

2 COR. 5:6 – 7:16

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H. Confidence and Commitment (5:6-10) – ⁶*Therefore, having confidence always, and knowing that while being at home in the body we are away from the Lord -- ⁷for we walk by faith not by sight -- ⁸we have confidence, [I say], and would prefer rather to be away from the body and be at home with the Lord. ⁹Accordingly, whether being at home or away, we aim to be pleasing to him. ¹⁰For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each may receive back in accordance with what he did in the body, whether good or bad.*

1. Because they always have confidence in the glorious resurrection existence that is in store for them, and knowing by faith that life in this present mortal body is in some sense life away from the Lord, who they know by faith is dwelling in heaven, they would, if it were up to them, prefer to be dead and thus be with the Lord awaiting the resurrection.

a. This is the same sentiment Paul expressed in Phil. 1:21-23 (ESV): For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.

b. The Spirit empowers them to endure suffering, hardships, and persecution, but he does so in conjunction with their confidence, born of faith, regarding both life after death (being with the Lord awaiting resurrection) and life *after* life after death (being resurrected in an immortal body for life in the new heavens and new earth).

2. Given the blessed future the Lord has provided for his followers, Paul and his companions are all about pleasing him, whether here on earth or with him in heaven. They are completely given over to doing what he wants done and will not be moved to displease him for the sake of pleasing people.

3. And they make it their goal to please him knowing that all Christians, as part of humanity, will appear before Christ's judgment seat and give an account for how they lived. On the day of the final judgment, one's life will bear witness to the Spirit-powered transformation that accompanies being clothed with Christ through faith or will bear witness to the lack of such faith. As Daniel B. Wallace says (*Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 219): "Both James and Paul would agree, I believe, with the statement: 'Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone.'" It is because of their faith that Paul and his companions make a point of living as God would have them live.

I. Motivation for Service (5:11-15) – ¹¹*Knowing, therefore, the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we have been made plain to God, and I hope also to have been made plain in your consciences. ¹²We are not again commending ourselves to you but giving you*

a basis for a boast on our behalf, so that you may have [a response] to those who boast in appearance and not in heart. ¹³For if we are out of our minds, [it is] for God; if we are in our right minds, [it is] for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ compels us, having concluded this, that one died on behalf of all, therefore all died. ¹⁵And he died on behalf of all that the living might no longer live for themselves but for the one who died for them and was raised up.

1. Because they know that all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ (therefore), they know the fear of the Lord; and because they know the fear of the Lord, they persuade men. In other words, they know the glory and power and authority of the Lord Jesus, the one who has called them to apostolic service, and thus fear him in the sense they fear what it would mean to treat him disrespectfully, to refuse to take with appropriate seriousness his call on their lives.

a. As faithful Christians, they are not living in fear of judgment; rather they are living in the knowledge that Christ *deserves* to be feared by all who would refuse to accept him as Lord. Because of their faith that Jesus is Lord, they strive to do what he has called them to do, which includes persuading men. So Paul's ministry is not about pleasing people, not about fitting into their concept of a blessed man. It is about pleasing the Lord.

b. It is in faithfulness to the Lord that they strive to "persuade men." They do not, of course, persuade in the negative sense of winning favor through deception or compromise (see Gal. 1:10), but in a way consistent with Jesus' lordship. They persuade with full knowledge that their motives and methods are fully exposed before God and in the hope that those motives and methods are also clear to the Corinthians' hearts.

2. Paul must have been criticized for commending himself because he denies that he is doing that when defending the straightforward character of his brand of persuasion. Rather, he is giving them a basis to answer his critics. He is giving those in Corinth who have reaffirmed their loyalty to him after Titus's visit ammunition to defend their confidence in his ministry.

3. He describes his critics as those who boast in appearance and not in heart. They have a shallow, external concept of spirituality. They prided themselves in such outward matters as their letters of recommendation (3:1), their forceful personality (10:10), their oratorical skills (11:6), their receiving money for preaching (11:7), their Jewish pedigree (11:22), and their visionary experiences (12:1-7). So not only did Paul's opponents claim that he lacked certain social indicators of authentic apostleship; they also claimed that he exhibited the Spirit too little for an authentic apostle.

