

2 Corinthians 6

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- [0 : 0 0] As we pick up then in the sixth chapter of 2 Corinthians, as I mentioned previously, it is now fully a year, which I haven't realized since we left at the end of chapter 5, when we looked at the opening five chapters.
- And we saw there at the end, you know, these majestic verses, that to which God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and have committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
- Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For ye hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
- And now we pick up, remembering, of course, in the original, there wouldn't have been chapters and verses as divisions, so it just have continued on to flow, we then as workers together, and the within, if you have the authorised version in front of you, is, of course, in italics, which means it's not part of the original text.
- So it would have been, we then as workers together, beseech you also. Now, you could say that the workers together might even apply to Paul and his companions, together with the Corinthians, being workers together.
- [1 : 1 8] Of course, the letter is, as you know, in chapter 1, verse 1, coming from Paul and Timothy, although there'd be others, no doubt, there with him. But the with him is almost certainly accurate, because we are beseeching you, obviously the Corinthians also, that ye, again, plural, collective, receive not the grace of God in vain.
- If it was workers together with the Corinthians, then it wouldn't make so much sense to be beseeching them. Oh, you could still say, you know, we ourselves together, we beseech you along with us, sort of thing.
- But almost certainly, it's workers together with God. And you might think, well, surely that's a wee bit presumptuous. We can't be workers together with God. It's all of God. Yes, it is all of God.
- God is the artist, but he still holds the paintbrush. He is the master sculptor, but the sculptor still takes the hammer and the chisel. We are the instruments in his hand.
- We are not the masters or the skilled ones, but we are the instruments that he uses in that sense. In the same way as he wrote to the Corinthians, the first line in chapter 3, verse 9, we are labourers together with God.
- [2 : 3 1] Ye are God's husbandry. Ye are God's building. That which the Lord has put together, that which he has, in a sense, created. He hasn't created in vain. He's created in order to use.
- You know, if you build a house, then you don't just build it and stand back and say, what a lovely job I've made of that, and then walk away. You build it in order to use it. And in all the days, people built a buyer.
- They built it in order for their beasts to go in it and to store things in it. It was created in order to be used. And the Lord, having created us and brought us perhaps also into a state of grace, has done so that he may make use of us.

We then as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. In other words, don't allow it to become an excuse for lasciviousness or worldliness.

Or say, well, I'm saved now. I can do whatever I like. I can live as worldly as I want. I can live to excess. I can just indulge all my appetites and so on. You know, verse 16 of the previous chapter, Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh.

[3 : 42] Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. The flesh is not what drives us now. If we are in the Lord, we still live in the flesh, but we are not to be driven by the flesh.

We are not to receive the grace of God in vain. We have not been given this free gift simply to indulge baser appetites. We have to live here in this world, in this fallen state, but we don't have to continue to live.

So that's what drove us. Because, verse 2, in this parenthesis, in brackets here, he said, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation have I suffered thee.

This is a quotation, of course, from Isaiah 49, verse 8, where we read, Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee.

And I will preserve thee and give thee for a covenant of the people to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. In other words, that which was hopeless, that which was empty, which was desolate, you're going to inherit and cause to become fruitful.

[4 : 50] What were we before? We were desolate. We were lost, without hope and without God in the world. We were barren in terms of our spirituality. But the Lord, causing us to inherit, as it were, this desolate heritage of wilderness, he then causes us, like the land of Canaan, like the mountains of Israel, to become killed and sold, to become fruitful under his hand.

I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day, or a day of salvation, have I suffered thee, provided for you, fed you, looked after you, behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation.

The Lord is freely offering this to us now. He wants us to be changed now, to be transformed now. This is the opportunity, the day of grace. But this is mentioned only, as it were, in passing, because what he wants to focus on is that having this great gift, having this great inheritance, were not to become sidetracked again by the world, and being drawn off to it.

And if you look at this chapter, the focus on it, is that the complete, 100% devotion, that the apostles have given, to this work, and what he is saying effectively.

And you Corinthians will likewise have the same kind of blessing, the greater and the more you give yourselves to this gospel. If you try and hold back, if you try and keep one fruit in the world, and play with the world as well, as opposed to giving yourself to the Lord, then any blessing you receive will likewise only be half-hearted.

[6 : 29] He is talking about how devoted they have been. Verse 3 continues, really, from verse 1. Remember that verse 2 is in brackets. The purpose of brackets is the sentence has to make sense, as though the brackets were not there.

