



JANUARY

2020

1 & 2 CORINTHIANS



MONTHLY PRAYER SHEET

"...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16

Reach out...

How I will do it...

How it went...

Other requests...

Answered

How it was answered...

MONTHLY COMMITMENT SHEET

Name: _____

This sheet is designed to help you make personal commitments each month that will help you grow in your walk with God. Fill it out by determining

1. What will push you
2. What you think you can achieve

If you need help filling out your commitments, seek out someone you trust who can help you. Share your commitments with those who will help keep you accountable to your personal commitment.

Personal Devotions:

How did I do with my commitment last month? _____

I will commit to read the OnTrack Bible passage and devotional thought _____ day(s) each week this month.

Church Attendance:

How did I do last month with my attendance? _____

I will attend Youth/Growth Group _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend the Sunday AM service _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend the Sunday PM service _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend _____ time(s) this month.

I will attend _____ time(s) this month.

Scripture Memory:

How did I do with Scripture memory last month? _____

I will memorize _____ key verse(s) from the daily OnTrack Devotions this month.

Outreach:

How did I do last month with sharing Christ? _____

I will share Christ with _____ person/people this month.

I will serve my local church this month by _____

Other Activities:

List any other opportunities such as events, prayer group, etc., that you will participate in this month. _____

Have you ever compared your church with another church, wishing you had what they have? Ever thought to yourself, "If only we had more kids, different leaders, a nicer facility," etc? If so, this chapter can be helpful. The Corinthian church had many problems. It would have been easy for them to conclude that their problems were related to what they did not have. Paul told them their experiences with failure were not because they were lacking anything. He told them, in verse 5, that they had been enriched in every way—in their speaking and in their knowledge. God was at work when people spoke and when people listened. In verse 7, he told them they did not lack any spiritual gift. God had given them every gift they needed to be successful as a church. The reality was their failures were not related to what they did not have. The same is true of your church. If there are struggles in your youth group or your church, it is not because of what you are missing, but because of what you or your members are not using. Maybe you are one of the people not using what you have. How can you use what God has given you to influence your church?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 1

1 CORINTHIANS 2:1-5

PRIORITIES

SAY WHAT?

What activities occupy most of your time and money?

SO WHAT?

What activities occupy your thoughts?

NOW WHAT?

How does your pursuit of knowing Christ compare to what is listed above?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

What is your main goal in life? What occupies your thoughts more than anything else? What do your goals and your thoughts reveal about what is really important to you? In this chapter, we learn the answers to those questions in the life of the Apostle Paul. Hopefully, they are the answers you would also give to those questions. In verse 2, Paul said his main goal was to know Christ. He had a passion and love for Christ that motivated him to pursue greater intimacy with Christ. He didn't spend time in the Scriptures to preach great messages, but to know Christ better. His goal was not to go down in history as the greatest preacher of all time—he just wanted to know Christ. Spending time with Paul would have confirmed what we already know—that his primary goal in life was to know Christ. What is your ambition in life? Is it being successful, rich, or famous? Is it your significant other? You can tell by observing how a person spends his time, money and what occupies his mind. Use today's questions to help you honestly examine your priorities to determine what is really most important in your life.

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 2

How did Paul know that this church was worldly? The answer will help us evaluate our churches and our own personal lives to see if we also have characteristics of worldliness. Paul let this church know that they were worldly, not spiritual. In verse 3, he told them that their worldliness was demonstrated by their jealousy and quarreling. The believers had divided into cliques. Some bragged by saying that because they followed Paul, they were superior. Others said they followed Apollos, so they were superior. What they demonstrated was that their loyalties were to men, not to God. Their pride blinded them to the fact that it was God who provided someone to impact their lives, and He determined how it would be done. Is there this kind of jealousy and quarreling in your youth group or church? Are people fighting and choosing sides based on issues like the school they attend, what ministry they are involved with, or their preferences? If the answer is yes, your group is worldly. What can you do to keep yourself or your church from allowing this kind of worldliness to prevent spiritual growth and influence in your community? Are you willing to do it?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 3

1 CORINTHIANS 4:1-5

PEOPLE OR GOD?

