

In this lesson's text, Paul expresses how that he had not limited the love that he had for the Corinthians and he urges them to reciprocate. He then warns them of the danger of yoking themselves with unbelievers because it would restrict their ability to serve God. Paul urges them to separate themselves from the world and anything that would negatively influence their ability to please God.

Verses 1-10: Paul appeals to the Corinthians to not receive the grace of God "in vain" (for no reason; in a useless manner). False teachers had come in teaching that salvation was not by grace but by obeying the law. Paul did not want the Corinthians, who had initially accepted the grace of God by faith, to push it aside in an effort to earn their salvation through their works. Paul defends his sincerity in the preaching of the gospel to the Corinthians by reminding them of what he had endured to bring it to them.

11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged.

"O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you" – Paul and his companions had freely spoken to the Corinthians without withholding any truths from them. He endeavored to teach them everything that they needed to please God.

"our heart is enlarged" – This phrase expressed that Paul and his companions still had enough room in their hearts to hold the love that they had for the Corinthians. The Corinthians' love for Paul seems to have wavered but that did not cause Paul to love the Corinthians any less.

12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.

"Ye are not straitened [restrained; restricted; to limit] in us" – The love that Paul and his companions had for the Corinthians (expressed in v. 11) was not restrained in any way. Recent events had not reduced Paul's love for them.

"but ye are straitened in your own bowels [affections]" – In Paul's day, the bowels were considered to be the seat of emotions such as love. Despite the unrestrained love Paul had for the Corinthians, that love was not reciprocated to the same degree. Their love for him had shrunk, likely because of the false apostles that had visited the church and had criticized Paul and his teaching.

13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto *my* children,) be ye also enlarged

As a father expressing his love for his children, Paul asks them to "recompense" (reciprocate) their love also in response to his unrestrained love for them. He asks that their hearts would also be "enlarged" to hold their love for him.

14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" – Paul seems to be pulling the language for this command from the OT law that forbade the yoking of two different types of animals together (Deut. 22:10). The idea was that putting two animals together to serve a common purpose (such as plowing) was self defeating if the two animals had different physical characteristics and temperaments. The same idea holds true when attempting to connect an unbeliever with a believer. The two will have different priorities and will want to pull in different directions, making it difficult for the believer to live a life pleasing to God. Paul then asks a series of rhetorical questions to make his point that attempting to join two dissimilar entities at cross purposes with one another is inherently self defeating. Such joining could be things like a marriage, a business partnership, close friendships, etc..

"for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" – Righteousness and unrighteousness have different goals, priorities and methods and will conflict with one another because they will attempt to pull the yoke in contrary directions.

"and what communion [partnership; association] hath light with darkness?" – Light and darkness are opposites and cannot mix. God's light will always conflict with the darkness of Satan since they are enemies.

15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

"And what concord [agreement] hath Christ with Belial [worthless; wicked]?" – The name Belial was an ancient name for Satan. Obviously, Christ and Satan would have no common ground for agreement and would be in constant conflict. It would be unthinkable for the two to be in any kind of partnership.

"or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel [unbeliever; unfaithful]?" – Neither would a believer and unbeliever have anything in common with each other. A partnership between these two would be one of constant conflict since their goals and methods would each offend the other. Cooperation would be strained at best since the believer would want to please God and the infidel would likely have no interest in doing so.

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

“And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” – The purpose of the temple of God was to worship God alone, so attempting to also worship idols would violate and negate the worship of God in His temple.

“for ye are the temple of the living God” – The Holy Spirit indwells us if we have been born again (1 Cor. 3:16-17 “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are*”). Expanding on the idea of the temple of God, Paul points out that believers are the temple of God, and so joining ourselves to unbelievers would be like trying to worship idols as well as God. Attempting to do so would certainly displease God.

“as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” – Paul loosely quotes from a combination of various OT passages (Lev. 26:11-12; Ezk. 37:27) to prove that it has always been God’s intention to dwell with His people.

17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, 18 And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*” – Paul here quotes from Isa. 52:11 (“*Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD*”), a passage where Israel is commanded to return to Jerusalem from the heathen nations where they have been exiled. That passage will find its final fulfillment in the millennial kingdom of Christ when He brings the Jews back to their land. Here, Paul uses it to illustrate that it is God’s will that Christians separate themselves from the world and its influences that would lure us away from being obedient to Him.

“and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” – Paul is not quoting a specific OT verse here, but the promise that God will be a Father to His people is found in multiple places in the OT. When we separate ourselves from the world, we place ourselves into a position to receive the blessings of God. He will accept us and love us as Father does His children.