So, we then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain, giving no offense in anything, that the ministry be not blamed. Don't let people have things they can criticize you for, which are not the offense of the gospel.

If, for example, you say to somebody, Jesus Christ is the Son of God, He's the only way of salvation, and people say, oh, that's so bigoted, that's so narrow-minded, how a terrible person you are, that is the offense of the gospel.

You are claiming the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, the world is offended by that. But if, having claimed that, you then say, oh, yes, the Lord calls us to purity, and so on, and then you are having affairs with uniting different people, then there's an inconsistency.

There is a hypocrisy there that will blame the ministry, the service, the work of the gospel, you know, the witness that they are meant to be having, say, well, they're rubbish, you're not even living in that. And this is part of the thing that we all have to recognize and learn, that it is not simply that which we speak with our lips, or profess to believe, or may even accept to intellectually, or even sign our names to, as a formula.

[7 : 57] It is also what we live out, which is part of our witness, our testimony, our ministry, small m, it is part of who we are in Christ.

It's not just what I say with my mouth, not just what I sign my name to, not just what I profess outwardly, it is how my life backs that up. And indeed this, of course, as we all know, is part of the greatest testimony that when an unbeliever is converted, people see the change in their lives before they even sometimes get to telling folk about it.

They can see that something has changed. They can recognize there is a difference in how they are, in the way they speak, in the way they live. Something is different about them.

And when they are told, yes, well, he's become converted, or she's become converted, all right, okay, we knew something was up. We knew something had changed because there has been a change. So giving no offense at anything that the ministry be not blamed.

Now, what he's not saying is, for goodness sake, don't give us a bad reputation. But what he's meaning is, don't let any slur be cast on that which we have taught you and that which you know we have lived out.

[9 : 12] You know that the message you receive is powerful. It is mighty to save. Don't let that be brought into disrepute. You also know that we, me and Timothy, what he's saying, and the apostles, we lived out what we taught.

You know that what you got from us was the authentic truth. Because in all things, we were approving ourselves as the ministers, the servants of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses.

And you'll notice that throughout these successive verses, there's what they would call, you know, there's these little triplets of words. Patience, much patience, first of all, is put first on its own.

Because in all of these trials and difficulties, there is a need for patience from the Christian. To recognize that what is happening to them is not just, oh, because a bad coincidence happened, oh, that was random, oh, that's a great pity, oh, what a pain in the neck that this thing happened.

That all these little brickbats or pinpricks or difficulties that seem to make no difference whatsoever to the grand scheme of things are all part of the little attacks of evil that you need for much patience in them all.

[10 : 28] And to weather these storms, it's like, you know, if you were going out into the North Sea on the rigs or whatever, if you get a calm day with beautiful sunshine, that's wonderful, that's great.

But if you happen to get a stormy, dark, wet, wild day out there on the rigs, you don't say, oh, goodness sake, this is ridiculous, how could it possibly have happened? You're going to get good days and you're going to get bad days.

It's part of the thing of being on the way out there at sea. Sometimes there will be sunshine and calm. Often there may be storms and difficulty. It's the same in the Christian life.

There will be mountaintop experiences with much blessing and great joy. There will be an awful lot of dark valleys too and an awful lot of slog and difficult days and they won't always take an obvious spiritual, you know, reason or dimension.

People are not going to say, oh, we're giving you a hard time because you're a Christian. But bad things may and will happen in your life that don't seem to have any rationale or explanation.

[11 : 32] But you know that this is part of the trials, part of the afflictions and there is need for much patience. In afflictions, in necessities, in distresses.

We can unpack those, of course, say the afflictions are that which are just general sufferings, necessities, we could say that which other people cause to happen to the apostles, distresses, some have suggested that's which things which they perhaps bring, almost as it were, on themselves through their witness.

Stripes, imprisonments, tumults, these are self-explanatory, whippings, in other words, like in Philippi, imprisonments, again Philippi and other places, in tumults, like in Ephesus, remember that where the town clerk of Ephesus had to calm down the multitude after they'd been crying out for our own men, great as Diana of the Ephesians and so on.

In labours, in wanderings, in fastings, the sense in fastings is not so much a devotional exercise as simply lack of food because of the circumstances.

