

## **LESSON 11: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-6:18**

### **Our Ministry of Reconciliation, Part 1**

1. Why does Paul write that “we know what it is to fear the Lord,” and how is that thought then connected to the consequence of this knowing, i.e., that therefore “we try to persuade men” (v. 11)? How does this impact your understanding of our commission to share the good news of Christ with any and all?
2. What accusations had possibly been made about Paul (vv. 11-13). How does he answer these? (See also 3:1; 4:1-2; 16-18.)
3. From these same verses, and through (especially) verse 15, what is it that motivates, that constrains, that convinces Paul to serve God? What are his goals? What are your goals?
4. What is the “worldly point of view” of which Paul speaks in verse 16? How is this contrasted with our being “a new creation” in Christ? In what way are you a “new creation”? What is the “old” that has gone, and what is the “new” that has come (v. 17)?
5. What is an ambassador? (See also Eph. 6:20, Luke 14:32, 19:14.) How does it help your understanding of your commission to think of yourself as an “ambassador of Christ”?
6. What do you think is the key word in verses 18-21? What does it mean? Why is it so foundationally important? What is the “ministry of reconciliation,” and what is its message? Who is reconciled to whom, what is restored, are you Christ's ambassador?
7. 2 Corinthians 5:21 is a powerful microcosm of the entire gospel. How so? What is Paul saying here and why is it so important?

## Our Ministry of Reconciliation, Part 2

1. Why does Paul write that “we know what it is to fear the Lord,” and how is that thought then connected to the consequence of this knowing, i.e., that therefore “we try to persuade men” (v. 11)? How does this impact your understanding of our commission to share the good news of Christ with any and all?
2. What accusations had possibly been made about Paul (vv. 11-13). How does he answer these? (See also 3:1; 4:1-2; 16-18.)
3. What does it mean to accept the grace of God in vain (6:1)? What would it mean today for you or someone else to accept the grace of God in vain? Why is it significant for Paul that he should write “now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation”?
4. “We put no stumbling block in anyone's path,” Paul writes in verse 3, “so that our ministry will not be discredited.” What's his point here. List the hardships in verses 4-5, the good things in verses 6-7, and the contrasts of verses 8-10. Again, what point is he making for his Corinthian hearers? For us? With which of these “credentials” can you identify? Why would such a list remove, rather than place, stumbling blocks in the way of persons trying to find their way to God?
5. In verses 11-13, Paul asks the Corinthians to do for him (and his apostolic companions) what he'd done for them. What is this thing he wants them to do? Why, do you think? What does it mean to “open wide your hearts”?
6. In verse 14, Paul writes, “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers.” List the series of contrasts he sets forth in verses 14-16. What is his point (see verses 16-18)? Why do you think he feels it necessary to make that point? And how should we, as Christians today, interpret and apply this message? (Note that this passage is usually understood to apply to marriages between Christians and pagans. However, what other close relationships or partnerships might these verses speak to?) What do we learn here about separation and holiness?