4. The opponents' emphasis on their visionary experiences is probably foremost in Paul's mind because:

a. In v. 13 he says that *his* ecstatic visionary experiences (being "not in his right mind" because of a vision or trance – Acts 10:10, 11:5, 22:17) are for God. In other words, they were moments of intimacy between himself and God, not something to be paraded to impress people.

b. On the other hand, his *rational* interaction with the Corinthians (being in his right mind) is for their spiritual benefit, something Paul is probably suggesting is a more relevant test in the evaluation of apostolic ministry.

c. This somewhat parallels Paul's comments about tongues in 1 Cor. 14, where the emphasis is on edification. In 14:28 Paul says that if no one is available to interpret the foreign language in which the worshipper miraculously speaks, the tongue-speaker must remain silent in the assembly. In that case, he must speak to God for his own benefit, meaning he must exercise his gift in private.

d. Many in the Charismatic movement have fallen prey to this kind of external evaluation of spirituality, this emphasis on the showy.

5. In v. 14 Paul explains that his commitment to bless the Corinthians spiritually (through rational interaction) is compelled by the fact of Christ's love, demonstrated in his death for all mankind.

a. And "therefore all died" in the sense that Christ's death was sufficient to serve as the death penalty for all. The penalty for all human sin has been paid, but it still must be individually appropriated through faith.

b. Verse 15 adds that Christ's atoning death for all mankind was intended to produce people who no longer live for themselves but for Christ (the one who died for them *and was raised*), which is precisely what Paul is doing. The question for all of us is whose interest are we pursuing in our lives. Are we living for ourselves or for the one who died for us?

J. Message of Reconciliation (5:16 - 6:2) – ¹⁶*So from now [on], we regard no one according to [the] flesh; even though we have regarded Christ according to [the] flesh, now we no longer regard [him that way].* ¹⁷*So if anyone [is] in Christ, [there is] a new creation; the old things passed away -- Look! New things have come to be.* ¹⁸*And all things [are] from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation,* ¹⁹*that is, that God, in Christ, was reconciling the world to himself, not charging their trespasses to them. And he has put in us the message of reconciliation.* ²⁰*Therefore, we serve as ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God [were] appealing through us. We implore [people] on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God.* ²¹*The one who knew no sin [God] made [to be] sin on our behalf, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 6 So working together with [God], we appeal also to you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For he says, "In [the] acceptable time I heard you, and in [the]*

day of salvation I helped you." Look, now [is the] acceptable time; look, now [is the] day of salvation!

1. In light of the fact Christ died for mankind and was raised from the dead, a fact that changes everything, Paul (and rightly all believers) no longer judge people from a worldly, external perspective. They now see everything through the lens of the Christ event. Indeed, we know how misleading a fleshly, worldly assessment was in the case of Christ. Sure he was crucified like the lowest of criminals, but the reality is that he was the divine sacrifice for our sins, God's chosen Savior of the world. David Garland writes (p. 283):

The primary reason for raising this issue is the Corinthians' misjudgment of his ministry, which they have assessed according to the worldly paradigms with which they are more familiar. Paul confesses that he (using an authorial "we") viewed reality and persons from a fleshly perspective which used only human yardsticks to measure others. False, superficial criteria led him to esteem those who appeared to be wise, influential, of noble birth, and strong, and to disdain those who were none of those things. Before he was captured by Christ, such worldly norms warped his judgments as they do all who live under the thralldom of sin and whose veiled, benighted minds screen out God's truth.

2. So if anyone is a Christian, he or she is part of a completely new creation, part of the eternal heavenly age that has already broken into the present evil age and which will be fully and ultimately expressed when Christ returns. As citizens of that new age, the lenses of the old age can no longer be made to fit us. Our perception of reality and of God's ways has been radically altered by the Christ event. Things which once were regarded as important are now seen as being worthless (e.g., Phil 3:4-8).

3. This is all from God. In all the action of the gospel the initiative is his; the new order, like the old, is his creative work. God is the one who reconciled Paul and his companions (and all believers) to himself through Christ and gave them the ministry of reconciliation.

a. This ministry of reconciliation consists essentially in the proclamation of the message of God's saving work in Christ, "that God, in Christ, was reconciling the world to himself, not charging their trespasses to them." Jesus is God's way of peace, peace through the forgiveness of our sins.

b. Having made reconciliation possible through the sacrifice of his Son, God entrusted the message of that reconciliation, the gospel of Christ, to the apostles and their assistants, who in turn entrusted it to many others. Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim. 2:2, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others." This is the church's message to the world.

