

Youth Teaching Resources

June 24, 2018



Season After Pentecost: The Perils of Pauline ... Thinking (May 27-July 8)

2 Corinthians 4:5-12 (RCL 4:5-12) – “Treasure Sharing”

2 Corinthians 4:13-5:5 (RCL 4:13-5:1) – “We Don’t Lose Heart”

2 Corinthians 5:6-17 (RCL 5:6-10 [11-13], 14-17) – “By Faith, Not Sight”

2 Corinthians 6:1-13 – “Living Oxymorons”

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Living Oxymorons

2 Corinthians 6:1-13

YOUTH Teaching Guide

by Jeremy Colliver

This youth teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Baptists Today*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Baptists Today* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Baptists Today* so they can prepare before the lesson.

PARENT PREP

Our students are a swarm of emotions. Sometimes, these emotions seem to change as often as they blink. A sentence can start with one emotion and the sentence can end in another emotion. You just stand there and shake your head, trying to figure out not only what to say, but what they even said. At times like this, the best thing to do is to just be present. You don't have to have all the answers, because they might even know what the question is. But they have come to you, they might even know why, but they have come to you, so be there for them.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Fellowship

Begin your session by showing the clip “Disgust & Anger” from *Inside Out*. If you are unable to show the clip, summarize it to the best of your ability, and then facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What emotions were present here?
- 2) What triggered the emotions?
- 3) Were these the same emotions you would have had in this scenario? How do our emotions change?
- 4) Do we really just have one emotion at a time?
- 5) How do our emotion affect how we live out our faith?

Information

Transition to the next section of the session by reading 2 Corinthians 6:1-13. Allow the students to ask any initial questions they have about the text. As you answer their questions, you may want to provide some of the information found in Tony's commentary to answer their questions. When the students have had an opportunity to share their initial thoughts, continue the discussion by facilitating a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) What conflict was the church at Corinth having? What troubles does Paul address in this passage?
- 2) Why does Paul want the people of Corinth to accept the true teachings of God?

Information *continued*

- 3) Why was Paul so adamant about the people understanding the will of God?
- 4) Why does Paul feel as if he has to defend himself in this passage from the people of Corinth? Or is Paul just boasting about himself?
- 5) What do you make of the list of paradoxes in this passage? Why would he use this tool to address the church at Corinth?

If your group would like to dig deeper in their discussion, share some of the insights that Tony provides in the “Digging Deeper” portion of his commentary. You may want to use some questions like the following to facilitate your discussion:

- 1) Why does Paul list all of his hardships?
- 2) Why does Paul list all his spiritual gifts?
- 3) What does Paul mean by spiritual children?

You may also want your group to discuss “The Hardest Question” if they would like to continue their discussion on this passage. Tony poses the following question to consider as “The Hardest Question”: What does Paul mean when warning the Corinthians not to receive God’s grace in vain?

Transformation

Conclude your session by distributing paper yellow, purple, red, green, and blue markers or crayons to each person. When all items have been distributed, instruct the group to listen to the scripture passage again, but this time, as the passage is read, use the appropriate color to reflect what you are feeling as the different situations are read. Read the passage through several times and allow the students to respond. After reading through the passage several times, facilitate a discussion using questions like the following:

- 1) How was hearing this passage, and relating it to yourself, different than the first time that you heard the passage?
- 2) What emotions did you put with each scenario? Did you have multiple emotions for different scenarios?
- 3) How might your emotions change according to each scenario?
- 4) How do emotions influence your faith? Or, does faith influence your emotions?
- 5) As a person of faith, should your emotions be level? Explain.

Close with a prayer thanking God for the emotions we have and how these emotions can cause us to affect change so that the Kingdom of God may be more present here on Earth.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartlege

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Translating v. 1—As noted in the lesson, v. 1 is subject to different interpretations regarding who Paul considers to be “working together.”

Some translations assume that Paul includes the Corinthians and add the word “we”: the NRSV has “As we work together,” and NET has “Now because we are fellow workers” The NRSV also adds the words “with him” (not in the text) to indicate that believers work together with God. The NIV 11 takes a different approach, adding the word “God” to its rendering but apparently leaving the Corinthians out: “As God’s co-workers, we urge you”

Hardship—Paul’s catalogue of suffering and hardship in 6:3-10 is the longest, but not the only one in 2 Corinthians.

In 4:8-10, he wrote: “We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.”

And, 11:23-28 he further highlighted his suffering, as if he were in competition with others: “Are they ministers of Christ? I am talking like a madman—I am a better one: with far greater labors, far more imprisonments, with countless floggings, and often near death. Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and a day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and naked. And, besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the churches.”

Spiritual gifts in action—Consider Paul’s description of his behavior in vv. 6-7a, a list that sounds like other catalogues of spiritual gifts Gal. 5:22-23 and elsewhere: “by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God”

Could any of us claim to have demonstrated such virtues consistently, especially in the face of severe trials? Have we remained pure despite temptation and responded rationally rather than emotionally while showing patience and kindness to everyone we meet? Have we maintained a spirit of holiness and showed sincere love through honest speech, trusting in God for help?

Digging Deeper *continued*

Have we even come close? Would we like to?

Children—In 1 Corinthians, Paul had spoken of the Corinthians as his spiritual children, urging them to imitate him: “I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me” (1 Cor. 4:14-15).

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartlege

The Hardest Question is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

What does Paul mean when warning the Corinthians not to receive God's grace in vain?

In v. 1, Paul appeals to the Corinthians that they receive him as one who is Christ's fellow-worker, that they not "accept the grace of God in vain." What does he mean by that?

In the Word Biblical Commentary, Ralph Martin reviews several possible ways to look at it.

One option is to imagine that Paul is thinking of someone, like the rocky soil in Jesus' parable of the seed and the soils (Mark 4:1-9, 13-20; Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23; Lu. 8:4-8, 11-15). There the idea is that some people receive the gospel and spring up quickly, but when difficulties arise, they fall away. In this case, one might say they had accepted God's grace "in vain." Martin judges that this is unlikely, largely because the verb for "to receive" is in the aorist tense, indicating conversion at an earlier time.

Another option is that Paul imagined people who had accepted the gospel, but later turned away and lost their salvation. This doesn't seem to jive with other places where Paul seems confident that when God begins a good work in someone, God will carry it through.

Yet a third option sees the statement as being addressed to people in general, rather than to the Corinthian believers in particular. In this case, it's an appeal to everyone not to reject salvation. The problem, again, is that the verb for "have accepted" or "have received" implies that they have already received salvation.

What seems most likely, Martin concludes, is that since Paul quickly moved to the subject of judgment in v. 10, he was concerned that there was little evidence of salvation in the Corinthians' lives. In other words, they had been saved, but didn't act or live like it, so their faith could be thought of as "in vain." Paul had reached a gospel of reconciliation, which he considered to be the true gospel of Christ. When they refused to be reconciled to him, he saw this as a denial of the very gospel they had received. In this case, they would have received salvation in vain, for it made no difference in their daily living. As Martin put it, "Having learned that Jesus died for them, they had not yet died to themselves. And this failure to die was partially exhibited in their failure to have stood by Paul." (Adapted from Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, vol. 40 of Word Biblical Commentary [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986], 165-166].)

How do you think this phrase should be interpreted? More importantly, if Paul had been writing to you and your church, could he have charged you with accepting the gospel in vain?