

## *The Power of an Open Heart (2 Cor 6)*

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**Introduction:** The strength in a sincere heart cannot be overstated.

- A. When a heart is marred by sin and compromise, there will be weakness and indecision.
  - 1. The double-minded man stands in contrast to the single-minded man. **(Jas 1:6-8; Matt 6:22-24)**
  - 2. A guilty conscience will produce a doubtful man who has not yet learned to trust God. **(Prov 28:1)**
- B. When the Christian's heart is set upon the truth of God there is an openness that does not need to hide! **(Jn 3:19-21)**
  - 1. This is shown in how you communicate to others. **(2 Cor 4:2)**
  - 2. This kind of heart will speak the truth and want to hear the truth!
  - 3. The other kind of heart will seek power in closed groups and often work in the background. Deceit always hurts those who spread it.
  - 4. Paul is now calling the Corinthians to a decision. In using such a strong warning he appeals to the grace of God, the consistency of his own ministry, and finally the nature of God Himself.

### ***I. The Urgency of the grace of God (1-2)***

- A. When a person is separated from the grace of God the matter is always urgent.
  - 1. Peter appealed with urgency and many responded. **(Acts 2:40-41)**
  - 2. Paul with urgency baptized the jailer. **(Acts 16:33)**
  - 3. With every appeal to God's grace also comes the necessary separation from wicked people. Certain relationships cannot continue as a Christian.
- B. It is possible to receive the grace of God in vain.
  - 1. This can come from several sources. The common end is that the Christian is no longer walking according to the gospel. **(1 Cor 15:1-2)**
  - 2. The danger to the Corinthians was similar to what happened to the Galatians, the appeal to join a group who wished to glory in men. **(Gal 4:17-19)**
  - 3. Paul with great openness shows his heart to the Corinthians. In this they might be able to see the genuine from the counterfeit.

### ***II. A Ministry without Offence (3-10)***

- A. Paul knew that his example would speak louder than his words. (V3)
  - 1. Jesus could easily point to the inconsistencies of the Pharisees. **(Mt 23:2-3)**
  - 2. A teacher's effectiveness is greatly hindered when his reputation is damaged.
- B. The sufferings of Paul. (V4-5)
  - 1. He suffered by hindrances.
  - 2. He suffered by violent opposition. **(2 Cor 1:8-11)**
  - 3. He suffered by hardship. **(2 Cor 11:23-28)**
    - a. The word "distress" means "extreme pressure" and is used to describe one who is jammed in a corner, or so pressed upon by the multitude that he cannot move.
    - b. Would a deceiver who is only interested in the thoughts of men do this?

No! They would have long since quit. Paul however had the truth in his heart and would die for it. **(1 Cor 15:30-32)**

C. The fruit of the spirit is also shown in Paul. What was in Paul's heart? **(Gal 5:22)**

1. Purity - Paul did not wish to be a castaway. **(1 Cor 9:26-29)**

2. Knowledge - A correct knowledge of God's will is a foundation.

3. Longsuffering - Abiding in difficulty without quitting shows faith in God. **(James 1:4; 5:10-11)**

4. Kindness - When one sees God's kindness they are transformed. **(Titus 3:3-5)**

5. Sincere love **(1 Pt 1:22-23)**

D. Paul also was equipped with the armor of God. **(V7, Eph 6:10-18)**

E. To the world the Christian life is a series of contradictions. **(V8-10)**

1. What is a paradox? Here in these contrast we learn what it means to be a Christian!

2. Are you rich or poor?

### ***III. Open and Closed Hearts (11-13)***

A. Satan by his devices was seeking to close the minds of the Corinthians. **(2 Cor 4:4)**

a. He was attacking Paul's influence while at the same time approaching the Corinthian with a kind of "zeal." **(Rom 16:18; 1 Thess 2:5; Jude 16)**

b. Remember that Satan appeals to emotions and people while God appeals to the solid rock of the truth.

B. Will we trust God and open our hearts? Watch your emotions!

### ***IV. The Urgency of a proper fellowship (14-28)***

A. We need to see clearly what improper fellowship can do. One's fellowship will in time determine one's practice.

B. When compromise is made in your loyalty to God, He calls it adultery.

1. How would you like to "share" your mate with another?

2. This is how God views our loyalty to Him. **(2 Cor 11:2-4)**

3. The nation of Israel heard their adultery described. **(Jer 3:6-10)**

a. Judah in Josiah's day was doing many good things outwardly. Why? Because they followed a good king, Josiah.

b. God said they were not true in their hearts. This is what God sees.

C. One can be "yoked" or joined to another that they must participate in sin.

1. Some business arrangement can be this way.

2. Some marriages can be this way. **(Mt 19:9)**

3. Here we must decide will it be God or man? Most people choose man.

D. The only way to live the Christian life is to be separate or holy. **(17-18)**

1. While we do not speak of sinless perfection, we do however mean that one repents of sin. Here they cannot continue in it! **(Rom 6:1)**

2. Do you love God enough to come out of the world?

**Conclusion:** Will you take time to be holy? **(Heb 12:14; Eph 5:27; Col 1:22-23)**

A. Some might think Paul's letter to be harsh but in reality it is an outpouring of love.

B. Are you ready to meet God? Be honest.