

SECOND CORINTHIANS

Chapter 7

Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

7:1 *cleanse. ourselves.* Though the Christian is declared clean by Christ's righteous sacrifice (1Co 1:30; Rm 4:24–25; 1Pt 2:24), repentance and forgiveness remain daily activities of the Christian life (Gal 5:24–6:4; 1Jn 2:1). (TLSB)

defilement of body and spirit. Sins of thought, word, and deed contaminate body and soul (Mt 15:11; 1Co 6:18). (TLSB)

holiness to completion. Becoming like Christ (cf Eph 5:1–2; Php 1:6). (TLSB)

6:14–7:1 Our relationship with Jesus is intimate because we, as believers, are “the temple of the living God” (v 16). Our faith calls us to break from those things that would compromise our life with Jesus. The good news is that God's promises are sure even when we are unfaithful. God calls us to claim the promises of His gracious presence again and again through repentance and forgiveness. • Lord, give me the confidence to trust in You more boldly and to separate from the things of the world that would jeopardize my faith. May it be even more apparent that I belong to You alone. Amen. (TLSB)

Paul's Joy

² Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. ³ I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. ⁴ I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds. ⁵ For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. ⁶ But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷ and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever. ⁸ Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— ⁹ yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹ See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see

justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹² So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. ¹³ By all this we are encouraged. In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. ¹⁴ I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. ¹⁵ And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶ I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

7:2 *We have ... exploited no one.* Implies that Paul had been accused by the false teachers of being unjust, destructive and fraudulent—the very things they themselves were guilty of. (CSB)

7:3 Again he declares the depth of his affection for the Corinthian believers and appeals to them to respond, contrary to the wishes of the false teachers, by displaying their love for him, their genuine apostle (cf. 6:11–13). (CSB)

to die together and to live together. The Corinthians and Paul share the deep, common bond of the Christian life, namely, dying in Christ to sin and living a new life together by the Holy Spirit's power (Rm 6:1–4). (TLSB)

7:4 *great confidence ... my joy knows no bounds.* The long digression that started at 2:14 concludes here on this note of exhilaration. The news he had been so anxiously awaiting from Corinth has turned out to be good and reassuring, and Paul is overjoyed to receive it. (CSB)

Titus's good report (vv 13–14) alleviated Paul's concern for the Church at Corinth, expressed by his sending of Timothy (1Co 4:17; cf 2Co 2:4). (TLSB)

7:5–6 *when we came into Macedonia ... God ... comforted us by the coming of Titus.* Here Paul resumes the account he began in 2:12–13, where he described how his hopes of meeting Titus in Troas were disappointed and how, restless for news, he had decided to press on into Macedonia. He now explains that on reaching Macedonia, he was at last comforted by the arrival of Titus, who brought the news he most wanted to hear concerning the situation in Corinth. Titus himself had been well received in that city and was able to assure Paul (see v. 7) of the “longing” and “ardent concern” of the Corinthian Christians for him and of the “deep sorrow” they had expressed for the grief they had caused him. Consequently, his “joy was greater than ever.” (CSB)

There were outward struggles against people hostile to the Gospel; such response brought inward fear to those who preached Christ (cf Ac 16:19–23; 17:13; 19:23). (TLSB)

7:6 *comforts the downcast.* At the moment of Paul's greatest concern and deepest fears, God brought him good news concerning the Corinthians' faith (cf 6:1). (TLSB)

7:7 *comforted by you.* Titus journeyed to Corinth to deal with the issues confronting the Church sometime in the spring or summer, AD 55. His work there was well received, which was a great comfort to Paul as their spiritual father (1Co 4:15). (TLSB)

7:8–9 *I do not regret it ... I did regret it ... now I am happy.* Paul did regret the necessity of writing a letter to the Corinthians that caused sorrow to them. However, it was not the actual writing that he regretted, but the situation that required the writing. Moreover, the fact that the letter had the desired effect made him happy, for their sorrow did not leave them embittered and hostile but led them to repentance. They became sorrowful as God intended, and so were benefited, not harmed, by the letter. (CSB)

I do not regret. Though it caused pain, it had to be done, as the results demonstrated. (TLSB)

grieved into repenting. The Law changes the heart, making it open to God's mercy. (TLSB)

godly grief. Guilt over sin is part of repentance (cf Ac 20:21). (TLSB)

7:10 *Godly sorrow ... worldly sorrow.* The former manifests itself by repentance and the blessing of divine grace; the latter brings death because, instead of being God-centered sorrow over the wickedness of sin, it is self-centered sorrow over the painful consequences of sin. The letter's primary purpose was not to deal with the notorious offender in Corinth or the person he had injured, but to test their loyalty and devotion to Paul as their apostle. (CSB)

Destructive guilt abandons a person in despair (e.g., depression), which can result in physical and spiritual death (Rm 6:23). "The preaching of the Gospel must be added so that the repentance may lead to salvation and not to the Law's contrition or terrors" (FC SD V 9). Contrast the examples of Peter and Judas (Mt 26:69–75; 27:3–10). (TLSB)

7:11 *eagerness to clear yourselves.* Repentance has "fruits" (Lk 3:8), one of which is to try to clear up what was wrong. (TLSB)

proved yourselves innocent. Godly repentance and godly forgiveness was now powerfully at work in their lives (cf Ps 103:11–14; Heb 8:11–12). (TLSB)

7:12 *revealed to you in the sight of God.* Paul wanted them to recognize fully the genuineness of his service to them on God's behalf (see notes, 6:11–13). (TLSB)

7:13 Titus was relieved, for the congregation's problems were dealt with in repentance and forgiveness. Their desire to mend what was broken also brought Paul deep comfort and peace of mind. (TLSB)

7:15 *obedience.* The Corinthians' willingness to follow Paul's admonitions reflected their repentance and faith. (TLSB)

fear and trembling. Responses associated with God's royal presence (see note, Ps 2:11), showing the Corinthians' respect and reverence for the Word of God Titus declared to them. (TLSB)

7:2–16 Paul shares the ups and downs of ministry and his great joy in hearing that the Corinthians' faith in Christ was solid again. We Christians are often guilty of hoarding Christ's great love, rather than making room in our hearts for others (cf v 2) God has loved us with an everlasting love through Jesus Christ. To open up our hearts to others, to let them know of Christ's love, is to experience again the joy of that great love of God for all. • Lord, teach us daily how great, how long, how wide, and how deep is Your love for us and for every person in this world. And teach us the joy of seeing others come to faith. Amen. (TLSB)