

**Living Reconciled**  
**2 Corinthians 6:6-7**  
**Part Three**

The Apostle Paul in **Romans 1:16** said, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”** Do we believe this? I would hope that our answer would be yes! Do we want others to believe this? Again, hopefully our answer would be yes!

So if we believe this and we want others to believe this then it would behoove us to live our lives in such a way that the way we live our lives would confirm the truth of the gospel message and its power to save.

And this brings us back to our study of **2 Corinthians** and more specifically to **2 Corinthians 6:1-10**. And what is the question that we are in the process of answering?

What does it mean for those who have been reconciled to live as if they have been reconciled? This is the question that we began to answer several weeks ago. And what have we discovered so far?

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). We saw this three weeks ago in **2 Corinthians 6:1-3**. So let me now read these verses for you. **“And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— (2) for He says, ‘At the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you.’ Behold, now is ‘the acceptable time,’ behold, now is ‘the day of salvation’— (3) giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited.”**

The Corinthians, though professing to have been reconciled, were living lives that were inconsistent with that profession. Paul in response to their inconsistency urged the Corinthians **“not to receive the grace of God in vain,”** or in other words to get their lifestyles aligned with their profession and to do so quickly so that they would not continue to cause offense to the

ministry of reconciliation, or in other words to the proclamation of the gospel of Christ.

So again, 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. But this is not all. There is something else that also needs to be present.

Secondly, for those who have been reconciled to live as if they have been reconciled means that they will strive to commend themselves as servants of God (2 Corinthians 6:4-10). We know this because this is how Paul and his associates as those who had been reconciled lived their lives according to the first part of **2 Corinthians 6:4**.

So now let me read for you that particular part of the verse and see if this is not so, and what does it say? **“But in everything commending ourselves as servants of God.”**

The Corinthians were messed up and had up to that point in time not quite gotten their act totally together, but this certainly was not true of Paul.

His lifestyle and the lifestyles of his associates were not a cause of stumbling, in fact, quite the contrary. Their lives **“in everything”** were not diminishing the gospel message, but were rather enhancing the gospel message as they, by the way they lived their lives, commended themselves as what? **“As the servants of God.”**

So now let me ask you this question. As they in everything commended themselves as servants of God, did this diminish the truthfulness of the message of the gospel and its power to save to those to whom they proclaimed it or did it enhance the message of the gospel and its power to save? Obviously it enhanced it.

And this is what we want to do. We want, by the way we live our lives, to commend ourselves as servants of God so that those who hear the message we proclaim will be more inclined to receive it as the power of God unto salvation rather than to reject it.

So how did Paul and his associates actually do this? How did they commend themselves “**in everything**” as the servants of God? In seeking to answer this question we have begun to examine Paul’s own words beginning in the latter half of **verse 4** through **verse 10**.

**“But in everything commending ourselves as servants of God [and now listen to what Paul says], in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, (5) in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, (6) in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, (7) in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, (8) by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; regarded as deceivers and yet true; (9) as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, (10) as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things.”**

So here we have it. These verses, **verses 4-10**, explain from the standpoint of Paul how he and his associates were able to commend themselves in everything as servants of God.

So let us now go back to **2 Corinthians 6:4-10** and even more specifically to **2 Corinthians 6:4** and remind ourselves of the one specific quality that must be present if we are ever going to be able to say like Paul and his associates that we “**in everything are commending ourselves as the servants of God.**” So, what is that one specific quality?

The one specific quality that we must possess is “**much endurance.**” Let us continue to read **verse 4** and see if this is not so. “**But in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance.**”

Paul’s “much endurance” is a descriptive heading and was the singular quality that Paul listed as commending him and his associates as servants of God.

Do we consider ourselves servants of God in everything? The only way for us to do so would be if we in the faithful execution of the ministry of reconciliation and the bold proclamation of the word of reconciliation would in fact “**in everything**” manifest the quality of “**much endurance.**”

So, what does this “**much endurance**” entail according to Paul in **2 Corinthians 6:4-10**? The “much endurance” according to Paul entailed a variety of different things that he divided into three different groupings in 2 Corinthians 6:4-10.

So, what was the first grouping? Paul’s initial grouping consisted of nine different troubles that were associated with his “much endurance” (2 Corinthians 6:4-5). So let me now read for you **2 Corinthians 6:4-5** that contains these troubles that Paul listed in order to highlight his “much endurance” and the “much endurance” of his associates.

