

II CORINTHIANS 6

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to II Corinthians chapter 6 as we continue our study through this letter that Paul wrote to the church in Corinth and through the Word of God.

As we have been going through these chapters here in II Corinthians, I have said that the first seven chapters deal with Christian living.

And that is all based upon our coming to saving faith in Jesus Christ, receiving the Gospel message.

Let me explain it this way and you will see how this moves us to where we will be at this evening.

Back in II Corinthians chapter 3 Paul speaks of the how God has made us ministers of the New Covenant, and that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

And please understand that Paul is not speaking of the Old Covenant, the Law but the New Covenant or the Spirit of life, that is the ministry we are bringing to people. In fact, the Law was the ministry of death because the Law could never save you, but the Spirit of life, that New Covalent brings to us everlasting life!

The Law never had the power to change a person's life, but the Spirit of life does because when we come to Christ the Holy Spirit indwells us and enables us to walk worthy of the high calling by which we have been called. It gives to us the power to live a life that is pleasing to God.

And, since we have this ministry, given to us by the Lord, we are to share our faith.

Listen to what Paul says in II Corinthians chapter 4, **“Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. . . . Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”** II Corinthians 4:1, 16-18.

Since we have received this wonderful gift, don’t keep it for yourself, but share it with others. Do we lose heart at times when people don’t want to hear what we have to say? Sure we do, but Paul tells us not to lose heart, to keep focused on ministering this wonderful gift to people!

And, as you look at II Corinthians chapter 5 you see that God has made us new in Christ. Listen to what Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:17-21, **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”**

Since God has done this for us, we are now His ambassadors sharing with others this free gift of life that is found in Jesus Christ. It is the hope we bring to a fallen world and I think this world is getting more and more hopeless and they need to hear some good news, they need Jesus!

And that leads us into II Corinthians chapter 6 where Paul is going to challenge them in regard to how much they are willing to suffer for Christ. And to show them that this can be accomplished, that suffering is just a part of ministry, he lays out his life before them so that they can see what he went through so that the Gospel message can go forth and transform people's lives.

But, before he does that, he is going to drive home this point of what Jesus has done. That He took our sin and gave us His righteousness.

You see, that gap that sin had placed between God and us was now bridged by Christ so we could have fellowship with God once again as our sins were cast as far as the east was from the west to be remembered no more!

Because of what God has done for us we then are to go out and bring that reconciliation of God to others, as His ambassador so that they would escape "**the terror of the Lord,**" the judgment of God upon those who have rejected Jesus Christ, those who have rejected the forgiveness of their sins.

With that said, let's begin reading in II Corinthians chapter 6, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word this evening.

II CORINTHIANS 6

VERSES 1-2

There are a few points I want to make regarding these verses.

First of all, Paul talks about working together with Christ!

And don't miss the point. You see, God does not work with us, but we work with Him!

For some reason people think that God needs them, that if they are not around, it would never get done. Let me make this clear, God does not need any of us, but we do get to work with Him. It is our choice.

Sadly, many just sit on the sidelines and watch others serving the Lord. That is not a good thing.

Let me show you what I mean about working together with the Lord. Have you ever seen a dad out cutting his lawn and right behind him is his son with his little lawnmower, just following after dad?

In a sense, that is what we are doing. God is leading and we are following after Him. And keep in mind that back in II Corinthians chapter 5 Paul spoke of us being ambassadors for Christ, thus, we must go out and represent Him to a world in darkness, labor with Him for the souls of men!

And then Paul says that he is pleading with them, begging them “**. . . not to receive the grace of God in vain.**” What does that mean?

Remember the parable of the soils and how some seed fell on stony ground and the birds took the seed away.

And others fell on shallow soil and when the heat came up, the plant was destroyed, no fruit was born.

And still other seed fell among thorns and weeds and they choked out the life of the plant, it too did not produce fruit.

And of this Jesus said that the shallow soil that the seed fell upon was a picture of what happens when difficulty, tribulation, persecution comes upon their life. And they move away from the Lord. They started out with joy but there was no root in the Lord and there was no fruit in their life. They were not saved.

And the seed that fell in the soil that was thorny, full of weeds, Jesus said that speaks of the person who gets entangled with the cares of this world and eventually just goes back to the world. They had no fruit in their life. They were not saved.

