

Monday

Widen Your Hearts

Today's Scripture 2 Corinthians 7:2-16

In 2 Corinthians 7:2, Paul exhorted the church to “make room in their hearts” for Titus and him. Previously, he instructed them to close their heart to anything which polluted their lives. They were to “bring their holiness to completion in the fear of God” (7:1). Dealing with sin is never an easy task because Satan does not give up easily. The apostle dealt with the problem and sent them a bold letter (7:8). How would they respond? Paul’s credibility was already being questioned by those who opposed him. This influential minority caused Paul much grief. Would they heed the apostle’s exhortation?

The Corinthians followed Paul’s instruction, and Titus’ report concerning the situation brought Paul comfort “from God” (7:6-7). The Corinthians longed to see Paul. Even better, they were moved by “godly grief” to repentance (7:9-10). This led to their salvation, and Paul rejoiced at the news of their penitence (7:16). Their grief blessed both Paul and them spiritually because it produced necessary change.

Grief is not often viewed as a positive thing. We must understand the difference between “worldly grief” and “godly grief” (7:9-10). Worldly grief is self-centered and focuses on the loss or denial of something we want for ourselves. It leads to despair, bitterness and paralysis (David Garland, 2 Corinthians, Nashville: Broadman). On the contrary, godly grief is caused by meditating on God’s will. It motivates us to change our direction away from sin and towards the Father. An excellent illustration of godly grief leading to repentance is the prodigal son. As he took inventory of his situation, Jesus stated the son “came to himself” and went home to his father. Godly grief recognizes what our choices do to our relationship with God. It motivates us to amend it. Making room for Paul and Titus was deeper than the Corinthian’s reconciliation with them. It was reconciliation with God and opening their hearts to His will.

Today, I will...widen my heart to God’s instruction, and if I need to repent I will make the necessary changes.