SAY WHAT?

How can you tell if you are someone who cares more about what people think than what God thinks?

SO WHAT?

Why is this such an issue in your life?

NOW WHAT?

How can you begin changing your focus from what people think to what God thinks?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

How much do you care about what others think of you? Does someone's opinion of you affect the way you dress? Does it affect how you act? Are there times when you want to take a stand but do not because you are afraid of what people may think? It would be great if we could all say what Paul did in verse 3 of this chapter. The most important thing to Paul was that he be found faithful—but faithful by whose definition? According to verse 3, the only person he really cared to please was God. He did not care if the Corinthians or any other human court judged him critically. In fact, he did not even look at his own conscience to determine how faithful he was. His only concern was how God would judge him. Can you say the same thing? Do you live your life knowing you will stand before God one day and will be judged by His standard? Do you enter school or work with your only goal being to please God? The world needs Christians who will live their lives committed to God and pleasing Him alone. There are too many believers who care more about what people think than what God thinks. Are you one of them? How can that change?

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 4

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-8

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

When was the last time you saw or heard about a church exercising church discipline? Why is it important for churches to make sure they exercise church discipline? What are the consequences if a church does not fulfill that responsibility? Paul answered those questions in today's reading. First, he told them church discipline is important for the restoration of the one who is in sin. According to verse 5, discipline provides the opportunity for his sinful nature to be destroyed and his spirit to be saved. If church discipline is used improperly or not at all, the person in sin loses an opportunity to be saved. We often think tolerance of sin is loving and kind, but if we don't practice discipline, we are really hurting the brother who is in sin. Second, according to verse 6, it keeps sin from spreading throughout the whole church. By ignoring sin, we allow the potential for it to spread and hurt others. There are some who see discipline as harsh actions towards those we love. God's Word takes a very different view. If we care about a person in sin and we care about the body of Christ, we will not only exercise Biblical discipline as a church, but also as individuals who truly care.

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 5

How should Christians settle disputes? If, for example, a believer owes another believer a large sum of money and it has caused problems between them, how should that be handled? Should the church get involved? The answer is in today's reading. Paul makes it very clear in this passage that Christians are to work to settle their disputes within the body of Christ. If a dispute arises, the Christians involved are to attempt to work it out themselves. If they are unable to come up with a solution, they are to bring the matter to church leaders who have been selected to help in situations like these. Christians should never take a dispute out into public. In fact, Paul says it is better to be wronged or cheated than to have your dispute with another believer brought out in public. The reason? Because it is so damaging to the cause of Christ. The world looks at these disputes and wonders why two people, who claim to have Christ controlling their lives, can't settle a problem. Our testimony is more important than proving who's right or wrong. How can you apply this passage? Use today's questions to help you get started.

SAY WHAT?

What disputes have you had with other Christians?

SO WHAT?

How have they been resolved?

NOW WHAT?

How should this passage impact the way you respond to disputes with other believers in the future?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 6

1 CORINTHIANS 7:8-16

I, NOT THE LORD

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What does Paul mean by the phrase in today's reading, "I, not the Lord"? Does he mean that what he said was his opinion and not directly from God? The answer could impact your view of how our Bible was written, and whether we can really trust it. Paul, in this section of Scripture, was giving us God's truth concerning marriage. First, he explains that marriage is the only place God intended for sexual fulfillment. Sex outside of marriage violates God's plan and is sin. Second, when he talks about divorce, he adds the phrase, "not I, but the Lord," to show the readers that what he just stated had already been communicated in Scripture. The paragraph beginning with verse 12, covers an area in which God had not yet given a command. Therefore, Paul used the phrase, "I, not the Lord," to say this is a new command that God is now revealing through him. It was not to state that it was just Paul's opinion. It is God's truth given through Paul as he wrote this letter to the Corinthians. Remember, all Scripture is given by God and should be read and obeyed as such. Therefore, we must view verses 12-16 as God's specific communication.