4. Therefore, they serve as ambassadors on behalf of Christ, as though God were appealing through them. They are his spokesmen, his agents in spreading the aroma of life. In fulfillment of that calling, they implore *people* (most insert "you") on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. That is the essence of their appeal (as the Corinthians should well know).

5. The reconciliation which Paul urges on behalf of Christ is made available through Christ's atoning work, a topic he elaborates on in v. 21. God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be "sin" on our behalf, so that in Christ we might become the righteousness of God.

a. The sinless Son of God was made to bear the consequences of our sin in order that God might deem us righteous by refusing, because of Christ's death in our place, to take account of our sins.

b. In taking upon himself the burden of humanity's sins (cf. Isa. 53:4-6, 12), Christ bore the holy wrath of God. His relationship with the Father was (momentarily, but terribly beyond all human comprehension) severed, which sheds light on his anxiety in the Garden of Gethsemane and his cry of dereliction from the cross ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

6. So working together with God, Paul and his companions also appeal to the Corinthians not to receive the grace of God in vain. In other words, they want them to remain faithful to the gospel they initially received, which involves remaining loyal to Paul as God's apostle and not swallowing the false teaching of the Judaizing intruders.

7. He emphasizes the seriousness of this appeal by quoting from Isa. 49:8, which speaks of God's gracious deliverance from the bondage of captivity at the chosen time. Christ is the deliverance *par excellence*, and the time of that deliverance has come; it is here. It is absolutely unthinkable that such grace should be received in vain!

K. A Blameless Ministry (6:3-10) – ³*We in no way give anyone a cause for offense, so that the ministry not be faulted.* ⁴*Rather, in every way, as ministers of God, we commend ourselves: with much endurance -- in afflictions, in distresses, in difficulties,* ⁵*in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in labors, in sleepless nights, in times without food --* ⁶*with purity, with knowledge, with patience, with kindness, with [the] Holy Spirit, with genuine love,* ⁷*with [the] word of truth, with [the] power of God; through the weapons of righteousness on the right [hand] and on the left,* ⁸*through glory and dishonor, through bad reputation and good reputation; [regarded] as deceivers, yet true men;* ⁹*as unknowns, yet well-known; as dying, yet, look, we live; as being punished, yet not put to death;* ¹⁰*as grieving, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.*

1. In 6:3 Paul says that he conducts his apostolic ministry in a way that is above reproach. He does not want to be an obstacle to people receiving the grace of God in their lives. If people have legitimate questions about the integrity of the messenger, they

may use that as an excuse to reject the message. This is something every Christian needs to remember.

2. Rather, Paul and his companions, as servants of God, conduct themselves in a way that commends or accredits their ministry.

a. They exhibited great endurance which testifies to their commitment to the task. They are not in it just to get something. Their endurance through hardships shows them to be "true believers" in what they proclaim, not some kind of religious hustlers who only sing the song when it benefits them to do so.

(1) Paul then specifies the kinds of things they have endured in their commitment to the gospel. The nine circumstances he lists comprise three sets of three.

(2) Afflictions, distresses, and difficulties are general terms for hardships. Beatings, imprisonments, and riots are particular examples of hardships inflicted on them by others. Labors, sleepless nights, and times without food speak of hardships voluntarily undertaken.

b. They exhibited "purity" (both moral uprightness and sincerity of purpose), "knowledge" (both the plan of redemption and pastoral insight), "patience" (endurance of injury without anger or retaliation), "kindness" (generous and sympathetic disposition), "the Holy Spirit" (His power in their lives), "genuine love" (not feigned), "the word of truth" (the divinely revealed gospel), and "the power of God" (disclosed through their weakness, suffering, and dedication to serving others).

c. They waged their battle with weapons of righteousness in the right and the left. Whether attacking or defending, they never resorted to the unholy tactics of many.

d. They showed themselves to be servants of God in that they would not be intimidated when foes dishonored or held them in low regard, nor would they be distracted from faithfulness when friends honored or held them in high regard.

