

## Worksheet #5: 2 Corinthians 5:1–6:2

### Introduction:

Paul's focus in 5:1–10 builds directly on his remarks about life after death at the end of chapter four. Since we know that believers in Christ will enjoy eternal life after death (5:1), believers go through daily existence "groaning" from desire for their heavenly home (5:2–4). This expectation is certain, because we have the Spirit "as a guarantee" (5:5). Paul builds on this certainty with a note of confidence in 5:6–8. Since he is so confident that after death he will be "present with the Lord" (5:8), he makes it his purpose to do things that would please the Lord, motivated by the coming judgment (5:9–10).

In 5:11–6:2, Paul returns again to a defense of his ministry, but only indirectly as he defers final judgment to the authoritative evaluation of God. He explains that it is because of his overriding desire to be "well pleasing" (5:9) to God at the judgment that he carries on in his ministry of "persuad[ing] men" (5:11). Because Christ died for all, life that is united with Christ should be carried out in service to others (5:14–15). Life in Christ transforms everything for Paul, so that he now evaluates both Christ and other people through a different lens than he had before (5:16–17). Not only that, but Paul has been reconciled to God through Christ and given a ministry of reconciliation that drives him to proclaim the gospel message throughout the world (5:18–19) as an ambassador (5:20). In fulfillment of this ministry of reconciliation, Paul calls the Corinthians to be reconciled to God so they will not "receive the grace of God in vain" (6:1).

### Abbreviated Outline<sup>1</sup> (current passage in bold):

- I. Introduction (1:1–11)
- II. Paul's Relationship with the Corinthians (1:12–2:11)
- III. **Paul's Defense of his Ministry (2:12–7:16)**
  - A. Paul's Ministry in Troas and Macedonia (2:12–17)
  - B. Paul's Letters of Recommendation (3:1–3)
  - C. Paul's Competence (3:4–6)
  - D. Ministry of the New Covenant (3:7–18)
  - E. The Unveiled Truth (4:1–6)
  - F. Treasure in Clay Jars (4:7–18)
  - G. The Coming Resurrection (5:1–10)**
  - H. The Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11–6:2)**
  - I. Catalog of Paul's Sufferings (6:3–13)
  - J. Call to Separate from Paul's Opponents (6:14–7:1)
  - K. Paul's Final Defense (7:2–16)
- IV. The Collection for the Believers in Jerusalem (8:1–9:15)
- V. Paul's Renewed Defense of his Apostleship (10:1–13:4)
- VI. Final Exhortations (13:5–12)
- VII. Closing (13:13)

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 484.

**Interpretation:** *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. What is Paul describing as “a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (5:1)? Consider the context of 5:1–4 in your response.  

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2. How does the Spirit serve as a “guarantee” (5:5), and what is it that he guarantees for us? What does Eph. 1:14 contribute to your understanding of this text?  

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3. Why is it necessary for Paul to point out both the assurance granted through the Spirit (5:8) and the warning implied by the future judgment (5:10)?  

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4. Based on Paul’s language in 5:11, do you think he was dismayed by the complaints of his critics?  

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5. Why is it important for Paul to avoid commending himself (5:12)? How does he undercut his critics by inviting them to boast on his behalf (5:12)?  

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6. Reflect on this phrase from 5:14–15: “that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.” Explain how each part of this passage relates to the others.  

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7. In 5:17, Paul describes an event which we call “regeneration,” the transformation of those in Christ into a “new creature.” What are the “old” things that pass away and the things that become “new” as a result of regeneration?  

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8. Why does Paul implore the Corinthians to be reconciled to *God* rather than to himself (5:20)?  

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**Application:** *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?  

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10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?  

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