

**Living Reconciled**  
**2 Corinthians 6:1-3**  
**Part One**

What does it mean for those who have been reconciled to live as if they have been reconciled?

First of all, for those who have been reconciled to live as if they have been reconciled means they will strive to not offend (2 Corinthians 6:1-3). This is what we will see in **2 Corinthians 6:1-3**.

So let us begin with **verse 1**. And how does it begin? It begins with these words, **“And working together with Him.”**

So who was the **“Him”** that Paul believed that he and his associates and others like them were working together with? The **“Him”** was God. And how do we know this? We know this because the first word **“and”** ties us back to **2 Corinthians 5:18-21** and more specifically to **verse 20**.

What had Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:20**? Therefore, **“we [or in other words those who had been reconciled to God and who had been given the ministry of reconciliation and the word of reconciliation] are ambassadors for Christ, [as though what?] as though God were making an appeal through us.”** To whom? To the world! To do what? To **“be reconciled to God”** This is what Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:20**.

So did Paul, in **2 Corinthians 5:20**, see himself and his associates as working together with God, to reconcile various people throughout the world to God? And what is the answer? Absolutely!

This is why Paul, after referring to himself and his associates as **“ambassadors for Christ,”** was able to say in **2 Corinthians 5:20**, as he reflected on this very privileged position and as he sought to fulfill it, that it was **“as though God were making an appeal through us.”**

Paul and his associates clearly saw themselves as those who had been given the ministry of reconciliation and the word of reconciliation so that they in working together with God might reach this world for Christ.

So how important was it that Paul and his associates actually viewed themselves as working together with God? It was extremely important, for it provided them, as the ambassadors of Christ, the confidence to come into the presence of God to ask Him for His help in carrying out that ministry and proclaiming that message. For apart from God's help they would have been crushed under the trials and tribulations associated with that ministry and the proclamation of that message, just like we would be crushed.

So whom did Paul and his associates, as they sought to reach this world for Christ, see themselves as working together with?

Paul and his associates, as they sought to reach this world for Christ, saw themselves as working together with God based on 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, and Paul carried this thought forward into 2 Corinthians 6.

And this is the reason why Paul was able to start **2 Corinthians 6:1** as he did, with the words, **“and working together with Him,”** linking what he had said about working together with God in **2 Corinthians 5:18-21** with what he will now add about working together with God in **2 Corinthians 6:1**.

So, what was this new thought, about working together with God, that Paul will now add in **2 Corinthians 6:1**? Let us continue to read. **“And working together with Him** [or in other words in seeking to reconcile those who need to be reconciled as we just talked about in **2 Corinthians 5:18-21**, Paul now goes on to say], **we also urge you** [or in other words the Corinthians who have been reconciled to God through Paul's earlier ministry, to what?] **not to receive the grace of God in vain.”**

Paul and his associates had brought the Corinthians the full and glorious gospel of reconciliation, and they had believed. They believed that God made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin on their behalf so that they might become the righteousness of God in Him. They actually believed all of this or at least it appeared that they had, but where was their fruit? Where were their changed lives?

This concerned Paul so much that when he addressed the Corinthians it appears that he addressed them as if they their decision to respond to the message of reconciliation that he had already preached to them, and which they professed that they already received, was an entirely new decision.

This, I believe, is what led Paul to exhort the Corinthians as he did when he urged the Corinthians in **2 Corinthians 6:1** “**to not receive the grace of God in vain.**” In other words, Paul expected those who had been reconciled to God to live like it and in doing so that they might in fact testify to the genuineness of their decision, which apparently was not necessarily the case in respect to many within the church at Corinth.

When Paul urged the Corinthians to not receive the grace of God in vain, he did so because those who professed to have been reconciled were by their lifestyles contradicting their profession.

So how hopeful was Paul that there would be positive change as he, together with God, urged the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain, or in other words the reconciling work of God in Christ in vain? It appears he was very hopeful.

Let us now go to **2 Corinthians 6:2** and see if this is not so. “**For He says, ‘At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.’**”

When Paul said, “At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you,” he was quoting **Isaiah 49:8**.

These words were originally a statement of God to His servant the Messiah in which the help of the Father was promised to the Messiah for His salvation ministry. The quotation in its present setting may be applied in a number of different ways. But the one that I believe fits best in respect to the flow of this passage is this.

The words of this quotation served to express the optimism of Paul, because God was working together with him in the ministry of reconciliation, that there would be a good result in respect to the Corinthians.

But even though it appears that Paul, based on this quotation, expected a good result in respect to the Corinthians, he wanted to make it very clear that there was urgency on their part to respond quickly to Paul's effort together with God to help them begin to live a lifestyle that was consistent with their profession.

So now let us continue to read the verse. **“For He says, ‘At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.’”** That is the quotation from **Isaiah 49:8** and then Paul adds, **“Behold, now is ‘the acceptable time,’ behold now is ‘the Day of salvation.’”**

Paul emphasized the phrases “acceptable time” and “day of salvation” to point out that the time is now.

If the Corinthians were going to turn their lives around and to live in a manner consistent with the profession the time was right now, not a month from now, not a week from now, not a day from now, but right now.

For even though he was confident that God was working together in helping him in his ministry of reconciliation to proclaim the word of reconciliation, and to also exhort those who had received that word to live in a manner consistent with the message, he was still concerned that someone whom he had exhorted to respond quickly to his exhortation might continue to leave themselves exposed to the possibility that they had in fact become reconciled to God, by God through Christ, which would mean not only would they find themselves continuing to be robbed of blessings in this life but would, if they in fact died in their sins, face condemnation in the life to come.

Now after having expressed some optimism about how he believed the church at Corinth would be responding to his exhortation and as he was working together with God to get their lifestyles in line with their professions he then said this in **2 Corinthians 6:3**, **“Giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited.”** Who is he talking about here? We might think that he is talking about the Corinthians and certainly what he says here could be applied to the Corinthians, but that is not whom Paul is talking about.

Obviously as Paul worked together with God in executing the ministry of reconciliation and proclaiming the word of reconciliation, and as Paul

worked together with God with those who had professed to be reconciled to God to live in a manner consistent with that profession, we should be able to easily see how excited Paul was about that ministry so much so that Paul said about himself, **“giving no cause for offense in anything.”**

The word “offense” (PROSKOPE) literally means cause of **stumbling**. Paul was so excited about the ministry that he had been given that he did not want to be a cause for stumbling in any area of his life so that what might not happen? So that he would not discredit the gospel.

May God give us the grace, as those who have been reconciled to God and who are working together with God, not to give offense in anything, so that the gospel of Christ would not be discredited.