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Selflessness

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

monthly (interim) schedule

1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month

TUESDAY, 16 AUGUST 2022

12 NOON IN 318 CLOB (& ZOOM)

Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Studies are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. The *bimonthly Bible studies* are *nonpartisan* and *non-denominational*, in addition to being *open-to-all*. The present study continues the exposition of the New Testament book of 2 Corinthians. The dual emphasis of 2 Corinthians is the New Covenant ministry of grace and the sufficiency of Christ.

We have an in-person Bible study in 318 CLOB (Senate Committee Room) *and* also use Zoom. Scripture is taught verse-by-verse with everyone having the opportunity to comment or ask a question.

For archives of past Bible studies (dating from 2010), please visit <http://www.capitolcom.org/georgia/studies>. **Capitol Commission's prayer is that this study will be edifying to you.** The sole intent of this ministry is to serve you, as a resource for pastoral attention, counsel, and prayer. **The present Bible study is just one aspect of that desire.**

– Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission Bible Study

is

Tuesday, 16 August 2022

2 Corinthians 7:1—8:9 – “Selflessness”

If all *your thoughts* from last week could be projected on a screen before a reasonably sized audience, would your character be vindicated or would you be ashamed? Scripture declares that *one's thoughts* are just as important to God as a person's actions (Ps 139:1-4; 1 Sam 16:7). The promise of intimate fellowship with God (2 Cor 6:16) is an incentive for avoiding whatever may be spiritually contaminating, either in action or thought. Means of contamination

may be external or internal: “defilement of flesh and spirit” (7:1) and can be in relation to God or to other people.

Scripture is unequivocal that the favor of God is received by divine grace through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ (Rom 3:21-26; Eph 2:8-9). Salvation is all of grace, which results in some discounting any need for gumption in one's relationship with the Lord God, yet the tremendous initiative not to “be conformed to this world, but [to] be transformed” ought to rouse every believer to determined activity so that he or she “may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2).

Charles Spurgeon exhorted, “Vanish forever all thought of indulging the flesh if you live in the power of your risen Lord. It were ill that a man who is alive in Christ should dwell in the corruption of sin. . . .”

An unholy church! it is useless to the world, and of no esteem among men. It is an abomination, hell's laughter, heaven's abhorrence. The worse evils which have ever come upon the world have been brought upon her by an unholy church (“26 June, Evening,” *Morning and Evening: Daily Readings*).

Second Corinthians affirms this same exhortation to holy living.

AN APPEAL FOR RECONCILIATION

(2 Cor 7:1-16) Weeds do not take long to overtake a yard. They do not require tending but do necessitate much work to eliminate them. Growing flowers or vegetables do require feeding, watering, and weeding. They only flourish for someone willing to get dirt under their fingernails. The life of a believer also necessitates work; it requires the commitment of one's entire being to God – heart, soul, mind, and strength – or the weeds “of the flesh” and sinful attitudes and thoughts will overtake the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23).

Believers at Corinth had failed to purify themselves from all defilement, and became overgrown with divisiveness and jealousy (1 Cor 3:1-3). For this reason, they needed to cleanse themselves (2 Cor 7:1). No defilement should be tolerated in a believer's life. The purpose for such cleansing is to manifest “holiness” as the goal of daily living. The motivation for such ambition is reverence for God.

Amos 3:3 asks, “Do two men walk together unless they have made an appointment?” For this reason, Paul wrote, “Make room for us *in your hearts*” (2 Cor 7:2a). Purity in one's personal life and with others is essential to have intimate fellowship with God (6:17). Close fellowship would also be possible with those spiritual leaders whose relationship is comparable to that between loving parents and children. Unlike the false teachers who defrauded and exploited others, Paul and his company had “wronged no one . . . corrupted no one . . . [and] took advantage of no one” (7:2b). Leadership is always going to invite troublemakers, yet spiritual leaders are certain there is no good reason for their criticism.



The Apostle Paul had his critics, yet denied any wrongdoing that may have inhibited a positive relationship with the church at Corinth. **Every word spoken – though convicting and necessary – was for the benefit of others.** Neither death nor life, or even the criticism against him, would change his affection for the church (v. 3). Despite all the problems, Paul's outlook for the majority of the believers was that they were a delight and encouragement (v. 4).

SOME PAIN HAS A WHOLESOME EFFECT.

Anyone who leads others is likely to have varied feelings towards each person individually. There can be appreciation for the work of the majority yet there can be much that needs changing for others, which can be frustrating. A genuine spirit of servant leadership is evident in Paul's words. **Anyone who leads others but does so in a formal and rigid manner – without affection – is going to be inefficient.** Paul suffered great affliction in Macedonia, to the point of exhaustion (v. 5). He had "conflicts without, fears within." However, when Titus arrived with word of evidence of God's grace at work, it provided rejoicing like nothing else (vv. 5-7).