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 7

How deeply do you care about other people? How badly do you want them to have a walk with God and avoid sin? Do you care enough to give up something you might enjoy in order to help them grow? You would if you cared as much as Paul did. There was a major dispute in this church when this letter was written. Some believers felt that it was acceptable to eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols. Weaker believers felt it was wrong. Paul's concern was not whether it was right or wrong, but how someone's behavior would impact those weaker brothers around him. His priority was his concern for others. If a weaker brother was offended, he gladly gave up meat, even though eating it was not wrong. If eating meat could result in a weaker brother returning to a sinful past, he would gladly give it up forever. Why? He cared more about others than he did his own freedom. Can you say the same thing? Would you willingly give something up because a weaker brother felt it was wrong? At what level of personal cost would you draw the line of sacrifice? Use today's questions to help you think through and respond to this important principle.

SAY WHAT?

What kinds of issues in today's Christianity are similar to eating sacrificed meat in Paul's day?

SO WHAT?

Why do people have such different views about those issues?

NOW WHAT?

How can today's passage help you know how to respond to these issues in the future?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 8-9

1 CORINTHIANS 10:1-13

NEVERTHELESS

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

What can you tell about your own spiritual condition by looking at your church or family? According to today's reading, maybe nothing. Paul tells us that, as a nation, the Israelites had seen God move on their behalf in powerful ways. They were all led by the same cloud, they all ate the same food, they all drank water from a rock, and they even had the very presence of Christ with them as they traveled. It would have been easy for a member of the nation of Israel to conclude he was spiritual because of what God had done for the Israelites. According to verse 5, however, God was not pleased with most of them. The majority of Israelites did not love God and were not committed to serving Him. In fact, most of them never made it to the Promised Land. Why not? Because they had no real personal relationship with Christ. Could you be like one of the Israelites? Is God moving in your church or your family and yet, He is not pleased with you? Being a part of a group where God is at work does not reveal where someone stands personally before God. Examine the condition of your heart, not what is going on around you, to see where you truly stand.

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 10

In what ways are meetings at your church similar to the meetings in this chapter? Unfortunately, the same characteristics we see in today's reading find their way into a lot of churches today. Paul was very discouraged with the behavior and the underlying motivations of the church at Corinth. When they came together, instead of being unified around their commitment to Christ and their desire to impact their world, they were divided. Paul tells them that disagreements were not only okay, but are actually necessary. The problem was not that there were disagreements, but that their disagreements had led to division. They cared more about having their own needs met than worshiping God, which was why they were supposed to be at church in the first place. Even their communion service, the purpose of which was to remember Christ, had degenerated into simply a free meal. Do you see these characteristics in your church? How do they demonstrate themselves? What can you do to be sure you are not part of creating them? What can you do to prevent them from happening?

SAY WHAT?

In what ways are division evident in your church?

SO WHAT?

In what ways are selfishness evident in your church?

NOW WHAT?

How can you prevent selfishness and division from occurring in your church and in your life?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 11

PROVERBS 20

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

As Paul began his discussion on spiritual gifts, what three important truths did he teach? Why did God have him begin this chapter with them? A close look will reveal the answers. First, in verse 4, Paul explained that there are different gifts, but the same Spirit gives these gifts. He wanted to communicate that not everyone will have the same gifts, nor should we want to. The Spirit decides who gets what gifts. Second, Paul teaches that there are different kinds of service, but Christ decides which service someone has. Each of us has a gift from the Spirit and specific ways we are to use our gift. Though we might have the same gift as someone else, our job may be different. Third, Paul explains that there are different works, but it is the Father who determines what those works are. When we use our gifts to do our jobs, God brings about the results. Just as our gifts and jobs are determined by the Godhead, so are the results when we use them. We should not be jealous or envious of other gifts, jobs, or results. We ought to know what our gifts are so we can begin to use them. Do you? How are you using yours?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 12

