imply that the Corinthians really believed them. 'I do not say this to condemn you' (3a). Or Paul may mean that his effort to clear himself did not amount to blaming them" (Murray J. Harris, "2 Corinthians," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, 10:361).

v. 3 **live or die** Lit., "die or live;" cf., "you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together" (ESV). "In the papyri the expression 'to live together and to die together' is found where mutual friendship and loyalty are extolled. The idea is that those involved have a friendship that will be sustained throughout life and will keep them together even if death is involved (cf. Mk. 14:31)" (142). Perhaps Paul has reversed the order "to reflect 'the christological destiny which awaits both himself and the Corinthians.' His phrasing refers to 'future death in Christ and future life in Christ after death.' The bond between them will therefore remain 'in future death and future life'" (David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, NAC, 344).

v. 4 **confidence** Cf., v. 16. Paul's confidence and his attendant pride and joy stemmed from Titus' report (vv. 6-13), informing him "of the steps taken by the Corinthians in obedience to the demands he made in the 'severe' letter. They had demonstrated their loyalty to the apostle, so he is able to say, I am overjoyed, despite all the affliction" (Kruse, 143). The two references to "confidence" (vv. 4, 16) form an *inclusio* framing the passage.

v. 5 **Macedonia** Paul's contacts with the Corinthians include: 1) his founding visit (Ac 18); 2) his "former letter" (1Co 5:9); 3) The Corinthians' letter to him (1Co 7:1); 4) First Corinthians; 5) Paul's "painful visit" (2Co 2:1); His "severe letter" (2Co 7:8); 2 Corinthians; and Paul's anticipated visit (2Co 12:14; 13:1). After writing his "severe letter" and before writing 2 Corinthians, Paul travelled from Ephesus to Troas where he expected to meet Titus and when he didn't, he went on to Macedonia.

v. 5 **conflicts** "When he had arrived in 'Macedonia,' Paul could not find Titus. Consequently, he continued to experience affliction from conflicts with unbelievers ('conflicts without') and from his concern ('fears within') for Titus and the Corinthians' response to his 'severe letter' (cf. 2:12-13)" (Constable, 78).

v. 8 **letter** Paul likely sent Titus to Corinth with his "severe letter" after returning to Ephesus following his "painful visit" to Corinth. "It called upon the Corinthian church to take action against the one who had caused Paul such hurt, and so to demonstrate their innocence in the matter and their affection for Paul (2 Cor. 2:3-4; 7:8, 12). It was from Titus, returning from a visit to Corinth, that Paul expected news of the Corinthians' response to this letter . . . Plans had been made for the two to meet in Troas. So Paul left Ephesus and made his way to Troas. He found there a wide-open door for evangelism, but because Titus had not yet come, and because he was so anxious to meet him, he left Troas and crossed over into Macedonia hoping to intercept him on his way through that province to Troas (2 Cor. 2:12-13). When Paul reached Macedonia [perhaps Philippi] he found himself embroiled in the bitter persecution which the churches of Macedonia themselves were experiencing (2 Cor. 7:5; 8:1-2) and this only compounded his anxiety. When Titus finally arrived, Paul found great consolation (2 Cor. 7:6-7), the more so when he heard from him of the Corinthians' zeal to demonstrate their affection and loyalty to their apostle by punishing the one who had caused him such hurt" (Kruse, 23).

v. 10 **salvation** Godly sorrow, which brings repentance, leads to salvation in its broadest sense, i.e., sanctification as well as justification. Worldly sorrow leads to no more than remorse. "They had exemplified repentance, a change of mind involving action in accord with God's will. As such it was a godly sorrow (like Peter's remorse after his denial of Christ). This was not a worldly sorrow which brings death (like Judas' 'sorrow' after he betrayed the Lord; Matt. 27:3-5)" (David K. Lowery, "2 Corinthians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 572). Verse 11 suggests that Paul has sanctification rather than justification in mind here.

v. 12 **injured party** I.e., Paul himself (see Barnett, 380); "the one who did wrong" likely refers to a man who publicly opposed, and to some degree thwarted, Paul's attempt at discipline during his "painful visit" to Corinth. "While the man was not actively supported by a majority of the Corinthians, nonetheless, he was not directly opposed by them nor subject to any expression of displeasure on their part, nor, least of all, the congregational discipline appropriate to the circumstances" (Barnett, 381).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Our core competency this week is Salvation by Grace - I believe I become a child of God by faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do. However, true repentance requires humility and that is something we don't talk about enough with our kids. Our culture values success and a positive self-esteem but true repentance comes when we humble ourselves before the Lord and others. Humility, in its simplest sense, is the ability to consider God and others above oneself. It has been said that a humble person doesn't think less of himself; he simply thinks of himself less. A humble person's self-esteem isn't tied to what other people say about him. As Mother Teresa once put it: "If you are humble, nothing will touch you, neither praise nor disgrace, because you know what you are." Humility is essential in our relationships. The prophet Micah wrote, "And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8). Jesus often spoke of humility, saying that "whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). Our Savior taught that our reliance on God—our humility before Him—should be the same as that of a little child (Matthew 18:4). Talk to your kids about how humility is the first step in repentance.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read 2Co 7:8-16

1. What made Paul happy in v. 9?
2. "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to _____" (v. 10)
3. What did godly sorrow produce in the Corinthians?

What Do You Think

1. How do you feel when you do something you know is wrong?
2. How do you feel when you confess that and make it right?
3. How does godly sorrow lead to repentance?

What R U Going To Do

Humility cause us to think of ourselves less and others more. What can you do this week for someone else? Brainstorm ideas with your parents and then do it!

Core Comp

Salvation by Grace - I believe that I become a child of God through faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do.

Memory Verse

2 Co 4:18 - So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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