

The “Yes and No” Principle

Pastor Ken Sistrunk

II Corinthians 1:12-24 ¹²And this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in relation to you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God—not in worldly wisdom, but in the grace of God. ¹³For we do not write you anything that is beyond your ability to read and understand. And I hope that you will understand us completely, ¹⁴as you have already understood us in part, so that you may boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of our Lord Jesus. ¹⁵Confident of this, I planned to visit you first, so that you might receive a double blessing. ¹⁶I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to return to you from Macedonia, and then to have you help me on my way to Judea. ¹⁷When I planned this, did I do it carelessly? Or do I make my plans by human standards, so as to say “Yes, yes” when I really mean “No, no”? ¹⁸But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not “Yes” and “No.” ¹⁹For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was proclaimed among you by me and Silvanus and Timothy, was not “Yes” and “No,” but in Him it has always been “Yes.” ²⁰For all the promises of God are “Yes” in Christ. And so through Him, our “Amen” is spoken to the glory of God. ²¹Now it is God who establishes both us and you in Christ. He anointed us, ²²placed His seal on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a pledge of what is to come. ²³I call God as my witness that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. ²⁴Not that we lord it over your faith, but we are fellow workers with you for your joy, because it is by faith that you stand firm. (BSB)

I. Here are the details of this passage.

- A.** Paul boasts that he has done **everything** that he can to practice what he preaches. V. 12a
- B.** He **contrasts** between worldly wisdom and the grace of God. V. 12b
- C.** Paul did not speak above their heads but tried to **explain** the word of God in a way that was understandable. V. 13-14
- D.** He had planned on two visits to Corinth but the first one was painful for him and the church. He did not want his change of mind to be interpreted as going back on his word but a course of wisdom for their **mutual** benefit. V. 17
- E.** This change in his plans does not **nullify** his love for them nor does it **invalidate** God’s word that was spoken to them. V. 18-19
- F.** We can trust in God’s **promises**. He will never change his mind. When others let us down, we should never allow this to cast doubt on God’s faithfulness! V. 20
- G.** The presence of the **Holy Spirit** is a guarantee that we are truly saved. V. 21-22
- H.** Paul restates that it was in the best **interest** of both them and him that he moves on from there. They had everything that they needed to thrive. V. 23-24

II. How can we apply these truths to our lives?

- A.** We must be **consistent** in our words and in our deeds.
- B.** We must **replace** keeping a tally of sins with a practice of showing grace. This does not mean caving into sin but to view others with the same grace that we receive from God.

- C. We must communicate **clearly** why we do what we do. Lack of communication is still not a license to “go beyond what is written”.
- D. We can never **benefit** from God’s promises if we do not know what they are.
- E. We should be **concerned** if we have no idea of who the Holy Spirit is or if we have never heard from Him.
- F. There are times when we give others **distance** from us for our benefit and for theirs. Constant fighting over the same issues benefits no one.