

***“Ministers Of God”***  
***2 Corinthians 6:3-10***

***Thy Word is like a starry host: a thousand rays of light  
Are seen to guide the traveler and make his pathway bright.  
Thy Word is like an armory, where soldiers may repair;  
And find, for life’s long battle day, all needful weapons there!***

**Introduction:**

1. Let’s Go Now In Our Bibles:
  - Back To 2 Corinthians 6:
    - Where Last Week - Paul Encouraged Us In:
      - 6:1 - “Receive Not The Grace Of God In Vain!” (2)
      - Did You Remember:
        - The Purpose Of God’s Grace To You Last Week?
    - God’s Grace Was Not Meant:
      - To Be Put On The Shelf!
        - The Purpose Of God’s Grace Is So That You Can Go To Him At Any Time:
          - “And Find Grace To Help In Time Of Need!” (Hebrews 4:16)
    - Are You Availing Yourself:
      - Of The “Manifold Grace Of God?”
2. Well - As We Come To The Next Several Verses:
  - Of 2 Corinthians 6:
    - We Find Just How Much We Need:
      - God’s Grace!
        - And What His Grace Can Do In The Life Of His Servants!
  - Beginning:
    - In 6:3-4a - Paul Writes - “Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: / But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God!”
      - Now - Before We Go On:
        - Paul Has Just Been “Preaching” To The Corinthian Church In This Letter!
        - To Those Who Still Need The Lord - He Preached - “Be Ye Reconciled To God!” (5:20)
        - And To Those Who Knew The Lord - He Preached - “Receive Not The Grace Of God In Vain!” (6:1)
  - Well Now - Paul Wants To Show Us:
    - That He “Practiced What He Preached!”
      - He Wanted The Manner Of His Life To Back Up His Message:
        - Because He Was A “Minister / Servant Of God!”
          - **IE:** As Murray Harris Wrote - “The Life Of The Christian Minister [Ought To Be] The Most Eloquent Advertisement For The Gospel!”
3. Now - Even Though Paul Is Talking Primarily About:
  - Himself & Other Pastors & Preachers Of The Gospel:
    - What He Says - Applies To Us All!
      - Because Every Christian Is A “Minister Of God!”
        - Every Christian Is God’s Servant!
          - And The Next Few Verses Will Show What The Grace Of God Can Really Do In Your Life!
        - Your Life As A Christian Can Also Be An “Eloquent Advertisement” Of The Grace Of God! How?
  - Paul Continues:
    - In 6:4-10 - “But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, / 5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; / 6 By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, / 7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, / 8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; / 9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; / 10 As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things!”

4. With This Remarkable List:
- Paul Shows Us What The Life Of A Grace-Filled Christian:
    - Will Be Like & Will Look Like!
      - And Even Though Paul Likely Wrote This List:
        - Spontaneously & Rapidly:
          - Yet Each Word & Each Phrase In This List Is Suggestive & Rich In Truth!
          - Because It Isn't Just Paul Speaking Here - It Is The Holy Spirit Of God!
  - And When You "Receive Not The Grace Of God In Vain!"
    - This Is What Your Life Will Be Like!
      - And Using The "Verbal Clues" That Are In These Verses & In This List - There Seem To Be Several Categories That Can Help Us In Our Own Lives:
        - As "The Ministers & Servants Of God!"
          - And The First Thing We See Is:

**1. *The Concern Of The Minister Of God!***

- In 6:3-4 - Paul's Tell Us One Of His Main Concerns As God's Servant & What Should Be One Of Our Main Concerns As Well!
  - "Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: / But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God!"
    - From A Heart Of Gratitude To The Lord:
      - He Wanted His Life To Be A "Living Advertisement" Of God's Grace & The Gospel!
      - And This Meant That He Was Careful & Cautious In His Life & Ministry:
  - "Giving No Offense" – In Any Thing!
    - Upon The Lord & His Ministry!
      - "Offense" Means To Put An Obstacle Or A Stumbling Block In The Way!
        - Now - The Bible Tells Us That There Already An "Offense" To The Gospel!
        - So - This Does Not Mean That We Change The Message Or Soften The Message Of The Gospel!
      - It Means That We Do Not Want Ourselves To "Get In The Way" Of The Work Of God!
        - Our Will / Our Weakness / Our Wrongs!
        - And This Is An Important Goal For Us As God's Servants!
    - Because - The World Is Watching!
      - And The World Is Looking For Ways:
        - To Mock & To Blame & To Find Fault With Christianity!
        - And Every "Spot & Blemish" That The World Finds, It Will Try To Use To Discredit Christ Himself!
        - Oh How We Need God's Grace In Our Lives!
      - So Instead - He Wanted To Be:
  - "Approving Ourselves" – In Every Thing!
    - "As The Ministers Of God!"
      - He Wanted There To Be A Confirmation:
        - Of His Life & Ministry!
        - In The World!
        - To The Church!
        - Especially Before The Lord!
      - And He Wanted To "Approve Himself" In:
        - Every Thing! Every Area Of Life!
          - This Ought To Be Our Desire As Well!
          - Because - All Too Often - We "Compartmentalize" Our Christian Life! It Becomes More Personal & Private Than Public & Practiced!
    - But How Can We Do This?
      - We Need God's Grace!
        - And This Is Where Paul Begins His List Of 28 Phrases That Shows What It Means:
          - To "Approve Ourselves As The Ministers / Servants Of God!"
          - And So He Begins His List In 6:4, And Reveals To Us:

**2. *The Constancy Of The Minister Of God!***

- 6:4b-5 - "In much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, / In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in

labours, in watchings, in fastings!”

- Even Though This List Looks Like One Thing After Another, There Are Some Verbal Clues In The Greek That Can Help Us Break Down This List In Order To See What It Means To Live As The “Servant Of God!”
  - And The First Phrase In This List - “In Much Patience” Shows The Kind Of Attitude & Fortitude Paul Had In All The Hardships He Experienced In His Life!
    - Paul Wanted To Be Faithful To The Lord!
    - And He Gives 9 Examples Of Hardships That He Personally Experienced!
  - And Yet - By God’s Grace:
    - His Desire Was To Be Faithful In And Through Each One!
    - He Sought To Be:
- Faithful In Providential Hardships!
  - “In Afflictions, In Necessities, In Distresses!”
    - These Three Hardships:
      - Are General Hardships - That Paul Had Absolutely No Control Over!
    - These Three Hardships:
      - Affected His Body, His Mind & His Heart!
      - They Would Cause Indescribable Anguish:
        - To The Point Where Paul Did Not Know What To Do!
    - But Paul Knew Where He Could Turn!
      - He Could Remember The Words Of Jesus - John 16:33 - “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!”
        - Paul Could Count On The Grace Of God To Be Faithful To The Lord!
        - He Also Sought To Be:
- Faithful In Painful Hardships!
  - 6:5a - “In Stripes, In Imprisonments, In Tumults!”
    - These Three Hardships:
      - Describe The Persecution That Paul Experienced In His Life & Ministry For Christ!
    - He Was Beaten Many Times!
      - He Was Imprisoned For Preaching The Gospel!
      - And He Was Exposed To Riots In Several Cities!
      - And His Life Was In Jeopardy!
    - Yet - Because Of God’s Grace:
      - Even When He & Silas Were In Prison:
        - In Philippi - Acts 26:25 - “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them!”
          - He Also Sought To Be:
- Faithful In Personal Hardships!
  - 6:5b - “In Labours, In Watchings, In Fastings!”
    - These Three Hardships:
      - Were Personal, Voluntary, Even Sacrificial Hardships:
        - In His Work & Serve For The Lord!
    - He Worked Hard!
      - He Worked Hard As A Tentmaker & As A Preacher & As A Pastor!
        - His Work & Study & Prayer Life Would Keep Him Up Late & Get Him Up Early!
        - Sometimes He Would Forget To Eat / Or Would Just Not Take The Time To Get Some Food!
- Because The Most Important Thing:
  - Was To Be Faithful & Constant To The Lord:
    - No Matter What Hardship He Faced!
      - “In Much Patience!”
        - In Providential Hardships!
        - In Painful Hardships!
        - In Personal Hardships!
  - And The Next 8 Phrases:
    - In 6:6-7 - Reveals How:
      - He Could Be So Faithful Through It All!