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-7

LOVE

CHARACTERISTIC	HOW I DEMONSTRATE IT	HOW I CAN IMPROVE IT
IS PATIENT		
IS KIND		
DOES NOT ENVY		
DOES NOT BOAST		
IS NOT PROUD		
IS NOT RUDE		
NOT SELF-SEEKING		
IS NOT EASILY ANGERED		
KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS		
DOES NOT DELIGHT IN EVIL		
ALWAYS PROTECTS		
ALWAYS TRUSTS		

This passage is often called the love chapter. We are given 12 characteristics of true love. Use the chart provided to help you examine your love and find ways to improve. Imagine what would happen if these 12 characteristics dominated your life or your church.

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 13

As chapter 14 continues with the subject of spiritual gifts, what new truths do we find? Because the church in Corinth had a misunderstanding of spiritual gifts and had misused them, Paul gave them more instructions in today's reading. First, they had determined that some spiritual gifts were more desirable than others, so they were trying to seek those gifts for themselves. They had forgotten that gifts were given by the Holy Spirit and were not something to request or seek. Second, their understanding of the purpose of spiritual gifts was wrong. As a result, their services had gotten out of hand and true worship was not even taking place. In fact, gifts they were attempting to use for themselves were really designed for the unsaved, not for personal worship or spiritual growth. As a result, Paul gave them specific information about gifts and how they were to be used. A misunderstanding of the gifts can lead to wrong doctrine and ineffective ministry. Do you have a proper understanding of spiritual gifts? What have you learned in the last three chapters to help you?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 14

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-11

PASSED ON

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

As you read this chapter, what thoughts came to your mind? Did you think about people in your world who do not know Christ? While this is possibly the greatest chapter in the Bible on the resurrection, there are two phrases that have a great impact on our view of outreach. In fact, when you connect them, they have an even greater impact. The first phrase is found in verse 3. Paul said that he passed on what he had received. In other words, he was given the truth of the Gospel and had passed it on so that others could know this truth and have their lives changed. The second phrase is found in verse 34. Here, Paul told them that there were some in Corinth who were ignorant of God. In other words, the people in the church of Corinth had not done what Paul did with the truth they received. Paul passed it on to others while, to the shame of this church, they had not. Could the same thing be said of you? You have been given great truth, but have you passed it on? Is there someone in your world who is ignorant of the Gospel because you have not shared it? How can you correct that this week?

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 15

If you really began to walk with God and gain a burden to influence your world for Christ, what could you expect to happen? One part of the answer is encouraging, while the other part could be discouraging. The encouraging part is to know that when someone is truly walking with God and seeking to influence his world, God will use him to make a difference. In today's reading, we see that God had opened a great door for effective ministry in Ephesus. How exciting it must have been to be a part of this great work, watching God use them to influence people's lives. But, did you notice what else was taking place in Ephesus? Here is the discouraging part. According to verse 9, not only did Paul have an open door, but there were many who opposed him. It was not all fun and games. Likewise, when you begin to influence people for Christ, you will find opposition. We need to realize it will come and avoid being discouraged or deterred by it. Satan does not like to see people influenced for Christ and will attempt to do all he can to stop you. Stand firm and keep plugging away. See the opposition as evidence you are making a difference.

SAY WHAT?

In what ways have you been challenged by reading 1 Corinthians?

SO WHAT?

What did you learn from reading 1 Corinthians?

NOW WHAT?

How can you use these truths right now?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

1 CORINTHIANS 16

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-11

POWER OF PRAYER

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

How was it that Paul was able to endure the opposition in his life and still be faithful and committed to his call? Did he know something or do something we can use when we face hard times? We find part of the answer in today's reading. It is an exciting aspect of our daily faith that we can all have a part in. Paul said, in verse 8, that there were times of extreme difficulty when they weren't sure that they would even live through it. Those events, however, enabled him to learn to trust in God and not in himself or his abilities. He then told the Corinthians that he would continue to serve God and trust Him to deliver them. Why? According to verse 11, it was because these Christians had been praying for Paul. Their prayers helped enable Paul to keep pressing on and to allow the difficult times to make him strong. This should motivate us to become more faithful in our prayers for others as they serve God. Prayer is an important tool of encouragement. We can help people endure difficult times, watch their dependence on God grow, and see godliness produced in their lives because we prayed for them. Who can you be praying for? Why not begin now?