**“But in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance** [there is the descriptive heading for what is about to follow and then he says], **in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses** [which were his list of general troubles], **in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults** [which were his list of troubles suffered at the hands of others, and then he said], **in labors, in sleeplessness, [and] in hunger”** [which was his list of self-inflicted troubles]. And though Paul suffered all these things: general troubles, troubles at the hands of others and self-inflicted troubles, he continued keeping on keeping on, or in other words he continued to faithfully execute the ministry of reconciliation and to boldly proclaim the word of reconciliation thus confirming himself along with his associates as **“servants of God.”**

But Paul is not yet done talking about his “**much endurance**” and the things entailed in that “**much endurance**” that commended him and his associates as servants of God. He will now go on to highlight for the Corinthians the manner of his endurance.

So again why was this important? It is important to understand the manner of their endurance so that we in imitating that endurance might not only commend ourselves “in everything” as servants of God but also our message as being the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes.

This brings us to Paul’s second grouping. And what comprised this second grouping? Paul’s second grouping consisted of nine different qualities that were associated with his “much endurance” (2 Corinthians 6:6-7).

So, what is my hope for this particular message as we examine these nine different qualities? My hope is this: that as we examine these various qualities that were associated with Paul's "**much endurance**" that we might be challenged, by the grace of God, to build these very same qualities into our lives, so that the manner of our endurance might, like Paul and his associates, commend us as servants of God thus enhancing the gospel message rather than diminishing it. So, what was the first quality that was associated with Paul's endurance?

Paul's endurance was "in purity" (2 Corinthians 6:6). Isn't this exactly what Paul tells us at the very beginning of **verse 6** as he begins to explain to his readers the manner in which he endured all the troubles he had just listed in **verses 4-5**? Absolutely! But what did he mean when he said this?

When Paul spoke of his endurance as being "in purity," he was speaking of his motives. In other words, in terms of all that Paul and his associates suffered it would have been very easy for them to think of themselves and to serve themselves rather than to think of the Corinthians and to serve the Corinthians, but they did not yield themselves to these fleshly impulses did they? Rather they only thought about how they might serve their Lord and the Corinthians. And this is what characterized their endurance and this is why Paul could say that their endurance was "**in purity.**" So, what was the second quality that was associated with Paul's endurance?

Paul's endurance was "in knowledge" (2 Corinthians 6:6). So let us read **2 Corinthians 6:6** and see if this is not so. "**...in purity, in knowledge...**" So, what did Paul mean when he told the Corinthians that his endurance was "**in knowledge?**"

When Paul spoke of his endurance as being "in knowledge," he was speaking of saving knowledge freely offered to sinners by faith in Christ. I believe this best fits the immediate context and is alluded to by Paul in **Colossians 2:3** when he, speaking of Christ, said, "**in whom are hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**"

In terms of all that Paul and his associates suffered it would have been very easy for them to question their salvation but they didn't. They knew that their salvation was secure in Christ Jesus. And this is what characterized

their endurance and this is why Paul could say that their endurance was **“in knowledge.”**

So, what was the third quality of Paul’s endurance that he mentioned?

Paul’s endurance was “in patience” (2 Corinthians 6:6). So let us once again read **2 Corinthians 6:6** and see if this is not so. **“...in purity, in knowledge, in patience...”** So, what did Paul mean when he told the Corinthians that his endurance was **“in patience?”**

When Paul spoke of his endurance as being “in patience,” he was speaking of patience as expressed toward people.

There were many wicked, ignorant, sinful, weak, unruly, judgmental, critical people who were continuously testing Paul and his associates by their bad behaviors and certainly among them were a good number of Corinthians, but rather than becoming impatient with them Paul and his associates patiently instructed them, encouraged them, and exhorted them. And this is what characterized the endurance of Paul and his associates and this is why Paul could say that their endurance was **“in patience.”** So, what was the fourth quality of Paul’s endurance that he mentioned?

Paul’s endurance was “in kindness” (2 Corinthians 6:6). So let us once again read **2 Corinthians 6:6** and see if this is not so. **“...in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness...”** So, what did Paul mean when he told the Corinthians that his endurance was **“in kindness?”**

When Paul spoke of his endurance as being “in kindness,” he was speaking of goodness in action (2 Corinthians 6:6). Not only did Paul and his associates, in all that they suffered at the hands of people, express patience toward them, they also looked for opportunities to do good to them and this is something that they encouraged other fellow believers to do as well.