- We Find:

### 3. ***The Character Of The Servant Of God!***

- Remember Back In:
  - 5:17 - Paul Described The Christian Life In These Terms - “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new!”
  - Paul Was An Example:
    - Of What This Meant!
      - Because He Was A New Creature In Christ – He Possessed A New Character From Christ!
      - And The Next 4 Items In Paul’s List Shows Us:
- The Signs Of Christian Character!
  - 6:6a - “By Purenness, By Knowledge, By Longsuffering, By Kindness!”
  - With This Kind Of Character:
    - Paul Was Able To “Approve Himself As The Servant Of God!”
    - His Character Was A Reflection Of The Character Of His Savior!
  - He Reflected The Purity:
    - Of Jesus - And Sought To Be Holy:
      - “In All Manner Of Conversation!” (1 Peter 1:5)
  - He Reflected The Knowledge:
    - Of Jesus - And Sought To Follow After:
      - The Wisdom Of God Found In His Word!
      - Being Sensitive To God’s Will!
  - He Reflected The Patience:
    - Of Jesus - And Sought To Always Be “Slow To Anger!”
  - He Reflected The Kindness:
    - Of Jesus - And Sought To Be Good & Gentle Toward All Men!
  - In Fact - These Last Two Character Traits:
    - Are Part Of The Fruit Of The Spirit:
      - In Galatians 6 - And Comes As A Gracious Gift From The Lord!
      - Which Leads Us To:
- The Source Of Christian Character!
  - 6b-7a - “By The Holy Ghost, By Love Unfeigned, By The Word Of Truth, By The Power Of God!”
  - Each Of These Things:
    - Comes From The Lord!
      - Paul Knew That He Could Not Be The Man He Needed To Be Apart From These Things!
  - The Spirit Of God!
    - The Love Of God!
      - The Word Of God!
        - And The Power Of God!
          - This Is What We Must Rely Upon If We Are To Be Faithful & Approved Servants Of God!
  - We Need To Walk In The Spirit:
    - And Bear His Fruit!
      - We Need To Love The Lord:
        - And Others - With A Genuine & Fervent Love - Even As Christ Loves Us!
  - We Need To Be Saturated In The Word Of God’s Truth!
    - To Read / To Meditate / To Memorize:
      - To Share It! Should Ooze Out Of Our Spiritual Pores!
  - We Need To Pray For & Rely Upon:
    - God’s Power & Might!
      - To Be What He Wants Us To Be!
      - And To Do What He Wants Us To Do!
  - God & His Grace Is The Wellspring:
    - Of The Character That Will Reveal Christ:
      - Into This Christ-Less World!
        - The Next Section Reveals To Us:

#### 4. ***The Conduct Of The Servant Of God!***

- 7b-8a - “By The Armor Of Righteousness On The Right Hand And On The Left / By Honor And Dishonor, By Evil Report And Good Report!”
  - This Reminds Us Of The “Armor Of God” That We Find In The Book Of Ephesians!
    - And Paul Tells Us That The Faithful Servant Of God:
      - Puts On The Whole Armor & Is Prepared In Both Character And Conduct:
        - To Face Whatever Comes At Them In This Life!
  - But The Armor That Is The Most Complete:
    - And The Most Useful:
      - In Approving Ourselves Before This World:
        - Is That Of “Righteousness!”
          - The “Breastplate Of Righteousness!”
  - And No Matter Where The Attack Comes From:
    - From The “Right” Or The “Left” - A Christian Who Is Dressed In The Righteousness Of Jesus:
      - Is Fully Prepared!
      - You Are Ready:
- No Matter What People Think About You!
  - “By / Through Honor And Dishonor!”
    - Whether They Think Good Of You:
      - Or Evil Of You:
        - Your Conduct & Behavior Reflects The Conduct & Behavior Of Christ Himself!
          - And That Is Your Defense!
          - You Are Ready:
- No Matter How People Talk About You!
  - “By / Through Evil Report And Good Report!”
    - You Are Ready!
      - Because - 2 Timothy 2:4 - “No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier!”
        - This Is Your Desire - And Your Behavior & Conduct As A Christian:
          - Is Pleasing To The Lord!
- And This Leads Us To The Final Section:
  - Of Paul’s List - And It Shows Us:

#### 5. ***The Comforts Of The Servant Of God!***

- 8b-10 - 7 More Phrases - That Seem To Be Related To:
  - The “Evil Report” That Paul Mentions In 6:8!
    - Because Many Times Paul Faced Criticism & Contempt!
      - From Unbelievers & Even From Professing Believers!
        - But There Was Great Comfort In His Heart - Because He Knew That He Was Approved & Acceptable To God - Through Jesus & His Grace!
  - As Deceivers, And Yet True!
  - As Unknown, And Yet Well Known!
  - As Dying, And Behold We Live!
  - As Chastened, And Not Killed!
  - As Sorrowful, Yet Always Rejoicing!
  - As Poor, Yet Making Many Rich!
  - As Having Nothing, Yet Possessing All Things!
    - You Can Look At The First Part Of Each Phrase:
      - As A Criticism Of God’s Servants!
      - And They Are:
- Words Of Contempt!
  - They May Call You:
    - A Deceiver!
      - Just Like All The Other Religious Peddlers Around!
        - Saying Anything To Get A Following & To Make A Buck!
  - But For The Faithful Servant Of God:
    - You Know The Truth!

- You Are “True!”
  - You Are A Truth Lover!
  - You Are A Truth Teller!
  - And God Alone Knows The Truth About You & Your Life & Your Heart!
- And That Is A Comforting Truth!
- They May Call You:
  - Unknown!
    - A Nobody!
      - You Are Uninteresting & Unimportant In This World!
  - But For The Faithful Servant Of God:
    - You Know The Truth!
      - You Are “Well Known!”
        - Because “The Lord Knoweth Them That Are His!” (2 Timothy 2:19)
- And This Is A Comforting Truth!
- They May Say That You Are:
  - Dying!
    - That Is - Everything You Are Going Through:
      - And All The Hardships You Are Facing As A Christian:
        - Is For Nothing! Might As Well Give Up!
  - But As A Faithful Servant Of God:
    - You Know The Truth!
      - “Behold, We Live!”
        - That Is - This **Is** Living!
          - Philippians 1:21 - “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain!”
  - And This Is A Great Comfort!
  - They May Say That You Are Being:
    - Chastened!
      - That Is - God Must Not Be Pleased With You!
        - After All - Look At All That You Are Going Through!
          - All That Suffering!
    - But As A Faithful Servant Of God:
      - You Know The Comforting Truth!
        - “And Not Killed!”
          - God Is Not Through With Me Yet! He Still Has A Purpose & A Plan!
    - And If God Is Chastening Me:
      - He Is Dealing With Me As His Child!
        - And Correcting What Needs To Be Corrected!
      - Hebrews 12:11 - “Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby!”
  - They May Say That You Are Always:
    - “Sorrowful!”
      - The Christian Life Is A Miserable Life!
        - But They Don’t Know The Truth!
    - You Do!
      - In Reality - Because Of Christ & His Grace To You:
        - You Are “Always Rejoicing!”
          - You Can “Rejoice In The Lord Always!”
    - It’s A Great Comfort!
      - To Know That In Christ:
        - You Will Always Have Reason To Rejoice!
  - They May Say That You Are:
    - “Poor!”
      - And That May Be The Case!
        - But They Are Looking At Things From The World’s Point Of View!
    - But The Faithful Servant Of God:
      - Is “Making Many Rich!”

- As Peter Said In Acts 3:6 - “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee!”
- And The Riches Of God’s Grace:
  - Can Be Abundantly Shared With Others!
- Last - They May Say That You:
  - “Have Nothing!”
  - But As A Christian:
    - And As A Faithful Servant Of God - You Know The Truth!”
  - “I Have Everything!”
  - Everything I Need Now!
    - And Everything God Has In The Future!
- Though Paul & Really Every Christian:
  - Is So Often Held In Contempt:
    - By The World - And “Esteemed Lightly!”
    - Yet - The Conviction Of Your Heart:
      - And The Comfort That It Brings:
        - Is Far Greater!

**Conclusion:**

1. Because Our Greatest Goal As A Christian:
  - Is To Serve & To Please:
    - The One Who Has Given Us His Amazing & Abundant Grace!
  - Is This Your Concern:
    - Today As A Servant Of God?
      - Do You Display:
        - The Character & The Conduct:
          - Of A Servant Of God?
  - Because When You Do:
    - No Matter What Criticism Or Contempt You Might Experience In This World:
      - You Can Experience The Great Comfort:
        - That Comes From The Knowledge:
          - That You Are Accepted & Approved By God!
            - All Through Jesus & All Because Of His Grace!

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