e. From a worldly point of view, they were seen one way, but these worldly judgments missed the deeper reality of their ministry. From a spiritual perspective, which is the right perspective, they were quite something else. Through this lens the quality and genuineness of their ministry was evident. The contrast of worldly judgments and the spiritual realities are:

(1) deceivers vs. men of integrity

(2) nobodies vs. well known to God's people

(3) dying vs. living by resurrection power

(4) punished vs. escaping death to bless others

(5) grieving vs. always rejoicing in blessings

(6) poor vs. enriching many with salvation

(7) having nothing vs. possessing everything

worth having

L. An Appeal for Reconciliation of Heart (6:11 - 7:4)

1. The appeal (6:11-13) – ¹¹*Our mouth has been opened to you, Corinthians, and our heart has been widened.* ¹²*You are not minimized by us; rather, you are minimized in your feelings.* ¹³*As recompense in kind -- I say as to children -- you also be widened.*

a. Paul and his companions have bared their souls to the Corinthians and had made room for them in their hearts. The problem in their relationship was not that Paul and his companions had restricted their affection for the Corinthians but that the Corinthians had restricted theirs for Paul and his companions.

b. Paul tenderly urges them to reciprocate the affection that he and his companions have for them. A minister is able to be most effective when the congregation loves him. Antagonism or reservation breeds resistance to the minister's message; the people cease to be teachable.

2. Removing an impediment to reciprocating their affection (6:14 - 7:1) – ¹⁴*Do not be misled with unbelievers. For what commonality [has] righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship [has] light with darkness?* ¹⁵*And what concord [has] Christ with Beliar, or what share [has] a believer with an unbeliever?* ¹⁶*And what agreement [has the] temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said, "I will dwell among them, and I will walk with them; and I will be their God, and they will be my people.* ¹⁷*Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate, says [the] Lord, and do not touch an unclean thing, and I will receive you.* ¹⁸*And I will be a father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to me, says [the] Lord Almighty."* **7** *Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*

a. The way this section fits in the letter has long been debated. The transition from v. 13 to v. 14 is quite abrupt. Since Paul in 6:11-13 and 7:2-3 is appealing to the Corinthians to reciprocate the affection that he and his companions have for them, it seems best to interpret 6:14-7:1 as somehow relating to that appeal.

b. Paul apparently knows that one impediment to the Corinthians' reciprocating his affection is their being joined to unbelievers in their pagan religious activities, participating with them in their ritual meals in pagan temples. Recall that Paul

spent nearly three chapters of 1 Corinthians (8:1-10:22) objecting to their consuming sacrificial meat in the pagan temple precinct as part of a pagan ritual. It seems this was still an issue, perhaps related to Paul's emergency visit, and the tension between Paul's expectation and their conduct was constraining their affection toward Paul.

c. To remove that impediment to their reciprocating his affection, Paul commands the Corinthians not to be misyoked with unbelievers.

(1) A "yoke" was put on animals for pulling loads. Those yoked together are engaged in the same enterprise; they are collaborating in pulling the same load. To be "yoked" with unbelievers is not in this context simply to be associated with them; it is to be participants with them in their pagan ways.

(2) Paul is telling them that they need to deal once and for all with the social pull toward idolatry, to cease being divided on the matter. They need to sever all ties with the pagan cults. A consequence of doing so is that they will be free to embrace Paul and his companions fully rather than keeping them somewhat at bay, but Paul does not ground the command on that consequence. Rather, he grounds the command not to be yoked with unbelievers on the fact doing so, joining in pagan worship, is utterly incongruous with their status as the people of God.

(3) Deut. 22:10 forbids plowing with an ox and a donkey yoked together, so Paul's imagery suggests that Christians are a different "breed" than non-Christians and are not to share in their work. There is no excuse for a Christian joining in pagan practices such as idol worship because Christians and unbelievers are worlds apart. We are righteous, in the light, of Christ, believers in the truth, and the temple of God. They are lawless, in the dark, of Satan (Beliar being an alternate form of Belial, which was used as a name for Satan in the intertestamental period), rejectors of the truth, and devotees of idols. We are to be spiritually pure, holy, and devoted to God. Though in the world, we are not to be of the world.

