

2 Corinthians 6:1–18

Working With God, Living Set Apart, and Responding to Grace Today

Introduction: Ministry as Cooperation With God

Paul opens this section with a breathtaking description of the Christian life:

“We then, as workers together with Him...”

Ministry is not merely service *for* God—it is cooperation *with* God. The Lord invites redeemed people to participate in what He is doing in the world. That privilege carries both dignity and responsibility.

Because grace has been offered, Paul urgently appeals:

“We also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.”

Grace can be received genuinely, or it can be resisted, postponed, or wasted. Paul’s concern is not theoretical—it is deeply pastoral. Grace must be responded to.

I. Now Is the Day of Salvation (2 Corinthians 6:1–3)

Paul grounds his appeal in Scripture:

“In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.”

Then he applies it with urgency:

“Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”

God’s grace is always offered in the present tense. Tomorrow is never promised. Delayed obedience often becomes permanent disobedience.

Paul also explains his personal conduct:

“Giving no offense in anything, that the ministry may not be blamed.”

Paul was careful not to place unnecessary obstacles in the path of the gospel. His life was shaped by the question: *Will this help or hinder someone from coming to Christ?*

Practical Application

Grace calls for response, not postponement. If God is speaking today, obedience belongs today.

II. The Marks of Authentic Ministry (2 Corinthians 6:4–10)

Paul now defends his ministry—not by credentials, but by character and endurance.

“But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God...”

A. Endurance Through Suffering

Paul lists physical and emotional hardships:

“In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments...”

True ministry is not validated by comfort or applause, but by faithfulness under pressure.

B. Character Shaped by the Spirit

Paul then describes inward qualities:

“By purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love.”

God’s Spirit produces endurance that does not harden the heart, but softens it.

C. Spiritual Resources, Not Human Strength

Paul adds:

“By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.”

The battle is real, but God provides what is needed on both the offensive and defensive sides of faith.

D. The Paradoxes of Christian Life

Paul closes with striking contrasts:

“As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.”

These are not contradictions. They are the realities of a life anchored in Christ. Paul possessed little materially, yet possessed Christ—and therefore everything that truly matters.

III. An Open Heart and a Loving Appeal (2 Corinthians 6:11–13)

Paul speaks tenderly:

“O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.”

The distance in the relationship did not come from Paul. He explains:

“You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.”

Spiritual pressure often comes from divided loyalties. Paul pleads as a father:

“Now in return for the same... you also be open.”

Love cannot flourish in a narrow heart.

Practical Application

Ask God to enlarge your heart. Bitterness, fear, and compromise constrict spiritual growth.

IV. The Call to Separation: Unequal Yokes (2 Corinthians 6:14–16)

Paul now issues a clear command:

“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers.”

A yoke joins two lives in a shared direction. When one follows Christ and the other does not, tension is inevitable.

Paul asks a series of penetrating questions:

“For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?”

The issue is not superiority, but incompatibility. Believers and unbelievers live by different authorities, values, and purposes.

This principle applies broadly—not only to marriage, but to partnerships, alliances, and binding commitments. Experience repeatedly confirms what Scripture declares: unequal yokes eventually produce pain.

Practical Application

Before entering binding relationships, ask not only *Do I love them?* but *Are we moving in the same spiritual direction?*

V. God’s Dwelling Place and God’s Promise (2 Corinthians 6:16–18)

Paul reminds believers of their identity:

“For you are the temple of the living God.”

God does not share His temple with idols. He makes this promise:

“I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Then comes the call:

“Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.”

Separation is not withdrawal from the world, but refusal to be shaped by it. God promises relationship, not isolation:

“I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters.”

This is family language—belonging, care, and intimacy.

VI. Living as God's Children in a Watching World

Jesus taught that God's children are to live differently:

"Love your enemies... that you may be sons of your Father in heaven."

Believers are not saved by separation, but separation flows from salvation. New creation life demands new priorities:

"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

Practical Application for Believers

- Respond to grace immediately and wholeheartedly.
- Measure success by faithfulness, not comfort.
- Guard your relationships wisely.
- Live distinctly without becoming distant.
- Let God's presence define your identity.

A Challenge for Believers

Are there relationships, habits, or alliances pulling you into spiritual compromise? God's call to separation is not restriction—it is protection. Will you trust Him enough to obey?

An Invitation to Non-Believers

God is offering reconciliation today. Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross to forgive sin. God raised Him from the dead, declaring that He is God, Savior, and Lord.

If you continue to delay, grace can be in vain. But if you respond today—turning from sin and trusting Christ—you will be forgiven, made new, and welcomed as a son or daughter of God.

Now is the accepted time.

Now is the day of salvation.