What did Paul say to the Galatians in **Galatians 6:10**? **“So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”** And what he was commanding the Galatians to do here in this verse is exactly what characterized Paul’s and his associates’ endurance, and this is why Paul could say that their endurance

was **“in kindness.”** So, what was the fifth quality of Paul’s endurance that he mentioned?

Paul’s endurance was “in the Spirit” (2 Corinthians 6:6). So let us once again go back to **2 Corinthians 6:6** and see if this is not so. **“...in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit...”** So, what did Paul mean when he told the Corinthians that his endurance was **“in the Holy Spirit?”**

When Paul spoke of his endurance as being “in the Holy Spirit,” he was speaking of the One who empowers the kind of endurance that is in fact Christ honoring. In other words, Paul at this point in our text was making sure that credit was being given where credit was due.

For apart from Paul and his associates being filled with the Holy Spirit their endurance would not have been able to be described by Paul as he was now describing it in **2 Corinthians 6:6**, as **“in purity, in knowledge, in patience, and in kindness.”** It would have been far short of that but the truth was that the Holy Spirit did in fact characterize his endurance and this is why he was able to say that their endurance was **“in the Holy Spirit.”** So what was the sixth quality of Paul’s endurance that he mentioned?

Paul’s endurance was “in genuine love” (2 Corinthians 6:6). So let us once again go back to **2 Corinthians 6:6** and see if this is not so. **“...in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit [and then it says], in genuine love...”** So, what did Paul mean when he told the Corinthians that his endurance was **“in genuine love?”**

When Paul spoke of his endurance as being “in genuine love,” he was speaking of a love free from any trace of hypocrisy. Paul was not only willing to bless them and to commend them but even if necessary sharply rebuke them, as they had already experienced in his “severe letter” that we have spoken about in earlier messages. A letter so severe that his enemies at Corinth used it as an occasion to attack Paul for having crossed the line of what would have been proper. But why had he done it? Did he do it so that he might be served? No! He did this because he loved them, because he genuinely loved them. And this is why Paul was able to say that his endurance was **“in genuine love.”** So, what was the seventh quality of Paul’s endurance that he mentioned?

Paul's endurance was "in the word of truth" (2 Corinthians 6:7). Let us now move on to **verse 7** and see if this is not so. **"...in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love [and then it says], in the word of truth..."** So, what did Paul mean when he told the Corinthians that his endurance was **"in the word of truth?"**

When Paul spoke of his endurance as being "in the word of truth," he was speaking of the gospel message. In a general sense the word of truth would be the Bible as a whole, but in this context we would have to understand it as the gospel message that declares that God reconciles sinners to Himself through the substitutionary death of His Son. Paul could easily have found fleshly reasons to no longer boldly proclaim the gospel of Christ but he didn't. And this is why Paul was able to say that his endurance was **"in the word of truth."** So, what was the eighth quality of Paul's endurance that he mentioned?

Paul's endurance was "in the power of God" (2 Corinthians 6:7). So let us once again read the verses and see if this is not so. **"...in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth [and then it says], in the power of God..."** So what did Paul mean what did Paul mean when he told the Corinthians that his endurance was **"in the power of God?"**

When Paul spoke of his endurance as being "in the power of God," he was speaking of the power that was manifested in the midst of his weakness as he proclaimed the gospel of Christ.

Paul did not water down, redefine, or simplify the gospel. He did not shrink from proclaiming its difficult demands, or seek to avoid making sinners feel uncomfortable. He preached the gospel clearly and unambiguously "so that," as he wrote earlier to the Corinthians in **1 Corinthians 2:5**, that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. And this is why Paul was able to say that his endurance was **"in the power of God."** So, what was the ninth quality of Paul's endurance that he mentioned?

Paul's endurance was "by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left." So once again let us go back to our verses and see if this is not so. **"...in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God [and**



then it says], **by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left...**” So, what did Paul mean when he told the Corinthians that his endurance was **“by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left?”**

When Paul spoke of “weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,” he was speaking of weapons supplied by God’s righteousness suitable for any attack. In other words, God’s righteousness that is available to us through the filling of the Spirit is far more potent as a weapon than any human righteousness we might be able to conjure up by the power of our own strength.

The Apostle Paul in **Romans 1:16** said, **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”** If we believe this and want others to believe this then we will need to live our lives in a manner consistent with our profession, or in other words we must not only put off from our lives those things that offend but we must also strive in our **“much endurance”** to put on those things, those qualities that will commend ourselves as the servants of God and our message as the power of God unto salvation.

May God give us the grace to endure whatever we might have to endure in such a way that we as ministers of reconciliation will commend ourselves in everything as servants of God.