And yes, there are those who are just *“playing church,”* they know the truth, they know of Jesus, they may even be working for Jesus, in their mind, but Jesus is not their Lord and Savior.

Paul is calling for them to get saved, don't let another day pass by, you may not get another chance to enter in.

Regarding those that have a vain relationship with Jesus, listen carefully to what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”**

Thus, Paul said, “**Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.**” In other words, don’t pass it up, you may not get another chance!

But I think the second point and one that truly fits in with the text here is that we as Christians can’t sit on our laurels but must get up and get out and serve the Lord.

Paul put it this way in I Corinthians 15:10, “**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.**”

Yes, grace is a free gift of God that we truly don’t deserve and yet that free gift of God should cause us to work or it is in vain, it is empty, it really doesn’t mean anything to us.

Think about that for a minute. When you get a present, do you take it to the bank and lock it in a vault, showing no one, telling no one about this gift you have received?

Of course not! You want to show everyone, you want to tell everyone, and I think that is Paul’s point here, working together with the Lord, being an ambassador for Christ!

And Paul quotes out of Isaiah 49:8 to show that for us Christians there is no time to sit around and do nothing, live a life of ease, it is time to go out and serve the Lord!

It is as James 1:22 tells us, “**But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.**”

Listen to what Redpath tells us regarding God’s grace. He wrote, “God’s grace is always coming to my heart and life in very wonderful and blessed experience of now. 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 for the little things as well as the big things, as a Christian I soon become stale, barren, and fruitless in the service of the Lord.”

A good lesson to remember and then, go out and share your faith!

VERSE 3

First of all, Paul is saying that his ministry was one that was blameless, he would not let his style, his liberty get in the way of ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Back in I Corinthians 9:3-15 Paul refused a salary for the work he was doing. He didn't care if others were seen as more prominent than he was. He worked hard, enduring hardships. He didn't let these things get in the way of the work and as people looked at his ministry, he was blameless even though some might try to accuse him of wrongdoing, those were false accusations, like the Corinthians were doing, at least some of them.

Peter put it this way in I Peter 3:14-17, **“But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you are blessed. ‘And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled.’ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.”**

And make no mistake about this, Paul did not water down the Gospel message so people would not be offended.

Let's face it, the Gospel is offensive to people, it cuts right to the heart of the matter and when some hear it, they repent and when some hear it, they revolt!

Paul, in I Corinthians 1:18-25 put it this way, **“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.’ Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”**

Thus, Paul was not afraid to offend anyone with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but he was not going to offend anyone by his style of ministry, by his liberty that he had in Christ.

Now, how does that apply to us today?

Don’t do anything that would discredit Christ and the ministry. Now, obviously you are not going to be able to please everybody, you please the Lord and the rest will fall into place.

A big turn-off for me is when people in the ministry will continually beg for money or their ministry will end. Maybe it is supposed to end, don’t keep it on life-support!

Keep your life simple, serve in humility and you will do okay!

As we move on, we are going to see Paul defend himself and show that he is blameless as a minister of Jesus Christ in verses 4-10.

And to do this Paul is going to open his life before them so they can see what he did for the Lord.

And we will see in II Corinthians 6:4-5 Paul describe the physical sufferings that he endured. And those physical sufferings were a demonstration of his faith, that it was genuine, that he was a faithful servant of the Lord.

Then, in II Corinthians 6:6-7 Paul lists some nine qualities that he exhibited in the face of all the hardships he endured in his ministry.

And lastly, in II Corinthians 6:8-10 Paul lists some nine contrasting experiences which are very typical of the Christian ministry.

So some important lessons for us to look at. Let's read on and see what the Lord has for us in these verses.

VERSES 4-5

First of all, Paul uses this word, "**commend**" and it means, "to present to God as worthy of confidence."

In other words, it really didn't matter what people thought about what Paul was doing, his conscience was clear before the Lord, the One he was serving!

If your service for the Lord is based upon how people treat you, you are going to be in trouble. If you serve the Lord, nothing will move you from the course that God has for you. You will serve Him faithfully!

Look at all the physical attacks against Paul and he served the Lord faithfully. And the question for us is simple, "How much are we willing to suffer to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Lost?" It is something you have to answer for yourself!