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 1

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

2 CORINTHIANS 2:12-17

MOTIVATION

SAY WHAT?

What motivations could you have for doing "spiritual" things?

SO WHAT?

How can you tell what your motivation is for doing "spiritual" things?

NOW WHAT?

How can you ensure that you have pure motives?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

What is your motivation for serving God? Why do you have devotions? Why do you serve in the church? Why do you even go to church? Often, people do these very good and right things for the wrong reasons. People have their devotions because they want others to think they are spiritual. Some serve in the church so that positive things will be said about them. In today's reading, we learn what motivated the Apostle Paul to do these things. According to verse 17, it was out of sincerity. He had the words of truth that could transform people's lives. He knew firsthand what power those words had. Paul knew that some served God for what they could get out of it. Some even served for the money they could make. Paul, however, was different. He was a man sent by God to accomplish something very specific and important on this earth. What other motivation could he have to serve? Why not examine your own life and ask yourself what motivates you to do the spiritual things you do? We should never serve God because of personal gain or selfishness, but as people sent by God to help others. Use today's questions to get started.

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 2

How is your walk with God different today than it was a year ago? Would you say you are growing spiritually? Would you say that you are stronger in your faith now than you were one year ago? Has your knowledge of God and His Word grown since last winter? Could you describe your walk with God the way Paul did in verse 18 of today's reading? Paul said that he was a man who reflected the glory of God. He was a man who was "being" transformed into the likeness of Christ. He was "becoming" more like Christ every day. Each day, more of the glory of God was evident in his life. That must have been exciting for him! To look back on your life and see how God has transformed you into the likeness of Christ is something to get excited about. On the other hand, little or no growth ought to discourage us. God intended for each of us to grow in our walk with Him. It is not His desire for us to be at a spiritual standstill. We, like Paul, ought to be becoming more like Christ each day. Are you? In what ways have you grown in your walk with God? Are you "being" transformed to display His glory to the people you see every day? Use today's questions to get started.

SAY WHAT?

In what area have you seen spiritual growth since the fall?

SO WHAT?

How are you more like Christ now than you were in the fall?

NOW WHAT?

What do you need to do in order to see continued growth this next year? Who can help you create a specific plan?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 3

2 CORINTHIANS 4:7-18

PRIORITIES

SAY WHAT?

How would someone act who views physical comfort as more important than spiritual growth?

SO WHAT?

How would someone act who views the present as more important than the future?

NOW WHAT?

How would someone act who views the temporal as more important than the eternal?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

In today's reading, we learn three important priorities we ought to have as Christians. They are given to us in verses 16-18. Did you notice them? Mark them in your Bible. First, we are to view the spiritual as more important than the physical. We must realize that what happens to us physically results in spiritual growth. If we care more about spiritual growth than physical comfort, we will rejoice when trouble strikes. Second, we are to view the future as having greater importance than the present. Paul did not mean, in verse 17, that the present does not matter or that its problems shouldn't be a concern. He meant that, in the midst of our present problems, we should realize that they are achieving for us something greater for the future. Therefore, since we are more concerned about the future than the present, we rejoice. Third, we are to view the eternal as more important than the temporal. God and the souls of men are more important than jobs, grades, awards, money, prestige, or anything else that won't be with us in eternity. Would your life be characterized by these three priorities? Use today's questions to help you honestly evaluate.

