Anchored to Stand

**STUDIES IN SECOND CORINTHIANS**

**Lesson 9**

**II Corinthians 6**

***Stand Separated***

***We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.***

**II Corinthians 6:1**

II Corinthians 6 is a call to the believer to walk a consistent Christian life. In this chapter, Paul begins by exhorting the believer to not receive the grace of God in vain, meaning that we should not take the privileges of belonging to Jesus for granted. Pay careful attention to the wisdom Paul reveals as he challenges us to live the separated life. Separation is not a negative thing; it’s a positive thing. It is not simply living contrary to the world and placing ourselves in a compartment labeled “separated”. Rather, it is living in harmony with the passion in the heart of God for a world that is lost. That is *separation*. After all, if we have an “us” versus “them” attitude, how will we fulfill the ministry of reconciliation God has entrusted to us?

I Corinthians 3:9 says that *we are God’s fellow workers.* The Amplified Bible magnifies the verse this way: *For we are fellow workmen (joint promoters, laborers together) with and for God.* We spent the last several weeks learning about the wonderful ways we can be used by God to spread the good news of Jesus: We are the *fragrance of Christ*, *living epistles*, *vessels* that contain God’s treasure, and *ambassadors for Christ*. These are the various avenues, which God has provided us to fulfill the ministry of reconciliation. Now, in this week’s study we will take time to examine our own lives. Are we cooperating with the Lord and taking full advantage of these opportunities, or have we received these wonderful graces in vain?

**First Day Overview: Read II Corinthians 6**

1. Read II Corinthians 6. Record a thought, phrase or verse that particularly captures your attention. Be sure to underline or highlight these verses in your Bible, too.
2. This week’s study of II Corinthians 6 should inspire and challenge us as Christians to live for the Lord and serve Him without compromise. In these verses the exhortations, personal examples and thought-provoking questions Paul addressed to the Corinthian church remain both practical and relevant today. From Chapter 6 choose and record one of Paul’s:
   1. exhortations
   2. personal examples
   3. questions
3. Paul challenges us in II Corinthians 6:2b as he uses the word *behold* two times saying, *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* Why is it important that we do not put off or ignore what God has prompted us to do?
4. Personal Question: Do you consider yourself a laborer together with the Lord, as Paul did, or have you simply received His grace and done nothing with it?
5. Pastor Chuck Smith wrote a book entitled *Why Grace Changes Everything*. In what way does the grace of God *change everything* for you personally?

**Anchored In –** Take some time to count your blessings today. Let’s respond to His amazing grace by writing a “thank you” note to the Lord:

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***Thank you Lord for saving my soul***

***Thank you Lord for making me whole***

***Thank you Lord for giving to me***

***Thy great salvation so rich and free***

***Amen***

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**Second Day: Read II Corinthians 6:1-2**

1. Paul begins chapter 6 by saying that *we are workers together with Him*. I Corinthians 3:9 says, *we are God’s fellow workers*. The Amplified Bible says it this way …*for we are fellow workmen (joint promoters, laborers together)* ***with and for God****.*

* 1. As *workers together with Him* what should be our purpose?
  2. Read Paul’s exhortation found in II Corinthians 5:15. Has this exchange happened in your own life where you are no longer living for yourself?

1. The phrase *in vain* here can be described as "without purpose". As believers, we are faced with two ways of thinking that are contrary to God's purpose in bestowing grace. According to the following verses, what are they?
   1. Romans 6:1 –

How does having the attitude that it's O.K. to sin because God will forgive you take away from what Jesus did on the cross?

* 1. Galatians 2:21 -

How does an emphasis on keeping the law rather than depending on God's grace take away from what Jesus did on the cross?

1. Read 2 Corinthians 6:2. Paul wrote of the *acceptable time* and *the day of salvation*.

* 1. What three- letter word did he use to indicate when that time is?
  2. In what way does the urgency of this speak to you?
  3. What have you experienced when you put off acting on something God has shown you?
  4. What can you do to get the message of salvation to others?

1. Alan Redpath said, *Yesterday's grace is totally inadequate for the burden of today, and if I do not learn to lay hold of heavenly resources every day of my life…I soon become stale, barren, and fruitless in the service of the Lord.* In what way have you found this to be true in your own life?
2. God’s grace isn’t given because of our good works, but rather to encourage good works. When we receive God’s supply of grace He doesn’t want us to be passive with it. Many Christians struggle at this very point. Is God supposed to do it or am I supposed to do it? The answer is, "Yes!" God does it and “Yes!” we do it. That is how we see the work of God accomplished. If I neglect my end of the partnership, God's grace doesn't accomplish all that it might, and is therefore given *in vain*. What are some ways you can become active with the grace you have been given?

**Anchored In** – Today we were reminded that we are workers together with God. Take some time to talk to the Lord, asking Him to reveal ways He wants to use you to accomplish His will and plan. Let’s make sure we are *vessels* who are available for His use today.