And when Paul speaks of "**patience**" it means endurance or "to bear up under pressure."

The reason this is so important is because people are watching us live out our faith. And thus; as tribulations, needs, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labors, sleeplessness, fastings come upon our lives, what are people seeing?

Paul was a living epistle for people to read and as they looked at Paul, they saw Jesus because the love of God not only flowed into Paul's life but through Paul's life to touch others. And nothing, not even all these physical things, were going to change Paul for his mission!

And did you notice that Paul didn't speak of wearing gold chains, having a flashy car, a mansion in town and a summer home in the country, his hair was not dyed blue to cover the gray, he didn't wear designer clothes, he did not have a jet to take him all over the world, and his ministry was not about money but about seeing people come into the kingdom of God by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

My have we gone astray today as we see some of these ministries on television and the way they behave.

That was not Paul. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

Notice the light is to shine of Jesus, bring glory to the Father, and too often we let the light shine upon us and let others see us.

Not Paul as we see in these verses.

But Paul is not done yet. He is going to show us in II Corinthians 6:6-7 some nine qualities that he exhibited in the face of all the hardships he endured in his ministry. Listen to what he says because he is going to show us how he was able to live this kind of life, to do this kind of service unto the Lord in spite of all that were coming against him!

VERSES 6-7

What is the key to living a life of service unto the Lord? There may be many ideas out there, but it is not complicated, we just have to do it.

You see, the key to living a life of service unto the Lord is being empowered by the Holy Spirit!

You must utilize the resources that are at your disposal as Paul did!

Paul shows us that yes, he had trials, he had tribulation, but he had the fruit of the Spirit flowing from his life as he surrendered his will to the will of God, which empowered him for the work that God had called him to do.

Why do we think that the work that God started in our lives by the Spirit can now be accomplished by the power of our flesh? Folks, it can't!

It is as we are told in Zechariah 4:6, “**. . . ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts.**”

May we not forget that no matter what we are going through!

And not only does God's Spirit strengthen us, but so does God's Word as we trust in the promises of God.

Remember when Joshua was preparing to lead the children of Israel into the Promise Land and the Lord told Joshua, **“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”** Joshua 1:7-9.

And here in II Corinthians Paul not only speaks of the **“word of truth”** but also **“the armor of righteousness on the right and on the left.”**

Now many commentators are not sure what that means, but again, let’s not make this complicated.

Keep in mind that the soldier would carry his sword on the right hand, and it speaks of the Word of God being our offensive weapon against the enemy.

Also, the shield was carried in the left hand and it is our defensive weapon, the shield of faith, to quench the fiery darts that the enemy will shoot at us!

Thus, to stand strong you must be empowered by the Spirit of God and you must use the spiritual weapons that God has given to us to win this battle, to minister the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the lost.

As we read on, we will see in II Corinthians 6:8-10 Paul list some nine contrasting experiences which are very typical of the Christian ministry. Listen to what he says.

VERSES 8-10

Notice the contrast here, why?

One is a view of how the world views Paul and the things he was going through, including some of the Corinthian believers who looked down at Paul's life.

The other view is from God and how He sees things and you can see the two views are completely opposite.

Notice how the world sees Paul: *in dishonor . . . by evil report . . . as deceivers . . . as unknown . . . as dying . . . as chastened . . . as sorrowful . . . as poor . . . as having nothing.*

Not too impressive but that is how the world looks at us, just as they looked at the life of Paul and what he was doing for the Lord!

The problem today is that we don't want to be like that, and we try to be like the world and in doing that we compromise our faith.

But here is the thing. Listen to how God looks upon our lives and the things we are doing for Him.

God looks upon our lives like this: *by honor . . . good report . . . true . . . well-known . . . behold we live . . . not killed . . . rejoicing . . . making many rich . . . possessing all things.*

I like that!

And here is the thing, and maybe this is my fault for not expressing this enough to people.

Folk's, this is ministry! And before you get into any ministry, you better count the cost. That is what Jesus told us to do.

It will cost you not only your time, but many times ministry will break your heart, it will cause others to not like you. Are you willing to sacrifice to serve?

