

**2 Corinthians**  
**Verses 6:3-7:1**  
**Our Holy Ministry**  
**August 14, 2011**

**I. When is it accepted for the Christian to join a large-scale public protest? What is the Christian's role in the world? How does a Christian drive change in the world?**

**II. No Stumbling Blocks**

**2 Cor 6:3**

**3 We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.**

Is it acceptable for a minister of the Lord to have a greater responsibility than that ministry? Is it possible for a reconciled Christian to have responsibilities outside of the ministry to the Lord?

Not breaking the law should also be included within the general sense of the verses. Acts 4 and 5, with Romans 13:1, provide directions to the Christian concerning keeping the law.

**III. Paul's Consistent Behavior as a Servant of God**

Through Acts and his epistles, we have seen Paul in many trying situations. While he has not been perfect (e.g. Acts 23:3), he has been consistent in his approach. When all is going well, we may act well. For each of us, the true test comes when trials come. How do we act in hardship?

**2 Cor 6:4-10**

**4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses;**

**5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger;**

**6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love;**

**7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;**

**8 through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors;**

**9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed;**

**10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.**

The above setting requires contentment.

**Phil 4:11-13**

**11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.**

**12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.**

**13 I can do everything through him who gives me strength.**

#### **IV. Mutually Enlarged Hearts**

Throughout the book of 2 Corinthians, Paul implies that the Corinthians have been very harsh in their judgments of him. Below, we see that him making a personal appeal to them, calling them Corinthians for the only time in the two letters written to them. He also refers to them as “my children.”

##### **2 Cor 6:11-13**

**11 We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you.**

**12 We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us.**

**13 As a fair exchange-- I speak as to my children-- open wide your hearts also.**

“Open wide our heart” is literally “Our heart is widened,” an interesting idiom.

#### **V. Do Not Be Yoke Together...**

##### **2 Cor 6:14-16**

**14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?**

**15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?**

**16a What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God.**

At best, this is a tough teaching for the Corinthians and for us as we are all affected by the world around us. Paul gives a command, and then asks five questions to highlight the reason for it.

Interpretations include:

-“Yoke together” refers to the Septuagint version of Lev. 19:19 which forbids mating different kinds of cows (“not breed together” from Lev. is a form of “unequally yoked” in the Septuagint). So, some interpret this passage as referring only to marriage.

-Some prefer to broaden it to mean any relationship with unbelievers.

However, if absolutely all relationships are included, that would contradict what Paul has already written to the Corinthians:

**1 Cor 5:9-10**

**9 I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people--  
10 not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world.**

**NIV**

Clearly, at a minimum, 2 Cor. 6:14-16 must refer to marriage. It probably also refers to other very strong commitments with unbelievers. As stated, it is not possible to separate exactly an acceptable relation with one that is unacceptable. However, it is certainly possible to determine some that are unacceptable, such as marriage. Any others?

Paul speaks of the Corinthians widening their hearts to him, while also telling them to be apart from the world. Do you see any relationship between the two points?

## **VI. Perfection of Holiness**

**2 Cor 6:16-7:1**

**16a For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."**

**17 "Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."**

**18 "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."**

**7:1 Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.**

6:16a quotes Lev. 26:11-12. Verse 17 quotes Ex. 20:34, and then Isa. 52:11. Verse 18 quotes 2 Sam. 7:14, perhaps also alluding to Deut. 32:18-19.

Holiness requires separation. Yet, in this life, it is not God's will for us to leave the world fully. For example, in additional to the above passage:

**John 17:15-18**

**15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.**

**NIV**

Even though, we are not "out of the world," we are not to be "of the world." There are reasons why Jesus has sent us out into the world. Are you fulfilling these reasons?

**VII. How do you respond to sorrow? What does it drive you to do? Where is your confidence when you are sorrowful?**