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***But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I,***

***but the grace of God which was with me* – I Corinthians 15:10**

**THIRD DAY: Read 2 Corinthians 6:3-10**

*One of the greatest obstacles to the progress of the gospel is the bad example of people who profess to be Christians. Unsaved people like to use the inconsistencies of the saints – especially preachers – as an excuse for rejecting Christ.* – Warren Wiersbe

1. Through II Corinthians 6:3-10 Christians are given an excellent example of commitment and conduct for ministry. Consider verses 3,4a NLT: *We try to live in such a way that no one will be hindered from finding the Lord by the way we act, and so no one can find fault with our ministry*. *In everything we do we try to show that we are true ministers of God*. Paul’s statement of integrity should be ours too.
   1. The world around us is watching to see if our lives match our claim to be Christians. What are some things that can interfere with our integrity and hinder our witness for Christ?
   2. Sometimes our actions can cause another believer to be “tripped up” in their own faith. What do I Corinthians 8:9, I John 2:9-10 and Romans 14:13-21 teach you about stumbling your brother?
2. Paul determined that no one would be hindered in their faith by anything he did. He wanted to show them that he was a true minister of God. Read II Corinthians 6:4-5 and answer:
   1. In what situations did Paul choose to be a good example? .
   2. Have you, personally, experienced any of these circumstances? Share it here:
3. II Corinthians 6:6-8a we see that Paul could be a witness for Christ *by* his godly character.
   1. Record the behaviors or the “tools” that he used:
   2. Explain what Paul meant when he used the phrase *by the Holy Spirit.* (verse 6)
   3. Are you making good use of these character “tools” in your own life?
4. II Corinthians 6:8 and 9 express the diversities of ways that Paul was viewed by people. The New Living Translation begins this section with the words – *We serve God whether people honor us or despise us…* 
   1. Why is this important for anyone who wants to effectively minister to others?
   2. These contrasting statements contain the differing views and opinions people had of Paul. The world may view us as sad and pitiful, but in reality, we are happy with the joy of the Lord. Has someone ever had a hurtful opinion of you as a Christian? Share your experience:
5. 2 Corinthians 6:10 reveals the paradoxes of ministry; how it may seem on the outside, but is not how the minister sees it. Record the paradoxes below as you reflect on Paul’s words:

As\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, yet always \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_;

As\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, yet making many \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_;

As having\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and yet possessing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Anchored In –** Our life is a platform upon which the grace of God is displayed for the world to see. This display will either attract people to God or give them an excuse to reject Him. Selah. Journal your response to this:

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***I’d rather have Jesus than men’s applause; I’d rather be faithful to His dear cause;***

***I’d rather have Jesus than worldwide fame; I’d rather be true to His holy name***

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**Fourth Day – Read II Corinthians 6:11-13**

1. *O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections. Now in return for the same (I speak to you as children), you also be open.* II Corinthians 6:11-13
   1. As Paul saw it, the problem between him and the believers in Corinth was that they had withheld their love. What are some things that might have kept them from fully committing to him??
   2. How might the Corinthian’s lack of love for Paul have lessened the effectiveness of his ministry to them?
2. Look at Paul’s statement in II Corinthians 6:12, *You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.* 
   1. What do you think he means by this?
   2. What kinds of affections hinder our own walk with God?
   3. It’s easy for us to blame other things for our stagnant relationship with God, but Paul says our own carnality is to blame. How does this speak to you personally?
3. Sometimes believers are compromised because they don’t want to hear the truth. Paul warned that there would come a time when some in the church will *not endure sound doctrine*. Read II Timothy 4:3-4. In what way have you observed Paul’s statement to be true?
4. It will be good for us to be reminded of the things we should be focused on. What do the following verses teach us about our priorities?
   1. Psalm 84:11
   2. Proverbs 16:16
   3. Matthew 6:33
5. Read II Corinthians 6:13. Paul had opened up his heart to the Corinthian believers and is now asking them to do the same.
   1. Give some reasons people may not want to *open up* to others?

* 1. Do you find it easy for you to be this open with others? Why or Why not?

1. It is an unfortunate fact that women tend to be defensive and critical of one another. One way we could be considered *separate* from this world is in the way we treat other women. To *open oneself up* to others is another way of saying, be *vulnerable and friendly*.
   1. What can we do to be more loving and honest with our sisters-in-Christ?
   2. How can we show God’s love to women who don’t know Jesus?

**Anchored In** – Perhaps your relationship with God is being restricted by your own affections. We all get pulled into the things of this world that compete for our attention. Let’s be open with the Lord today and allow Him to show you any area that is restricting your walk with Him

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*If I walk with the world, I can't walk with God.*- selected

**Fifth Day – Read II Corinthians 6:14-18**

Jesus told us in Matthew 28 that we are to *go into all the world and preach the Gospel*, we are to be in the world, but NOT of it. As Christians, our worldview should reflect God’s view of the world. Therefore, we are called to be separate from the ungodly activities we see around us.