(4) That Paul's focus is on ethical and religious separation from unbelievers, on not joining them in idolatry, rather than on social separation is suggested by the fact the paragraph concludes (7:1) with a call to perfect holiness.

(a) As Paul indicated in 1 Cor. 5:9-10, social contact with pagans is unavoidable as long as one lives in this world. Furthermore, Paul elsewhere forbid Christians from divorcing their non-Christian spouses (1 Cor. 7:12-15) and called Christian slaves to submit to their masters (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25), which included non-Christians (1 Tim. 6:1-2). That shows that cooperative relationships with non-Christians are not *inherently* defiling. Otherwise, Paul would have insisted on separation in those cases. Indeed, Paul in 1 Cor. 14:23 mentions unbelievers entering the Christian assembly without any indication their presence would be defiling or should be forbidden.

(b) This is not to deny that certain social bonds, such as marriage, are so influential that entering into them too easily leads to joining in pagan

practices; it is to say that Paul is here focusing on joining in the practices rather than on entering into relationships that influence one toward the practices. If one is joining with unbelievers in idolatry, pulling the "sin cart" with them, one will resist getting close to Paul.

3. Appeal for reconciliation concluded (7:2-4) – ²*Make room for us. We wronged no one; we ruined no one; we exploited no one.* ³*I do not say [this] for condemnation, for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and live together.* ⁴*I have much confidence regarding you; I have much boasting on behalf of you. I have been filled with comfort; I overflow with joy in all our affliction.*

(a) Paul concludes his appeal to the Corinthians to receive him and his companions into their hearts. He asserts their integrity at three levels.

(1) They "wronged" no one – They had not mistreated any of those in Corinth. On the contrary, the wrong had been done to them.

(2) They "ruined" no one – Their doctrine and example was not responsible for anyone's moral ruin, and their organizing of the collection was not responsible for anyone's financial ruin.

(3) They "exploited" no one – They did not take advantage of anyone at Corinth.

(b) In v. 3 Paul explains that in saying this he is seeking to deny the insinuations of the intruders not to blame the Corinthians. The intruders are the ones stirring up the trouble. He assures the Corinthians that they occupy a permanent place in his love and concern, a place that will remain in future death and in future resurrection life.

(c) Despite all his frustration, Paul (especially now) has great confidence in the Corinthians' basic allegiance to him, and he is proud of how they responded to his "severe letter." In the midst of affliction, he was filled with comfort and overflowing with joy. The reason is given in the following verses: Titus had arrived with the encouraging news of how they had responded to that letter.

IV. The Joyful Reunion with Titus - 7:5-16

A. Comfort in Macedonia (7:5-7) – ⁵*Indeed, upon our coming into Macedonia, our flesh had no relief. Rather, in every way [we were] being afflicted, disputes without, fears within.* ⁶*But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us with the coming of Titus,* ⁷*yet not only with his coming but also with the comfort with which he was comforted over you, in [his] reporting to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal on my behalf, so that I rejoiced even more.*

1. Paul returns to the account of his travels that was broken off at 2:13 to include the lengthy discussion about his ministry. When Titus didn't show up in Troas, Paul went to Macedonia expecting to meet him there, but Titus was not there when Paul arrived.

2. When Paul arrived in Macedonia he faced great distress. He was embroiled in "fightings without," which may point to quarrelling that focused on Paul or to opposition or persecution that beset him in Macedonia (perhaps related to the "severe test of affliction" facing the Macedonian churches - see 8:1-2). He also faced "fears within," which probably refers to his concern over Titus and his mission to the Corinthians.

3. God comforted the distressed apostle in the coming of Titus itself and even more in the news of Titus's reception at Corinth (the comfort the Corinthians had given to Titus).

a. Note how Paul thanks God for Titus's coming. God was responsible for Titus's returning to him.

b. The reception with which the Corinthians had comforted Titus, the report of which comforted Paul, involved their "longing" to see Paul and to be reconciled to him, their "mourning" over their disloyal behavior, and their "zeal" to defend Paul's cause and to follow his directions in disciplining the guilty party.