And let me say this. As Christians, we are all in the ministry so we all better count the cost of being in the ministry!

You see, if you are in ministry for the fame and fortune, or whatever, then when things don't go your way you will drop out, you will stop serving.

You might think I am taking this too far, but believe me, I have seen this over and over with those who have been in ministry and have dropped out.

You better be in love with the Lord, you better be directed by the Lord, and you better have a love for those you are serving. If you don't, ministry will be tough, tougher than it already is, and eventually, you will drop out.

So the big question I will give to you is this. "What is driving you to serve?"

And if you think this is not fair, that you should not have to go through all those things if you are serving the Lord, then listen to what Paul said back in II Corinthians 4:17-18, "**For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.**"

And here's the thing. Are you looking at ministry through the world's eyes with all the problems that come your way?

Or, are you looking at ministry through the eyes of God seeing the difficulty but not focused on that, you are focused on what God sees?

What does God see? Remember: *by honor . . . good report . . . true . . . well-known . . . behold we live . . . not killed . . . rejoicing . . . making many rich . . . possessing all things.*

What perspective are you looking at in the ministry you are in? Look to the eternal!

And now Paul is going to share how he ministered to the church in Corinth. He will let them know that he did not hold back but his heart was open to them, even though they hurt him deeply. Listen to what he said.

VERSES 11-13

Notice the passion in Paul's heart as he says to them, "**O Corinthians!**"

He wants to appeal to them to take these principles that he has given to them and apply them to their life! He wanted them to grow, to mature in the Lord and not to remain carnal!

And Paul wants them to understand that he did not try to hide anything from them. Paul opened his life and his heart to them, he corrected them in love and yet, the Corinthians refused to love Paul because of the things Paul said to them.

They, in a sense, were playing the "*victim.*"

And Paul is telling them that he does not cause this restriction, but by their own hearts, they are refusing to let it go.

They are saying, "Yes, we want to be reconciled to you, but you have hurt us so much that we just can't let it go, we can't get over it!"

This "*victim complex*" I have seen far too often with Christians.

The reason people can't let go is because of pride, because they love themselves too much, because they love this world too much and refuse to let go of it and surrender to God!

It is as John tells us in I John 2:15-17, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”**

Who do you love more, the world or God? If you love God then you will forgive, you will be open, you will not put a wall up around your heart. And yes, as we are open, as we expose our heart to others, will it get stomped upon at times?

You bet it will. That is not a *MIGHT*, it *WILL!*

The key here is not to put the wall up but always be open to others and let God be the One to comfort your heart!

You see, if you are restricting your affections towards others, I would admonish you to be open, to search your heart and reconcile yourself to the person or persons you have been restricting yourself towards.

It is as John once again tells us, **“We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.”** I John 4:19-21.

Listen to how Jesus put it in Matthew 5:23-24, **“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”**

In other words, before you serve the Lord, be reconciled to your brother or sister in the Lord for how can you serve the Lord when you can't love your brother or sister in the Lord?

But for these Corinthians, it was their own affections that restricted them from loving Paul and receiving from him.

As I have said, they loved the world too much and Paul is going to deal with that in a minute, giving them a correct perspective of the situation.

And they also loved themselves too much and because of that they refused to look at their heart and let God remove those things that were hindering their relationship with Him. And because of that, they remained carnal and so will we if we don't deal with those issues of the heart!

Make no mistake about it, the rift between Paul and the Corinthian church could be healed, but it was in the hands of the Corinthian Christians to do it. They had to also be open.

As we read on, we will see that Paul is going to deal with relationships, which is a very touchy subject for some.

I believe Paul speaks of these relationships because of the way the Corinthian believers were acting, that the relationships they had were affecting their behavior and specifically their reconciliation to Paul.

Now, one last point before we move into this section and that is this. I am sorry if I step on any toes this evening, if anyone is offended by what I have to say. But please understand this, I am just the messenger, these words are in the Word of God, the Bible, and thus, if you have a problem with what I am telling you, your problem is not with me but with God!

And if you are struggling in this area of relationships, I would encourage you to heed the warning by Paul, and really, by God!

Because, as we will see, the church has partnered with the world today and that is never a good thing! When the world gets into the church, there is always death and destruction to the things of God because they move away from the Word of God!