In 1 Corinthians 4, verse 11, for example, even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst and are naked and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place.

[12 : 49] And the sense there, in 1 Corinthians 4, 11, is not, oh, we're hungry and we're thirsty because we're fasting, because we're doing it for the Lord. It's rather, this is just the circumstances into which, this is just the par for the course, we're suffering, we're struggling because of it and that probably is the sense of the fastings here, it's just the necessities, you know, lack of food, foodlessness in the sense, hunger, genuine hunger there.

Watchings and fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love and fame. Now see how we've moved now from that which is the attacks of the evil one or the difficulties they've endured to the positive outpouring.

You know, they're getting the attacks and they're responding in what way? Kindness, the Holy Ghost, love and fame, long-suffering, knowledge, by the word of truth, the power of God, the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.

That's their sort of fight back as it were. You know, be not overcome of evil, they wrote to the Romans, but overcome evil with good. And then we've got a whole lot of, as it were, couplets of contrast, honor and dishonor, evil report and good report, deceivers and yet true.

People said they were being deceivers, in fact, they were telling the truth. As unknown, the world doesn't know us who we are in fact, it doesn't recognize us in our hearts and who we are in truth and yet we are well known.

[14 : 20] The truth of what we say is well known to other believers and ultimately we are known to the Lord. As dying, and behold, we live. As chastened, and not killed. As sorrowful, yet all we rejoicing.

As poor, yet making many rich. As having nothing, and yet possessing all things. Notice that, all these verses from verse 4 onwards, and I'll do verse 10.

It's the total immersion in the service, the work, the labor of the Lord. You know, it's all or nothing. And it's not nothing. So it's all. It's all that the apostles are giving.

It's all, it's the example that they are giving. It's complete, total commitment. You might say, well, not everybody can do that. Why are they, why are they so obsessed with it? Why are they so fanatical?

Because for them, for Paul and his companions, this is a period of intensity prior to the ultimate test. You know, most of us at some point in our lives, we've had to sit exams.

[15 : 22] Now, what happens as you're coming up to sort of May, June time with exams, and you've got so much to swat up on, and so much to study for, and so on. Do you just carry on with normal life as before, and maybe do the odd five minutes here and there?

Or do you shut yourself away with your pile of books, and you're slogging away, you're cramming, you're swatting, you're revising, you're intensity, and then you do your exam, and then, oh, goodness, that's out of the way.

Or you've got your half dozen exams, you're swatting for one, then for another, then for another. And that period of time, you know, the spring, the early summer, and so on, we all have sympathy with those in their mid-teens at that point when they are slogging away from whether it's the standard grades or higher, or the, you know, advanced fires or whatever it might be, the amount of slog for exams you've got to do.

But it's not forever. It's a telescoped period of intensity prior to a great test which once it's done, oh, you get to breathe and you've got a bit more time to yourself.

Like the athlete training for the games. He or she, they're going to put themselves through intense training. Yes, over a long period of time, but it's going to get more intense the nearer the games they come.

[16 : 36] And then, oh, it's done. Now for Paul, this life, a mindful that is so short is this period of intensity. You can't waste any time.

You've got to go through whatever it takes. Stripes, imprisonments, trials, testings, fastings. It doesn't matter. It's just got to be endured. The main thing is to get there. The main thing is to give people the message.

The main thing if you like is the exam. You cannot live your whole life as though it were one great big swanning up for an exam. It's a period of intensity prior to the final test as it were.

Now, Paul has not lived the whole of his life as a Christian, but he sees this now as the final run-in to the ultimate test. And he is inviting the Corinthians likewise to recognise this life is short.

This life is being effectively tunnelled and channeled towards this ultimate reality which is when we leave this world behind and enter into the lasting eternity.

[17 : 41] You know, if you live to be, let's say, 80 years old, that's a fairly normal standard amount of time nowadays, 80 years old, how much time would you have spent studying for exams, say, what, you'd have been when you were at school, maybe if you were at college, university, there's a bit of time here, or if you're studying for apprenticeships or whatever it might be, or nursing exams or whatever it might be, it's a comparatively small amount of time out of your whole working life and career.