Confrontation is not always pleasant yet there are times when it is necessary. Paul had written a severe letter that was initially painful but "only for a while" since it would result in good for the long-term (vv. 8-9). Some pain has a wholesome effect. The only positive change that can occur when there is sin in someone's life is repentance, and this is not a passing feeling but true godly sorrow for sin (v. 10). Repentance was essential for those who needed to correct their thinking (a change of mind) so their manner of living would be made positive (a change of behavior).

Scripture records the encouragement resulting from repentance as people demonstrate concern and zeal for what is right (v. 11). **Divine grace was manifested in both godly sorrow and repentance** (v. 12). Pain is not pleasant but when the goal is not simply to eliminate it but to cultivate a proper relationship with God, it is valuable, resulting in comfort and joy for all involved (vv. 12-13).

"Boasting" can occur in a positive manner when individuals are submissive to the truth (v. 14). Respect for those leaders who seek the benefit of others – even though pain for a little while occurs – is evident through "obedience," resulting in the abounding of mutual "affection" (v. 15). What a blessing to have absolute "confidence" in those who heed the caring and wise admonition (v. 16)! The genuineness of faith is proved by how one responds appropriately to the Word of God, the Bible.

All throughout chapter 7, Paul demonstrated concern for his relationship with others. People are just as important as is one's ministry or service. **Godly leaders never serve at the expense of relationships with people.**

AN APPEAL FOR GENEROSITY

(2 Cor 8:1-9) The next two chapters address generosity that is enabled and motivated by God (vv. 1-4; cf. vv. 12-14). The expression "beyond their ability" (v. 3) is somewhat hyperbolic for

beyond normal expectation. **Personal interests do not interfere with giving what is not essential,** which is why the Bible refers to it as a "gracious work" (vv. 6-7) or divine enablement.

Being generous requires consecration "to the Lord" and to his servants, in addition to regarding all one possesses as God's (v. 5). **"Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above"** (Jas 1:17a); therefore, one is a steward (not master) of his or her possessions. The primary duty of a steward is faithfulness (1 Cor 4:2), which God rewards (Luke 16:10-12).

Defined as the transfer of income and wealth from some individuals to others, redistribution of wealth is a polarizing issue. Scripture, however, provides an example of the greatest redistribution of wealth that will ever occur. Verse 9 declares,

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

Of course, this verse is not referring to monetary wealth; rather He is eternal God, and as such owns everything by virtue of his authority and power. Jesus "became poor" (by humbling himself as a bond-servant, and becoming obedient to a substitutionary death on a cross, Phil 2:5-8) is the glorious truth of the gospel. Jesus "became poor" even though the riches of his glory as God the Son are infinite. Jesus is the great example for being generous, and the gospel is the basis and motivation for godly living. **Being a generous person is modeled after Christ's example.** Considering the cheerfulness, desire, and willingness of Jesus Christ to give all for those who trust in Him is reason to be generous (2 Cor 8:8-9).

Thank you for the privilege in providing you with the Capitol Commission Bible study. If we can serve you in any manner, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission exists to minister gospel hope and spiritual strength to legislators, staff, lobbyists, and all who constitute the Capitol community. The focus of our ministry is people as opposed to politics, and thus to be a spiritual resource to the legislature. Our ministry strategy is expressed by pastoral *presence*, the *proclamation* of the Bible, and fervent *prayer* for every legislator.

God values civilization. The Hebrew word *shalom* ("peace") testifies to the Lord God's desire for society. When peace describes society, it refers to a prosperous and wholesome civilization. God has a high standard for governing authorities, referring to them as his ministers (Rom 13:4). He desires their salvation and for them to have knowledge of his truth (1 Tim 2:1-2). Our passion is the same as the Lord God, which is why Capitol Commission provides hope "behind the scenes" through a ministry of presence.

The gospel "is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom 1:16). The Word of God is inspired by God and provides equipping "for every good work" (2 Tim 3:16-17). Capitol Commission state ministers value prayer because we exist as a ministry to people. God hears and answers prayer! "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (Jas 5:16b).

Capitol Commission is a charitable and religious nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Capitol Commission is supported by the generous gifts of businesses, churches, and individuals. Capitol Commission is not state funded; rather, those with a heart for the Capitol community fund it.

As the Lord Jesus said, "look on the fields, that they are white for harvest" (John 4:35). If you would like to partner with Capitol Commission, Georgia with your talents, time, or treasure, please contact us by email, mail, or phone; or, visit online at <http://capitolcom.org/georgia/donate>.

Please join us in this ministry!