Look at what Paul says here.

VERSES 14-18

As you read this, we tend to take these verses and apply them to marriage. In other words, you should not marry an unbeliever!

Make no mistake about that, God is very clear, you, as a Christian, should not marry or even date an unbeliever!

You, in a sense, would be unequally yoked together and thus, your unbelieving spouse will not want to do things that you want to do and there will be a pulling apart in the marriage. And, many times, what happens is the believer's faith is compromised. Don't do it!

Clarke put it this way as he said, "A very wise and very holy man was given his judgment on this point: 'A man who is truly pious, marrying with an unconverted woman, will either draw back to perdition, or have a cross during life.' The same may be said of a pious woman marrying an unconverted man. Such person cannot say this petition of the Lord's prayer, Lead us not into temptation. They plunge into it of their own accord."

But, in the context here, I think the idea is partnering with false teachers and their false doctrine.

Thank God that is not a problem today! Okay, a little sarcasm. Okay, maybe not a little, it is full blown sarcasm because we see the church doing that today!

Let me show you what I mean about what leaders in the church think about the church and I will share some things within this article as we read through it. We are told,

Some Christian leaders wonder if the American church retains any meaningful influence in a society when it has been so strongly dominated by other cultural forces.

In the book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience*, theologian Ron Sider laments that evangelicals do not seem to live by biblical standards.

A professor at Palmer Theological Seminary, a school affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA, Sider asked, “Why are Christians living just like the rest of the world?”

In the book praised by conservative and liberal theologians, Sider details several examples. Research shows about the same percentage of U.S. born-again Christians are divorced as the overall U.S. population and the rate of unmarried cohabitation is only slightly less among born-again Christians than in society as a whole. Sider also notes that evangelicals - and especially Baptists - are more likely to object to black neighbors and that few evangelicals actually tithe.

[That is the problem. We have let the world influence the church and thus, we compromise our faith to fit into the world. That is not what God desires as we see here in what Paul wrote in II Corinthians chapter 6. Now, listen carefully to this.]

Cheryl Harader, associate pastor of spiritual formation at First Baptist Church in Lawrence, Kan., has heard these statistics and still believes church remains important. She finds many of the similarities between Christians and others unsurprising since non-Christians can also be good people.

[Is that true? Can Christians and non-Christians be good people? Absolutely not and the reason I can say that is that the Bible tells us that *NONE* are good, not even *ONE!* So she is already wrong, and yet, she goes on to say,]

“I think what we make of those statistics is something that some Christians are reluctant to admit: that there are an awful lot of good people in the world who have never claimed to follow Jesus,” she said. “I think people are kind of afraid to admit that God does good in a number of ways. It’s not just through Christians.”

She added that “the teaching of a lot of churches is that Christianity is the only good. You’re either in or you’re out, there’s no in between.”

Harader pointed to Gandhi as an example of a good person who never claimed to be a Christian, though he expressed admiration for Jesus. She stressed there are biblical teachings - like Micah 6:8 and Luke 4 - that teach Christians to do good deeds. Yet she still recognizes others could come to follow those actions without biblical admonitions. . . .

[First of all, the Bible tells us that all our righteousness is like filthy rags, so there is not much good in that. Secondly, even the Devil quotes Scripture and I am not saying that Gandhi is the Devil, but if he is not a believer, and because we say these things about him people follow him instead of Jesus, have we helped them? Absolutely not! This is so dangerous when we see the church and the world being the same!]

Author and leadership coach Bob Dale sees the problem of culture keeping churches from making the difference they could otherwise make. A native of Missouri who now lives in Virginia, Dale has served as pastor, seminary professor and denominational leader.

“Does culture control the church or does the church shape culture?” he offered. “There’s no question in my mind that culture has been very powerful in the American church and often shaped it in particular ways.”

- <http://bit.ly/2GH4DKN>

Also, look at the false teachers that are rising up in the church today. And lately, the books and movies that Christian women have put forth and much of what they are bringing forth is not Christianity, it is New Age, Eastern mysticism, Kingdom Now theology!