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 4

What responsibility do those of us who have received Jesus Christ have to the rest of the world? How does your answer to that question impact how you live your life? The answer is found in today's reading. Paul reminds the Corinthians that they have been reconciled to God. This means that they have had their debt of sin paid for and have received eternal life. He reminds them that they have been made new. According to verse 16, as a result, their view of the world ought to have changed. Since they have been reconciled, God has given to them the ministry of reconciliation for the world. That is, they have become God's ambassadors. God is, in fact, making His appeal to the world through us. What an awesome responsibility! He has given us the message of reconciliation to share with those who don't know or understand what reconciliation is. We need to tell people that they can be right with God and have a relationship with Him. He can change lives and we are the living proof. How well are you fulfilling your responsibility? Can you name someone that you recently shared God's plan of salvation with? Better get started!

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 5

2 CORINTHIANS 6:1-13

IN VAIN

SAY WHAT?

In what ways have you seen people receive the grace of God in vain?

SO WHAT?

In what ways have you received the grace of God in vain?

NOW WHAT?

How can you avoid being one who receives God's grace in vain?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

Verse 1 of this chapter tells us not to receive the grace of God in vain. What does that mean and how do we do it? This is an important question that Christians don't seem to take time to consider. To answer it, we must look closely at the context. While our Bibles have a chapter division here, Paul's original letter did not. It is obvious that he was continuing his thoughts and discussion from chapter 5. He concluded that chapter with the discussion of our salvation and our ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, according to the context, we receive the grace of God in vain when we do not fulfill our ministry of reconciliation. We receive the grace of God in vain when we accept our salvation but then keep it to ourselves. We receive the grace of God in vain when we isolate ourselves in the safe world of Christianity and fail to reach a lost world with the message of Christ. If you have not been actively sharing your faith and the message that everyone can be reconciled to God, you have received the grace of God in vain. It is a tragedy to have what the world needs and neglect to share the message. So, have you received the grace of God in vain?

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 6

In this chapter, Paul has written some amazing things about the church in Corinth. Look at verse 16. Could those who know you say that about your life? Paul wrote in this letter how thrilled he was with the report Titus gave him concerning their lives. They continued to be loyal to Paul. They repented of the sin they had committed and demonstrated their repentance with godly sorrow. Paul had great love for and pride in these people, and Titus saw why after spending time with them. Their love for God and commitment to Him was a source of joy for Paul. He told Titus that they were a great group of believers, and he would have a wonderful time with them. Titus returned to Paul encouraged and refreshed by this church. It would have humiliated Paul to find out, after Titus returned, that this church did not live up to the expectation Paul had for them. His words could have caused great embarrassment for him, but they didn't. Could the same thing be said of you or your church? If someone were to see who you are in all areas of your life, would you be an embarrassment or an encouragement to them? Is the life you live publically who you really are?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 7

PROVERBS 22

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

How well are you doing in the area of giving? How much money have you given to your church this year? Is there a Biblical method we can use to evaluate ourselves honestly in this area? Paul answers that question in today's reading. The answer, however, may not be an encouragement to some of us. In this chapter, Paul teaches us what our motivation for giving ought to be and whose example we are to follow. First, we learn that the example we are to follow in our giving is Jesus Christ's. Although He was rich, He was willing to become poor for us. He gave everything He had for us. Often, we give out of our surplus or in ways that do not cost us anything. What have you sacrificed in order to give to your church or to someone in need? Second, we are to give because we want to help others become rich. It is out of love and concern for others that we make sacrifices. Have you recently made a sacrifice in order to provide for the needs of others? How does your life compare to the standard set by Jesus? Remember, He is our example. Although He was rich, He was willing to become poor out of His great love for you and me. Is your giving like that?

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 8

2 CORINTHIANS 10:1-6

WEAPONS

SAY WHAT?

What are some of the weapons the world uses to fight battles?

SO WHAT?

Which of the world's weapons do you find yourself using the most?

NOW WHAT?

