

Godly Sorrow vs Worldly Sorrow

Pastor Ken Sistrunk

2 Corinthians 7:1-16 ¹Therefore, beloved, since we have these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that defiles body and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. ²Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. ³I do not say this to condemn you. I have said before that you so occupy our hearts that we live and die together with you. ⁴Great is my confidence in you; great is my pride in you; I am filled with encouragement; in all our troubles my joy overflows. ⁵For when we arrived in Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were pressed from every direction—conflicts on the outside, fears within. ⁶But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the arrival of Titus, ⁷and not only by his arrival, but also by the comfort he had received from you. He told us about your longing, your mourning, and your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced all the more. ⁸Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Although I did regret it, I now see that my letter caused you sorrow, but only for a short time. ⁹And now I rejoice, not because you were made sorrowful, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you felt the sorrow that God had intended, and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹Consider what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what vindication! In every way you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹²So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did wrong or the one who was harmed, but rather that your earnestness on our behalf would be made clear to you in the sight of God. ¹³On account of this, we are encouraged. In addition to our own encouragement, we were even more delighted by the joy of Titus. For his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. ¹⁴Indeed, I was not embarrassed by anything I had boasted to him about you. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting to Titus has proved to be true as well. ¹⁵And his affection for you is even greater when he remembers that you were all obedient as you welcomed him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶I rejoice that I can have complete confidence in you. (BSB)

I. Here are the details of this passage.

- A.** The promises that are referred to here are the promises of God's **living** presence with us and that we will be **adopted** into His family. 2 Corinthians 6:16-18
- B.** Our response to these promises is to desire **maturity** in our walk with God. V. 1
- C.** Another response is to the other **members** of our spiritual family, especially those who look after us spiritually. V. 2-4
- D.** Paul honestly opens up about the **struggles** that he was going through and how Titus was able to minister to him. V. 5-7
- E.** Paul notes the **difference** between earthly sorrow and godly sorrow. Earthly sorrow makes one sad that they paid a price for their actions. Godly sorrow is being sorrowful that your actions hurt others, especially God. V. 8-12

F. Paul is confirming that the Corinthian church responded to his first letter by expressing godly sorrow to Titus. This sorrow led to **repentance** and brought **joy** to Titus and Paul. V. 13-16

II. How can we apply these truths?

A. It is important to do an **inventory** of what we believe. Generic Christianity stresses obedience to Scripture to remain in God's favor. Real Christianity is a father-child relationship with God.

B. We must **grow up** in our faith. This includes putting sinful attitudes, habits, and actions behind us.

C. Our spiritual **family** has got to be a priority in our life.

D. We must **cultivate** godly sorrow in our life.

*We must acknowledge the damage that our actions have caused to **others**.

*We must acknowledge the pain that we have caused to **God**.

*Repentance and restoration of trust is the sign of **genuine** sorrow for our actions.