Let me show you how this plays out for us today because their books, their seminars, their movies are selling like hotcakes! T. A. McMahon warns us,

The Emerging Church Movement (ECM), having begun not too long ago, made a huge impact among young adult Christians. It seduced many away from adhering to sound doctrine and led them into subjective conversations *about* God, the contemplative approach to knowing God, traditional rituals, the sacramentals of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and the use of allegory and spiritualization of the interpretation of Scripture. That debris of the ECM continues to find fertile ground among millennials. But there is a far more devastating and widespread example in the church of drifting away from sound doctrine, and that, tragically, is through the ministries of some of the most influential women in Christendom.

In the March 2019 *TBC* newsletter's main article, I mentioned the names of Beth Moore, Joyce Meyer, Priscilla Shirer, and Sarah Young. All are prolific writers, have huge followings, and are guilty of supplanting the Word of God and Jesus himself through drifting away from sound doctrine. They all take teachings, many of which have a biblical basis, and "miss the mark" by pushing them far beyond biblical truth. Their "ongoing conversations" with God have led them and consequently their followers to numerous false teachings.

Certainly God can speak to the hearts of His children, but nowhere in the Epistles do we find continuous dialogue between the Lord and believers. We find in the book of Acts that the Holy Spirit at times personally guides and directs the saints but never in the sense that these women teach! God's personal communication with people is for His purpose and at His choosing and timing. Even His prophets didn't have ongoing two-way conversations with Him. Jeremiah had to wait ten days for the Lord to speak to Him regarding his enquiry.

The errors that follow these women's "conversations" (which their numerous books encourage their admirers to emulate) suggest to their readers that the communication content can be taken as "thus saith the Lord." For those who spend more time reading their many books than they do the Bible, a false teaching that sounds biblical can readily be accepted as such. That distorts not only the authority and content of Scripture but also the character of God.

Often the claimed dialogue demeans the Lord, as though He were one of their familiar peers. Beth Moore declares that God calls her "Baby" and "Honey" and participates in playfulness with her. Worse yet is what these ladies assert they have heard from Him that *contradicts what His Word says*. That would make Him at the very least "another Jesus" (2 Corinthians: 11:4), certainly not the Word Himself.

All of these women promote some form of mysticism, which is an abandonment of the objective truth of God's Word, giving preference to personal experiences, intuitions, subjective understandings, and feelings. Some teach techniques that are "Christianized alterations" of Eastern mystical techniques and practices. They misinterpret and corrupt the "Be still" of Psalm: 46:10 to mean a clearing of the mind in silence in order to hear from God. No. . . .

These women all fall into the trap of counseling from the errors of so-called Christian psychology, the principles of which are diametrically opposed to God's Word. All promote the false teaching of self-esteem-building in order to help their followers feel better about themselves.

Ecumenism is rampant in their writings and their video series, and particularly in their acceptance of Roman Catholics as brothers and sisters in Christ. It may be that they are unaware of the official gospel of Rome, which declares that heaven is available only to those who are baptized, and entrance is dependent upon one's good works after their sins have been expiated in purgatory. That ignorance is not just related to an ignorance of Catholicism and other "Christian" cults and aberrational groups, but it seems to stem from a lack of knowledge of the basic doctrines of biblical Christianity!

Having gone through many of the materials authored by these women, I've yet to find a clear presentation of the gospel, particularly an explanation of what one needs to believe in order to be saved.

Although they seem sincere in wanting to help women "go deeper with Jesus," and "develop a more intimate relationship" with Him, that cannot happen unless a person has been born-again.

The doctrine of the gospel of salvation is given simply in response to the Philippian jailor who cried out: “. . . Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. . . .” Furthermore, one must believe that He “died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (Acts:16:30-31; 1 Corinthians:15:1-4).

I found only one clear explanation of the gospel among these women teachers, and that was by Joyce Meyer. However, for the millions who follow her, tragically, she declares that Jesus paid the penalty for our sins by descending into hell, where He was tortured by Satan and his demons. That is clearly a false gospel and a false Jesus.

Presenting a comprehensive presentation of all the false teachings of these ladies would take volumes, certainly far beyond what could be contained in this one article. Other troubling points can be found in this newsletter’s Q&A. My challenge to those who are enamored with the books of Beth Moore, Priscilla Shirer, Joyce Meyer, and Sarah Young is that they prayerfully consider what I’ve pointed out, and then be a Berean (Acts:17:11) and compare their teachings with God’s Word.