And of the rest of your life, it's a kind of small amount of time, really. It's intense at the time, but you've got to do it, but the rest of your life still awaits. And in contrast to the brief little glimpse we have of time here, compared with the vastness of eternity, this is what Paul means, you know, yes, we're immersed in this, yes, we're struggling through its stripes and imprisonments and pureness and knowledge and love unfeigned and sorrowfully and always rejoicing, this intensity, this immersion in all the struggles and sufferings and difficulty, it's just for a time, it's just for this intensity of period, which has got to make their work effectual.

their big thing is to let the Corinthians and everybody else see, this is how real this message is, this is how important this message is, we're going through all of this because we want you to get the message, we want you to see that there is a consistency in the message, it's not just with the mouth that we forget about the life, it's not just once you believe it, ah, you can relax and do what you like, no, it drives all of your life, oh, ye Corinthians, verse 11, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged, and what he means there when he says our mouth is open, doesn't he, ah, I've been around about this the whole time, but rather, what it means is there's nothing hidden or twisted in our speech, we're not keeping something away sitting at the side of our mouth, we're not speaking out of the edge of our mouth or tongue in cheek or anything, our mouth is open unto you, we're using clarity of speech, big, wide, open, clear, honest words, our mouth is open to you, because what comes out of our mouth is an expression of what is in our heart, our mouth is open, our heart is enlarged, you see the connection there, we're not trying to fool you with that twisted little bit of speech hidden here or tongue in cheek or sort of, at the side of our mouth, our mouth is open, it's big, wide open words, it's a true message we're bringing and what is coming out of the mouth is a reflection of what is in the heart and this remembers exactly what Jesus said, you know, what comes out of our man's mouth is exactly what's in his heart, what he does with his hands and his feet is what is originally conceived in the heart and in the mind, so you need to purify that verse and then the actions and deeds and words will follow, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged, you're not straightened in us, we're not the narrow of heart to you, we're not being closed in our hearts against you, you're not straightened in us, but you're straightened in your own bowels, in other words, your own hearts, your own thoughts toward us are negative, you're thinking that all these supposedly super apostles and false teachers like they're better than us, we're the real article, they're the fake ones, you know, you're straightened in your own bowels, your own feelings towards us are constricted, are narrowed down, so we're pleading with you, verse 30, with our recompense and the same,

I speak as unto my children, be ye also enlarged, it's like a parent pleading with her child to love them back, you know, a mother, for example, lavishes her mother love upon the child and all she's saying is love me back and this is what Paul is saying to the parent, he's like, we've spent everything on you, we've loved you and as our own children all we're saying is love us back, be ye also enlarged because our love to you was absolute, it was total, this is how much we endure, by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by loving things, we give it all, you can't fault the way that we lived our lives or the love we expended on you, Corinthians, just return our love, just reciprocate is all we're saying and as you do that, you'll show your love for us likewise and your love for the Lord by the single-mindedness with which you pursue your calling, your calling, if it's half-hearted, one foot in the world, one foot with the Lord, that's a very uncomfortable place to be, you cannot be pulled in two directions,

Jesus said, no man can serve two masters, either he'll hate the one and love the other or he'll be devoted to the one and despise the other, you can't serve God and man, man doesn't just mean money, it means a sort of worldly acquisition, the worldly acquired, building our houses as it were, our treasure houses here up on earth as opposed to in heaven, building on the sand basically, you can't serve God and the forces of this world, God and man, you've got to decide which it is you're going to follow, this is what he means part of what he said, be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, the original context here, as you can see there, is about worship, and you can't say, go along to the idol's temple one week, and we'll go to the church next week, we'll mix in with our neighbours, you know, we'll join in their religious festivals and eat the meat sacrificed to idols there, and they'll come with us to the church the next week and we'll all be together and recognise it, you know, there's lots of different ways to God and we'll just treat them all the same and all equally and nobody's judging or getting bit and isn't that great and we're just treating them all as if they're the same and we're all ploughing the same furrow and you can't plough the same furrow with different beasts, this is what, you know,

[23 : 45] Deuteronomy already taught, you know, in chapter 22, verse 10, thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together, you can't use these two different beasts of completely different size and strength to try and work a plough and make it equal, the whole thing's going to be crooked and spew with at best and also really what the Lord is saying with these things is this kind of mixture is abomination to him, he gives some beasts for different tasks and purposes and labour, you don't try and mix them up in that way because in the same context he says in Deuteronomy 22 and verse 9, thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with diverse seeds lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown and the fruit of thy vineyard be defiled, thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together, thou shalt not wear garment of diverse sorts as in woolen and linen together, you see the context here of mixture and of making out these things and the same you think, oh that doesn't matter how it is, mixing linen and woolen garments and so on, that's obviously not important now but the truth that he's seeking to teach is that the Lord has given these different fibres and fabrics and so on just as he's given different beasts for different work, just as there are different kinds of people and ultimately the demarcation line between different kinds of people is not even the most basic one at birth when you pick up the baby and say, is it a boy or a girl?

