

The Transparency of the Minister

Chapter 9

Audio Lesson: New Testament #52



Objective: To understand the purposes and motivation for Paul's ministry, and to understand our role as ministers.



We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

—2 Corinthians 4:7-10

Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is all about the ministry God wants every believer to experience. God has called all of us to a ministry of reconciling all people to Him. But in order to bring people to God, our lives must be characterized with an honest transparency. It must be clear to all that everything that is good in our life is because of the Christ who has saved us and lives in us.

In order for Jesus to be seen in us, God will often allow us to experience much pressure and go through various trials. Because the Spirit of God has been placed within us, we can respond rightly to those pressures, storms, and trials, and people will see that we are different. They will notice that though we are earthen vessels, we are filled with a priceless treasure: Jesus Himself.

Paul described our relationship to Christ in three ways: *by* Christ, *in* Christ, and *for* Christ. Jesus gives us everything we have in the way of salvation and spiritual blessings; we are united with Him as the source of everything we need; and we are surrendered to Him as we live for Him and His purposes.

1. True or false? The letter of 2 Corinthians is addressed only to ministers who are leaders of the church.
2. True or false? Paul believed every Christian is a minister.
3. True or false? The church throughout history has effectively practiced Paul's message that every Christian believer is a minister.
4. True or false? Most people who have become Christians were led to Christ by professional ministers.



5. True or false? Only adult men can have the ministry of reconciliation.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

6. What evidence did Paul present to the Corinthians to prove his apostleship?

- a. The faith of the Corinthians to whom he had preached
- b. The fact that he was a student of the other apostles
- c. His education as a Jewish scholar
- d. His miracles

7. What motivated Paul to do his work?

- a. His pride
- b. His large salary and the prestige of being an apostle
- c. The pressure of his family and friends
- d. His relationship with Jesus—saved by Christ, living in Christ, and serving for Christ

8. Once we have been reconciled to God by Jesus, how should we respond to Him?

- a. We should strive to keep the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament.
- b. We should prosper in every way and never show our weaknesses.
- c. We should live for Jesus and help others become reconciled to Him.
- d. We should prove that we are holier than everyone around us.

9. What illustration did Paul use to describe those who minister?

- a. A treasure hidden in a field
- b. A clay pot with a treasure inside
- c. An ox pulling a heavy load
- d. A talking donkey

10. What empowers us to respond to pressures and trials with patience and love? (choose all that apply)

- a. The Holy Spirit
- b. Our own strength
- c. Strict religious principles
- d. The truth and power of God's Word
- e. The armor of God's righteousness
- f. The opinions of other people
- g. Faith

11. What does God want us to demonstrate in our lives?

- a. Our own righteousness
- b. Our own wisdom
- c. Our own talents
- d. Jesus living within us

12. What purpose do the storms in our life often have?

- a. They show that the life of Jesus within us is stronger than our storms, and they prove His power to uphold us.
- b. They show that we are not living in accordance with God's will because He is not protecting us.
- c. They prove that not even our faith in Jesus can overcome the problems of the world.
- d. They do not have any purpose; they are random events.

13. What do people see when we are transparent before them?

- a. That we are no different than anyone else
- b. That our faith is just another religion like all others
- c. That we have a treasure within us, which is Jesus
- d. Nothing, because no one really notices us anyway



God asks us not to make Jesus a part of our plans but to become part of His plan. Have you sought to be taken into His plans? In what ways can you become part of God's purpose in your family, in your church and for the world?



Thank God for the treasure He has placed within you—the life of Jesus. Ask Him to help you live honestly before others so they can see the life of Jesus within you. Pray that as people see Jesus clearly in you, they will come to faith in Him.



Going Deeper

1. In addition to the love of Christ, what motivated Paul to accomplish his miraculous ministry, according to 2 Corinthians 5:14-6:2? _____

2. Based on these same verses, what were three absolutes that drove and motivated Paul to be the greatest missionary in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ? (Consider especially vv. 14-15)

3. In this same passage, explain and apply the way Paul uses the expressions, “by Christ,” “in Christ” and “for Christ.” _____

4. Explain and apply how verse 16 in chapter 4 could be a very real blessing to a devout believer who is dying from a malignancy. _____

5. When you read and study the entire fourth chapter, is it biblical to teach that, since the inward man is a greater value than the outward man, inner healing can be a greater miracle than physical healing? Explain. _____

6. How could the 18th verse of chapter 3 revolutionize your pursuit of a personal relationship with Christ? _____

7. How can you personally apply the eternal values of Paul as expressed in the first six chapters of this letter? _____