How can you begin training yourself to use the weapons of God and not the weapons of the world?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

When was the last time you faced opposition because of your faith? When someone opposes you or disagrees with a Biblical standard, how should you respond? According to today's reading, your response should be radically different than a non-believer's. Paul tells us that the weapons the world uses are not the weapons Christians use. The world's weapons do not have divine power and are not able to truly demolish strongholds. Our weapons as Christians, however, are different. They have divine power and are able to demolish arguments and break through the hearts of people. They are prayer, the Word of God, and changed lives. When we are facing opposition, why would we fight with the weapons the world uses and not use the ones God has given to us? Why do we think it is better to debate or convince people with our clever arguments when we can get down on our knees and pray? That logic is from the world. Are you using God's weapons in your battle? How can you become more effective in using the weapons God has given to us?

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 9, 10

What is Satan's agenda for our lives? According to 1 Peter 5:8, it is to destroy us. But how does he try to do it? According to today's reading, he comes as an angel of light. In other words, he deceives us by appearing harmless and innocent. In fact, sometimes it is very difficult to see that it really is Satan trying to destroy us and not something good. Sometimes people who seem as if they have our best interest in mind are actually being used by Satan to try to defeat us. Certain kinds of activities may not appear to be harmful, but eventually lead us down a road to great sin and destruction. If Satan's plans were obvious, we would run for cover. He hides evil behind the appearance of good or in a neutral area. We then walk down the road, blind to what is actually going on. Could you be involved in something right now that seems to be okay but is, in fact, Satan's deception? It could be TV programs that seem okay but, in reality, are weakening your ability to resist sin. It may be a friendship you have developed that will ultimately encourage you to sin. Ask God to open your eyes to see the reality of Satan's attacks.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 11

2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-10

WHOSE GLORY?

SAY WHAT?

When talking about our lives, how do we give ourselves the glory?

SO WHAT?

Why is it so difficult for us to rejoice in times of suffering?

NOW WHAT?

How can you live to bring glory to God and not to yourself?

THEN WHAT?

In light of this passage, what personal commitment can you make?

Are there accomplishments in your life that you are proud of and enjoy discussing with friends? Would they be the same items Paul mentioned in this chapter? Notice what Paul listed in verses 9 and 10. Paul boasted about his weaknesses. He did not talk about the things he did well, but about those things he did not do well. He not only spoke of his weaknesses, but joyfully endured insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties. Why? Look at verse 10. When he was weak, God made him strong. He boasted about his weaknesses because he could see God in them. When he was insulted and persecuted, God gave him strength to endure. When he faced difficulties and hardships, God energized him to persevere. God wants us to be totally dependent on Him, too. He wants all the glory to go to His Name. We often operate in our own strength, depend on ourselves to persevere, and then give ourselves the glory. We resist difficult times and forget that it is in the painful moments that God makes us more like Christ. Who receives glory for what is accomplished in your life? What do your stories tell?

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 12

What have you learned about the Apostle Paul after reading through this book? If the only source of information you had was this book, what conclusion would you make about his life? We could describe him as a man who deeply loved the church in Corinth. He wanted them to be all God made them to be. When someone tried to malign Paul's ministry in the church, his response was governed by their best interest, not his reputation. He took a stand for what was right and loved them enough to tell them what was right, even though it may have been difficult for them to hear and may have caused pain. He closed this letter by again showing his deep love for these people. He asked them to honestly look at their lives and evaluate the condition of their hearts. Finally, he told them not to settle for anything but perfection. It is wonderful to have someone in your life who cares for you like this. At times, they may make you uncomfortable, but they enable you to keep on track in your walk with God. Why not finish this book by reflecting on who those people are in your life. Thank them for their love and concern even when it makes you angry or uncomfortable.

SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

EXTRA READING

2 CORINTHIANS 13



ANCHOR

CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



THIS HOPE WE HAVE AS
AN ANCHOR OF THE
SOUL, A HOPE BOTH
SURE AND STEADFAST
AND ONE WHICH
ENTERS WITHIN THE
VEIL, WHERE JESUS HAS
ENTERED AS A FORERUN-
NER FOR US...

HEBREWS 6:19-20

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