Oh it's a girl, oh it's a boy and that's you for life. That's not the biggest demarcation line, not Jew or Gentile, not black or white, not nationality or whether you're in Christ or out of Christ or as famously of course as you know the illustration from the Titanic when it went down it didn't matter about first class, second class, third class, it was only the two lists, the lost and the saved, who had been pulled out of the water and who hadn't.

Of course the list of the lost were like hundreds of people and the saved was so painfully few. Leviticus 19 verse 19 similarly He shall keep my statutes thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed neither shall I gram mingle of linen and women come upon thee.

Now this reference to not letting cattle gender with a different kind it's again this is one of the as it were the base texts for which this teaching in Corinthians will have been based on and it's probably these kind of references that have made people think oh yes well that would apply to marriage it does and it would apply to marriage and we often hear this verse quoted in relation to marriage and it's true for that you know a Christian should not be marrying a non-Christian if that's their state when they start obviously you can get two non-Christians married one of them gets converted that's great then you've got a Christian married to a non-Christian or you know you get two Christians married one of them might fall away that can't be helped either humanly speaking but you don't start off unequally guilt you don't put an ox and a donkey under the same plough you don't put a Christian and a non-Christian together you don't go to the idol's temple and pretend it's just as good as going to the church be ye not unequally guilt together with unbelievers for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion hath light with darkness because there is no greater division in the world than that between Christ and that which is not Christ and all else which is not of Christ is it by our lost and his darkness because he alone is the light of the world and this is what the original context is it does apply yes as well to marriage and it is taken as you think in terms of the different beasts gendering one with another so likewise human beings who come together in marriage and of course reproduce perhaps in the fullness of time there is an inequality there and I know that some people will think yes but

I'll be influenced for good with this non-Christian and I'll perhaps be able to influence them for the gospel that may happen to an extent but remember there will also be the deleterious effect the other way you know if you fill a bath 50% hot water 50% cold water what is going to be the overall temperature of that bath it's not going to be all just nicely piping hot pleasantly warm it's going to be at best neither one nor the other and normal way of things the cold will be far more powerful than the hot and it'll just make the whole bath cold there will inevitably be compromise in such a relationship compromise which will necessitate the watering down of the Christian witness because the whole thing begins with compromise so be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers originally it's a reference to not treating worship and you know me offered to idols and so on as though it didn't matter now this is a slight a slight change but a development let's say from you know what we found in 1st Corinthians chapter 8 for example he wrote

[29 : 26] Paul it's concerning the things offered to idols that are offered in sacrifice we know an idol is nothing in the world there's none other god but one and the one and he's saying don't be bothered by it if you end up doing it and you don't realise you're doing it or you didn't mean for it it's not a big deal you're not going to go to hell for it if it's offered to idols if it's sold in the marketplace in other words and so on and has already been offered to idols don't get high ups about it but a couple of chapters further on in chapter 12 of 1st Corinthians you know he said that the things which the Gentiles offer they offer to devils and not to God and so that's not exactly saying well it doesn't really matter and he's saying that you shouldn't just treat these things as though they were unimportant as though they were immaterial because you should have the purity of the Lord and I think it's chapter 12 I may have misjudged that one it might have been 10 that big one is 10 first chapters first

Corinthians chapter 10 what what say I have any idols anything or that which is offered and sacrificed anything but I say the things which the Gentiles sacrifice the devils and not to God I would not that you should have fellowship with devils you can't drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils and this is the same sort of reference here you can't pretend these other false gods are the same as the true God you can't pretend it doesn't matter that you're countering their worship by going there and of course people do take you know if so and so is at it it must be okay if somebody is there certain persons there they obviously are approving of it some of you will remember of course in 1989 when the Free Presbyterian Church split what was that focused on it was focused on the fact that the Lord Chancellor Lord Mackay attended a funeral for a Roman Catholic colleague but of course in attending the funeral every Roman

