

**Men's Sunday Night**  
**The Book of 2 Corinthians**  
**"Finding Strength in Weakness"**  
**Lesson 5 – 2 Corinthians 5:11-21**  
**"Motive for Ministry"**

What we believe and how we behave must always go together. Paul usually connected duty and doctrine, because what God has done for us must motivate us to do something for God. Paul has moved from explanation to application, and his theme is motivation for ministry. His enemies had accused him of using the ministry of the Gospel for his own selfish purposes, when in reality they were the ones who were "merchandising" the Gospel. What is the ministry of the Christian? To persuade sinners to be reconciled to God. We must never force people to trust Christ, or force them by some deceitful approach. Our message needs to be true, our motives pure, and our conduct absolutely genuine. The Christian worker must have the right motive for ministry as well as the right message. In this section, Paul stated three acceptable motives for ministry:

**His Concern to Please Christ (5:11-13)**

The Greek word for "appear" in v.10 means more than "stand" or "show up." It carries the idea of being revealed; "for we shall all be shown as we are" is the meaning. There will be no pretending at that judgment; our character and works will be revealed as they are, and the appropriate rewards will be given. But the true servant of God is careful even today to have an open life, evident to both God and men.

**His Constraint of Love (5:14-17)**

Paul had been accused of being mad (Acts 26:24) since he went to such extremes to win men to Christ. But the controlling power of his life was the love of Christ. This does not mean Paul's love for Christ, although certainly that was there. It means rather the love Christ had for Paul. The apostle was so overwhelmed by Jesus' love for him, that to serve and honor Christ became the controlling motive of his life.

**His Commission from God (5:18-21)**

We have seen three motives that controlled Paul's life and ministry: his confidence of heaven, his concern to please Christ, and his constraint of love. There was a fourth motive: Paul's commission from God. Paul was an

ambassador for Christ. His message was one of peace. God had paid the price for sin; God was not at war with sinners; sinners could now believe and be saved. What a tremendous message!

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-15. Pray and answer the following questions:**

The description of the ministry sustained by Paul touched on the work of Christ, the work of the Spirit, and the work of the Father. He also spoke of the eternal viewpoint required for the ministry to be carried out effectively. He now turned to the heart of that ministry, the message.

1. How do Christians sometimes take pride in ministries that give them attention and popularity?
2. What does Paul want them to know about Christ's death and how this ought to affect their lives?
3. Why was Paul concerned about justifying his ministry to the Christians at Corinth?
4. What motivated Paul in his ministry?

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-20. Pray and answer the following questions:**

In this section Paul defends himself by showing his face and declaring himself defended in the gospel but defenseless in himself. He now invites us

to look into his heart and see how utterly convinced he is about the gospel's message of reconciliation.

5. In describing his message, here in verses 18-20, Paul uses the words reconciliation and reconciled five times. What has Christ done to make reconciliation possible?

6. What does it mean to be reconciled to God?

7. Remember a time and the way you felt when you were reconciled to someone you had wronged, misunderstood or ignored. How does that help you appreciate God taking the initiative to reconcile us to himself?

8. Review verse 17. When you became a new creation in Christ, what old things disappeared from your life and what new things arrived?

**Read 2 Corinthians 5:20-21. Pray and answer the following questions:**

9. Ambassadors, as representatives of their country carry important messages, often to bring reconciliation. In what sense are all Christians to be Christ's ambassadors?

10. How does being Christ's ambassador affect your attitudes and actions as well as your message?

11. What does verse 21 add to your understanding of what God has done in Christ “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us*”?

12. From this chapter, what would you say Paul understands his mission and message to be?

### **Here’s a great word from Jon Courson**

*“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” 2 Cor. 5:21*

As Jesus hung on the cross, a spear was thrust into Him, drawing forth water and blood, and opening His side so that we might, positionally, enter in. Jesus opened the way for us through the rending of His own flesh. That is why we can tell anyone and everyone that they, too, can be tucked away in Christ; that when God looks at them, He will see only the righteousness of His Son; that they can have a fresh start as a new creation. What a fabulous truth! May the fear of the Lord motivate us. May the love of Christ constrain us. May the joy of service thrill us. May we, like Paul, say, “No matter what problems we face or what challenges come our way, it’s an unbelievable privilege to be an ambassador of the King.”

### **Journaling**

**Compare your notes and daily Scripture references. Take some time to pray and meditate on what God showed you in a practical way this week and how you can apply it to your Christian walk. Write your insights down for review and group discussion.**

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