I also exhort pastors, as shepherds who have a responsibility to protect their sheep, to come alongside the women in their fellowship, helping them to grow in biblical discernment.

- <http://bit.ly/2VqBH3d>

I am sorry, but as a pastor, as an under-shepherd for the sheep that God has entrusted to me, I will not allow this false teaching into the church. I will not partner with false teachers just because they are popular or make you feel good!

I am here to teach, to love, to warn, to feed the sheep. And with the warning, it can rub people the wrong way.

If I have offended you, then I would challenge you to check out what these women believe.

And it is not just the women, but they seem to be making a lot of money right now and thus, are very popular, but check out everyone, even *ME!*

If they are bringing teaching into the church that is not in the Scriptures, false teaching, then who are they speaking for?

I am sorry, they are speaking for the Devil! I know that is hard, but if you are not speaking for God, there is only one other person you can be speaking for, and that is the Devil.

I am not saying that they are intentionally doing this, but, because no one has kept them accountable, because they make lots of money doing this, they continue down this path and the church becomes weaker and weaker!

Notice what the Corinthian Christians were doing.

I guess they too were loving and affectionate in that they accepted lawlessness and righteousness into the church. They accepted darkness along with light. They welcomed Belial and Christ in!

And keep in mind that Belial is a word that was borrowed from the Hebrew and it means “worthlessness or wickedness.” In this context it speaks of Satan! Poole put it like this, “The term is used only in this place in the New Testament, but very often in the Old Testament, to express men notoriously wicked and scandalous.”

And when Paul says, “**And what communion has light with darkness?**” the idea is that of influence. Hodge put it like this, “Parties are said to be in communion when they are so united that what belongs to the one belongs to the other, or when what is true of the one is true of the other.”

They had compromised their faith so much that the world, the darkness of the world was influencing their lives, in how they lived.

And, like I have said, that is what has happened to the church today, the world has influenced it so much that the church has become like the world. We get our ideas from the world.

We accept the sin of the world as being good and, in the end, we are bringing death and destruction to so many lives!

Now let me ask you this. Does that mean we are not to associate ourselves with non-Christians?

Not at all but they are not to be our best friends, our mate, we are not to embrace and welcome into our church false teachers, because I will tell you this, and I have seen it over and over again, you will not bring them up to where you are at but they will drag you down to where they are!

Make no mistake about it, they will influence your life and not for the good! Your behavior, your language, the things you do will begin to deteriorate because you are dwelling in darkness, they are influencing you.

Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 15:33, “**Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’**”

The Amplified Bible tells us, **“Do not be so deceived and misled! Evil companionships (communion, associations) corrupt and deprave good manners and morals and character.”**

The Living Bible puts it this way, **“Don’t be fooled by those who say such things. If you listen to them you will start acting like them.”**

I think you get the point!

And do you see what God calls us to do here? God calls for us to come out of that darkness, we are His, He dwells in us.

Of this Redpath tells us, “It is not a question simply of trying to empty your heart and life of every worldly desire – what an awful impossibility! It is rather opening your heart wide to all the love of God in Christ and letting that love just sweep through you and exercise its expulsive power till your heart is filled with love.”

Remember when you were a kid and you went out to play, what did your mother tell you?

My mom would always tell me, “Joey, don’t get dirty!”

Now our Father God is telling us the same, don’t fill your life with evil, don’t surround yourself with evil, because it will affect your life. I don’t care how strong you think you are, Father God knows best!

Fill yourself up with the things of God as Paul tells us in Philippians 4:8-9, **“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”**

I know, a lot of things for you to think about. But this is so important.

And I will leave you with these words from Hodge as he speaks of this call for purity and how it is also a call for reconciliation.

Hodge tells us, “A man cannot accept reconciliation with God and live in sin; because the renunciation of sin is involved in the acceptance of reconciliation. Paul never assumes that men may accept one benefit of redemption, and reject another. They cannot take pardon and refuse sanctification.”

Remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 3:16-17 Paul said, “**Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.**”

Thus, “**Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.**” II Corinthians 6:17-18. May we do that!