

Twelve Lessons

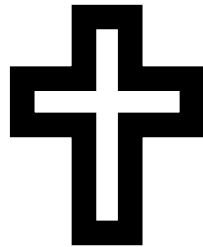
on

II Corinthians

Volume I

(Chapters 1-7)

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A MAN OF INTEGRITY – PART I: PROVIDENTIAL RELATIONS – LESSON 1

II Corinthians 1:1-7

Introduction: The Corinthians had begun to doubt the integrity of Paul because he had been delayed in coming to Corinth. In chapter 1, Paul greets the church and then begins to explain the circumstances which had hindered him. In the content of this first chapter, we see the characteristics of a true man of God. There are nine qualities which must be present in God's man before he can be effectively used to minister to people. These nine are divided into

1. Providential Relations – vs. 1-7
2. Personal Relations – vs. 8-12
3. Public Relations – vs. 13-24

Lesson Goals:

1. Study the how a minister is to be directed and developed by God.
2. Identify the manner in which God develops the believer and what this development produces.

Definitions of Important Terms/Phrases:

1. Providence – The care and superintendence which God exercises over his creatures
2. Development – A process in which something passes by degrees to a different stage (especially a more advanced or mature stage); the act or process of growing, progressing, or developing

I. GOD'S MAN WILL BE DIRECTED—vs. 1-3

A. God's Direction Involves Requirements—“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God”

- 1. Conversion**—“Paul”—The change of Paul's name from Saul symbolized the change made in his life by Christ. In the text, it correctly holds a foundational position. Salvation must precede service.
- 2. Commission**—“an apostle”—Translated from “apostolos” meaning “a delegate, a messenger, one sent forth with orders”. All men of God are given specific appointments of service.
- 3. Compliance**—“by the will of God”—The term “will” comes from “thelema” and is defined as “what one wishes or has determined shall be done; of what God wishes to be done by us; commands and desires”.
- 4. Cooperation**—“and Timothy our brother”—The word “brother” or “adelphos” refers to “a fellow believer, united to another by the bond of affection; an associate in employment or office.” God puts believers together in the church body to effectively accomplish God's general will.
- 5. Commitment**—“unto the church of God”—The focus of Paul's ministry was the church. His life's work involved the local church. The church is at the heart of God's purpose on earth.

B. God's Direction Involves Resources—“Grace be unto you and peace”

- 1. Our Strength**—“grace”
 - a) Grace may be defined as “the divine influence of God” in the believer's life. It is a supernatural power that overcomes difficulties and promises victory. What a wonderful promise, “He giveth more grace!”
 - b) When one meets the requirement of God's direction, he will find a sustaining power behind his efforts. God upholds everything He ordains. One great blessing of serving God is the knowledge that our success is guaranteed. God is obligated to the obedient.
- 2. Our Solace**—“peace”
 - a) The influx of God's grace into the believer's life will embolden him to attempt greater things for God.
 - b) Peace is a product of God's controlling power. One who submits himself to the will of God will experience the tranquility of soul that comes with God's backing.
 - c) Obedience harmonizes the believer with God and this harmony results in a deep settle peace.

C. God's Direction Involves Relationship—“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”

- 1. Associated with the Person of God**—“God”—When a man commits himself to God, his adherence to God's law allows for fellowship. Most believers never experience real fellowship with God because they never fully follow God's direction. Obedience deepens the believer's relationship.
- 2. Associated with the Provision of God**—“the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort”
 - a) The Father of mercies—“Mercies” is defined as “bowels in which compassion resides, a heart of compassion; emotions, longings, manifestations of pity”.
 - b) The God of all comfort—“Comfort” or “paraklesis” means a “a calling near, summons, (especially for help); exhortation, admonition, encouragement; consolation, comfort, solace; what affords comfort or refreshment.”