1. Paul emphatically tells us in II Corinthians 6:14, *do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers…*
   1. Look up the definition of a yoke and its purpose. What do you think Paul meant when he said this?
   2. This verse is often applied to the marriage relationship. What other relationships does this command include?
   3. Why would being yoked to an unbeliever be an impediment to a Christian’s walk?
   4. Some of us have a current relationship that would be considered *unequally yoked*. How has Paul’s command impacted the way you view your situation?
      1. There are many Christian women who have an unbelieving husband. Although they are considered to be *unequally yoked*, what special advice and encouragement does Paul offer according to I Corinthians 7:12-16?
2. To help Christians understand the rationale behind the principle of II Corinthians 6:14a, Paul asked five penetrating questions in II Corinthians 6:14b-16a. Observe each question as you complete the following chart:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| WHAT | HAS | WITH |
| *1. Fellowship* | *righteousness* | *unrighteousness* |
| 2. |  |  |
| 3. |  | *Belial* is a word for Satan |
| 4. |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |

* 1. Share any conclusions you draw from this.
  2. Do these verses mean we are to isolate ourselves from unbelievers? Why or why not?

1. 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 express God’s heart for His people to be separate.
   1. We have the amazing promise that God will graciously dwell in, walk among, and call us His people! In return, we are instructed, *do not touch what is unclean*. What does God consider unclean?
   2. Separation is two-fold: turning away from the world and turning unto the Lord. Read the glorious benefit promised to us in II Corinthians 6:17c-18. How does the promise of intimate fellowship with the Father motivate you today

**Anchored in** – Many people have an acquaintance with God as the Creator of the universe, but few experience the wonderful Father-daughter relationship with Him. In fact, we are even told in Romans 8:15 that we can lovingly call Him our Abba Father, or Daddy. Write down what it means to you to be considered a daughter of the King:

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***For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear,***

***but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father”.***

**Romans 8:15**

**Sixth Day- STAND Separated**

Have you ever read John Bunyan’s book, *Pilgrim’s Progress*? His book tells the story of “Christian”, a man who is seeking to be delivered from his burden of sin. Once “Christian” finds deliverance at the cross of Christ, he begins his journey on the Kings Highway towards the Celestial City (Heaven). Christian and his traveling companion, Faithful, encounter a city called *Vanity Fair, which* is known for the buying and selling of material things. Bunyan writes that Christian and Faithful were different from all the others in their dress, their speech, in their behavior, and in their contempt for the merchandise of the fair. In fact, these *pilgrims* were put on trial for having beliefs that were against the concept of life in Vanity Fair, and declared guilty.

It is a fair assessment to say that living in Orange County is just like living in Vanity Fair. If we were put on trial for having beliefs that differ from our culture, would there be enough evidence to convict us? This is a question we should all dare ask ourselves. When God is asking us *come out from among them and be separate*, it means that day by day we should live in such a way that we refrain from doing anything that would disturb our harmony with Him.. Our bond with our Lord should be so precious to us that anything that threatens to come between us must be destroyed.

Today we will look to God’s Word to find encouragement and inspiration to STAND Separated from the influence of Vanity Fair.

1. We are considered the Bride of Christ. When we flirt with the world and allow ourselves to be given over to its ideals and pleasures it is as if we are being unfaithful to God. He loves us and is jealous for our affection.
   1. Read I John 2:15-17 and record what you see:
   2. What does James 4:4-5 say?
   3. How can we apply these principals to our own lives?
2. Separation involves a choosing of sides. We can’t have one foot in the world and one foot in Christ.
   1. Anything in our lives that take precedence over our love for God can be considered an idol. Read Joshua 24:15 and record your response here:
   2. Jesus has called us to side with Him against a world that crucified Him. What does Luke 9:23 say?
   3. Some people will not like us if we choose to side with Jesus, but this shouldn’t shock us. He warned us this would happen. What does John 15:18-19 say?
   4. Share a time you may have had to choose a side - either Jesus or the world?
3. The number one thing that separates us from the world around us is our love. In John 13:35 Jesus said, “*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*.”
   1. God’s love is different than the world’s definition of love. Read Matthew 5:43-48 and record what you see:
   2. Share a way we can be separate, or different, by choosing to love others?

**Anchored In –** There is a line drawn in the sand; one side of the line is labeled “the world”, the other side labeled “in Christ”. Where do we stand today? Some of us have one foot on each side; others are walking on the line so closely that it is unclear where they stand. We all desire to have both feet firmly planted “in Christ” so we can *stand, separated* from this world. Write your own declaration, just as Joshua did, expressing your resolve to follow the Lord!

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***And above all things have fervent love for one another,***

***for “love will cover a multitude of sins.”***

**I Peter 4:8**