Catholic funeral service includes the mass a requiem mass and the sticking point and the diverging point in the Free Presbyterian Church at the time was of course that some said he was just attending a funeral it wasn't a big deal others said he was attending a mass and in attending a mass he appeared to be giving countenance to it to say this was okay whether or not you think that's what he actually was saying or not depends which side you come down on but that was the point of issue that by being in attendance his presence appeared to countenance something which his branch of the church of course completely would reject as for their own of course but this is the thing by being present in a place we can appear to countenance something one agreement at the temple of God with idols you are the temple of the living God as God said I will dwell in them and walk in them I will be their God and they shall be my people that which is unclean should not be defiling the presence of God even if you think in terms of that wonderful verse in

Deuteronomy that talks so eloquently about you know keeping the camp of the Lord clean of how shall I put it ordinary biological waste let's put it that way in chapter 23 read it verse 12 thou shalt have a place also without the camp whether thou shalt go forth abroad and thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon wonderful prayer of praise that and it shall be when thou wilt ease thyself abroad thou shalt dig therewith and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee for the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp to deliver thee and to give up thine enemies before thee therefore shall I come be holy that he see no unclean thing and turn away from me now of course God is not a man as other men in terms of walking about and there's a danger of stepping and things but the idea is that the camp of God's people should be clean should be pure should be holy now what defiles the camp of that is that which is the normal produce of human living but if that is not dealt with separated off with an appropriate place to it not the normal camp not the place where

God's own name dwells then it defiles it now there are aspects to human life which in a sense of course involve certain uncleanness we can't avoid that but we can avoid what we do about it we can help what we do about it we can help how we behave in terms of hygiene physically we can help in how we behave in terms of our own control of these things and the point being illustrated in Deuteronomy is that while some of these things cannot be avoided they are happening you can avoid what you do about them our objective in following Christ is to keep our lives pure to keep our lives focused on the Lord we cannot avoid sin happening to some extent we all sin every day even if we don't mean to sin happens naturally for us we can't necessarily stop it happening but we can affect what we do about it there can be the spiritual cleansing there can be the repentance there can be the turning away from it there can be the washing in the blood of

[35 : 04] Christ and starting again next day God who moves amongst us will not behold sin he will not look upon sin he desires to walk amongst his people come out from among them be separate that the Lord walks in the midst of this temple you're the temple of the living God as God has said I will dwell in them and walk in them I will be their God they shall be my people if God is not just to dwell with us but move amongst us walk amongst us we must be a people devoted to him that means that little by little we should be eliminating from our lives things which may clash with him which may compete with him things that are at odds with him that we may never have given much thought to before but as we go further with the Lord we should be just little by little seeking to bring our lives more and more into line with his word with his teaching and excising eliminating cleaning away those things which would defile our relationship and it may be that we've gone on happening in ignorance for a long time of some things and then it comes to something we read in

God's word or something comes to it you know I never realised I've been doing this for years and I never realised it was actually against God's word but now that I know I have the choice I have to do something about it or to just carry on and pretend it's okay now if we're to progress with the Lord as the Corinthians are to progress we have to keep clearing away whatever may get in the way to be focused on the Lord come out from among them don't mix with these things of falsehood with these people who would drag you down or away from the Lord don't treat them as though it didn't matter don't treat them like their worship is the same as God's worship come out from among them be separate said the Lord touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and be a father unto you you shall be my sons and daughters said the Lord almighty if you're sons and daughters it means you belong in a household in a family in a place where God is the head of that household

God is the head of that family we are sons and daughters we belong with him we don't belong equally with everybody else in all the other religions of the world if you have children yourself when you're young you don't expect that they'll be spending three nights there four nights there a couple of nights with you there another night with somebody else and so on and be constantly in and out everywhere all over the place and never really being at home with the family you expect them to be in your own home under your own roof gathered with your own children you expect them to be there because they're your children so likewise God expects his children to be ultimately belonging to him this is his calling this is his devotion we as fellow labourers together with him we as workers together with him beseech you that you receive not the grace of God in vain don't let it be for nothing don't let it just turn you back to the world but rather focus upon the Lord little by little more and more day by day and exams study for them they're like a slog but it's for a particular end a particular purpose and the end is in sight and the purpose is clear and the rewards of passing and of receiving that ascent and that affirmation of the last a greater than all the suffix of earth that is great and and and and and