B. The Severe Letter and Its Effect (7:8-13a) – ⁸*For even though I grieved you by the letter, I do not regret [it]. Though I did regret [it] (for I see that that letter grieved you, even though for an hour),* ⁹*now I rejoice, not because you were grieved but because you were grieved to repentance. For you were grieved according to God, that in no way did you suffer loss through us.* ¹⁰*For the grief [that is] according to God, brings about repentance that leads to salvation without regrets, but the grief of the world produces death.* ¹¹*For notice this very thing, [not only] what earnestness being grieved according to God produced in you, but what a defense, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment. In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.* ¹²*So even though I wrote to you, [it was] neither on account of the one who did wrong nor on account of the one who was wronged but in order that your earnestness on our behalf might be manifested to you before God.* ¹³*On account of this, we have been comforted.*

1. Recall that soon after (or during) Paul's emergency visit to Corinth at least one of his opponents had attacked him in deeply insulting ways. Paul wrote from Ephesus what is called the "severe" or "tearful" letter. In this letter he apparently laid down the standards he expected in the churches and sought to determine if they would meet those standards. He demanded the punishment of the ringleader who had maligned and opposed him so maliciously. This letter was not preserved.

2. At one point Paul regretted having sent this letter, apparently because he was uncertain about the effect it would have. But in light of the fact, which he learned from Titus, that the initial grief caused by the letter had produced repentance, rather than rejection and hostility, he now had no regrets. In fact, he now rejoiced, not because they endured grief but because they were led to repentance.

3. Because they experienced this godly sorrow, which produced repentance, they suffered no harm as a result of the painful letter. If, on the other hand, they had reacted with anger or bitterness, the letter would have had a negative effect (i.e., caused them some kind of "loss," which is what Paul had been concerned about).

4. The difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow is that godly sorrow produces repentance, a commitment to change, whereas worldly sorrow stops at remorse.

a. Repentance is redemptive. It leads to salvation in that there is no salvation without it. Those who willfully refuse to submit to God have rejected him; they do not have a biblical, saving faith. They love their sin more than they love God. Salvation, of course, is unaccompanied by regrets.

b. Worldly sorrow produces spiritual death precisely because it stops short of repentance. There is conviction but no repentance.

5. Paul reminds his readers of the outworking of this godly sorrow in their case, the repentance which it produced:

a. earnestness – serious about rectifying the matter

b. a defense (eagerness to clear themselves - NIV) – to do what was necessary to set the matter right

c. indignation – directed toward the perpetrator(s) who had attacked Paul and/or themselves

d. fear – of God or of Paul as God's apostle

e. longing – to be reunited with Paul physically and emotionally

f. zeal (concern - NIV) – for Paul and his gospel and things of God

g. punishment – of the offender for attacking God's apostle

6. In every way they showed themselves innocent in that they did all that Paul asked of them. They gave Paul his due as God's apostle.

7. Given their positive reaction to the "severe letter," Paul now realizes that the purpose God intended the letter to serve was not so much to have the offender corrected nor to rectify the wrong done to Paul but to let the Corinthians as a group see just how much they really did care for Paul. And because of that, Paul and his companions have been comforted.

C. The Relief of Titus (7:13b-16) – *Now in addition to our comfort, we rejoiced even much more over Titus's joy, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you.* ¹⁴*For if I have boasted some to him about you, I was not put to shame, but as we spoke all things in truth to you, so also our boasting before Titus became the truth.* ¹⁵*And his feelings toward you are in more abundance as he remembers the obedience of all of you, as with fear and trembling you received him.* ¹⁶*I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you.*

1. In addition to the comfort they received from the Corinthians' response to the "severe letter," they were thrilled by Titus's joy regarding the Corinthians. They had refreshed his spirit; they were a great emotional lift for this soldier of Christ.

2. And part of why they were so thrilled was that Paul had bragged to Titus about the Corinthians as a whole (despite their failure to defend him when he had been maligned). He would have been embarrassed had they not lived up to what Paul told Titus about them.

3. Titus's affection for the Corinthians was enhanced as he remembered their obedience to the demands of the "severe letter" and the fear and trembling with which they received him (i.e., they were extremely concerned that they would fail to meet their obligations toward Paul's envoy).

4. This gave Paul good reason for complete confidence in them and a secure base from which to propose completion of the collection, which he does in chapters 8 and 9. (Note: This confidence seems shaken in chaps. 10-13 [esp. 11:3-4, 19-20], which suggests that something has happened between these sections.)