II. GOD'S MAN WILL BE DEVELOPED—vs. 4-7

A. Experience: The Process of Development—vs. 4-5

1. The Experience of Tribulation—“in all our tribulation”—Mental Pressure

- a) Tribulation is translated from “thlipsis” meaning “a pressing, a pressing together, pressure; metaphorically, oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits.”
- b) The ministry will certainly bring hardships into the life of God’s servant. The responsibility of preaching the Gospel and directing the church can overwhelm the man of God.
- c) When a man commits himself to ministering to others, he also commits himself to carrying the burdens of those to whom he ministers.

2. The Experience of Suffering—“as the sufferings of Christ”—Spiritual Pressure

- a) Sufferings is “pathema” and is defined as “what one suffers or has suffered”. It refers to external suffering, misfortune, calamity, evil, or affliction. The term is also used to describe the “afflictions which Christians must undergo in behalf of the same cause which Christ patiently endured”.
- b) The experience of suffering is not limited to the external. It also refers to internal pain of sorrow, grief, and distress of mind. It may be likened to the mental and spiritual burden Christ experienced.

3. The Experience of Affliction—“we be afflicted”—Physical Pressure

- a) The term “afflicted or thlibo (thlee'-bo)” refers to “a crowd” and denotes the idea of being thronged. The word picture is one of pressing grapes in a vat.
- b) It is amazing that the affliction is pictured as coming from a group of people. The ministry focuses on people and with people come problems. The preacher is the burden bearer of these problems.

B. Encouragement: The Purpose of Development—vs. 4-6

1. Personal Encouragement for Self—vs. 4—“the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted”

- a) The experience of hardships allows the preacher to understand the grace needed to overcome.
- b) The term “comforted” or “parakaleo (par-ak-al-eh'-o)” speaks of the “calling near, invitation, or begging” of the Holy Spirit for consolation of the believer.
- c) The closeness created by this consolation brings the reality of God’s presence. Every man of God must learn to heed this calling near that he may receive the help only God can give.
- d) The quality of our own Christian faith is diminished when we rebel against God’s will for our lives because we see ourselves being lead into difficult situations.
- e) Hebrews 6:12-15 and James 1:2-4 shed light on the necessity of tribulation for the development of perfect faith. God commands that we let faith have its perfect work

2. Practical Encouragement for Saints—vs. 4—“we may be able to comfort them... in any trouble”

- a) Often we resist the Spirit’s leadership into situations of tribulation or trouble. We may come to the place of resenting a pathway of hardships. However, our reluctance to accept tribulation denies us the privilege of developing a great relationship with Christ, therefore limiting our effectiveness in ministering to others. We all need spiritual additives to our faith. These additives represent spiritual progress in our maturity. 2 Pet 1:5-7—“*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.*”
- b) Paul understood that whether he suffered or was comforted, his personal circumstances were developing his own character for the benefit of others. This is the same message Peter was delivering in the above passage. If you never accept tribulation, patience can never be added to your faith. Therefore, you will never fully develop.
- c) God allows His people to suffer that they may help others with their suffering.
 - 1) “*your consolation*”—“Paraklesis (par-ak'-lay-sis)” means “imploration, exhortation, solace”
 - 2) “*your... salvation*”—“Soteria (so-tay-ree'-ah)” meaning “deliverance, rescue, or safety.”

C. Establishment: The Product of Development—vs. 7

1. Strong Confidence—“Our hope of you is steadfast”

- a) Paul’s experience of God’s grace, peace, and consolation allowed him to have hope concerning those to whom he ministered. If God ever has delivered, he still can.
- b) The term “hope” refers to “confidence”. The term “steadfast” is defined as “stable or sure”.

2. Strong People—“ye are partakers of the suffering”

- a) The term “partaker” is significant because of the voluntary nature of the term. “Partaker” means “a partner, associate, comrade, companion; a sharer; brought into fellowship.”
- b) Those who willingly partake of suffering for Christ’s sake, will also partake of the consolation of Christ.