

NT Week 7: Home Is Where the Heart Is

Redemption- 2 Corinthians 6

Bible: 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 NLT

14 Don't team up with those who are unbelievers. How can righteousness be a partner with wickedness? How can light live with darkness? 15 What harmony can there be between Christ and the devil? How can a believer be a partner with an unbeliever? 16 And what union can there be between God's temple and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God said: "I will live in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 17 Therefore, come out from among unbelievers, and separate yourselves from them, says the LORD. Don't touch their filthy things, and I will welcome you. 18 And I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty."

Series Recap and Intro:

For the past several weeks, we've studied the Bible in four parts, Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration in the Old Testament, and Creation and Fall in the New Testament. We are asking: What is God's story and where do we fit into it? Today we will dive into the book 2 Corinthians, chapter 6.

Transition/Intro:

Who was your childhood best friend? How did your experience with him or her shape the person you became? [Leader note: Consider letting students share briefly and then briefly share one of your own stories.] For me, one of my childhood friends lived several houses down the block from me. We were a year apart from each other, and we enjoyed playing together when we were younger. But as we grew older and past our high school years, our lives took a different turn when she became pregnant. Back then it was taboo to have a child out of wedlock. She also got involved in other things that I was not interested in and we eventually grew apart.

Many of us are familiar with the truth, "You are who you hang out with." Who we spend our time with shapes how we see ourselves and the world around us. Even as we grow older and more independent, friendships from as far back as grade school can have a significant impact on our tastes, likes, and perceptions. We can have a type of relationship with a person or group without ever knowing them personally. This could be a celebrity, a news organization, or any number of people we may follow on social media.

Our **Big Idea** today is: **God dwells within us and He calls us holy.**

Bible Passages

Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-15.

(1.) God's presence is in the light.

Paul calls for Christians to be mindful of the company that they keep. The Corinthians' actions toward Paul reveal that they may have allowed destructive people to shape how they viewed themselves and how they viewed Paul's ministry to them. **Paul talks about how Christians relate to others in light of their new life with Jesus.** It's easier to avoid ideas than people. We can mostly be selective with the type of content we are exposed to, but it may be more difficult to be as selective with the people in our lives. Most of us have deep, impactful relationships with family members, friends, or coworkers who do not know and love Jesus.

Illustration: Paul describes a particular relationship between people with the image of a team. Being teamed up together with someone means that you are "intimately connected (and) working together." Christians are called to let other Christians be the most formative people in their lives. Paul's other image to describe our relationship with non-Christians is that of light having no fellowship with darkness in verse 14. In the same way that light and darkness are opposites, Christians and non-Christians have opposite views of the world.

(Leader Note: Share your own example of a relationship with an unbeliever. I have family and friends who are unbelievers. Or perhaps share an example of working as a team, whether that is from sports, work, or the game you play in youth group today)

Application: What drawbacks come from being intimately associated with people who are not following Jesus? What circumstances compel us to completely disassociate from non-Christians? Does living out Paul's command to "not team up with those who are unbelievers" mean we detach from all these relationships? *(Leaders you can share your own example. My colleagues are not believers and one in particular uses curse words a lot. I see them everyday I am at work and still need to maintain civil/professional conversations with them, although at times it is difficult.)*

Read 2 Corinthians 6:16

(2.) We are God's temple, He lives in us.

Paul's other image of the relationship between the people of God and those opposed to God: the temple and idols. The Corinthians were acting like they wanted it "both ways," to worship God while also worshipping idols (distractions). The Corinthians wanted to

remain committed to their sin but also live in righteousness with other believers. The two can't mix.

Illustration: Self-deception often plays a role in our having it both ways in our lives. If we aren't aware of where we tend to stray, we will struggle to align that area of life with the values of Jesus. We need help from others. What specific practices tempt you to "have it both ways" in your life? Where have you seen progress in rejecting sin and embracing holiness over the past year?

(Leader note: Share your own example. I know for me, I want to exercise, but I like to be lazy. I know that I can not mix those two lifestyles.)

Application: Who could you ask to help illuminate blind spots in your spiritual life? What would it look like to make accountability a regular habit?

(Leader note: You can share your own example. I see my therapist twice a month and she has been helpful for me to recognize the unhealthy patterns that I bring up about myself.)

Read 2 Corinthians 6:17-18

(3.) A holy God calls us to be a holy people.

Even though we are called to be set apart from things that are opposed to Jesus, we still must engage people who need God's gift of salvation. While we shouldn't allow non-Christians to be the formative influence on how we view ourselves and our world, that doesn't exclude us from having meaningful relationships with them for the sake of the gospel.

Illustration: Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, the Holy Spirit allows God to make his home in our hearts. In response, we are to live set apart lives in the midst of the world we live in. We can respond to God's gift of salvation by supporting others as they face hardships and partnering with faithful Christians in holy living. As the body of Christ, we all make up Christ's church and should glorify God by relying on his Spirit that lives in all of us. We must feel empowered by God's presence in our lives to create holy, meaningful relationships.

(Leaders you can share your own example. For me, I love my life groups, both women's and youth. I am always encouraged by someone or something that someone says. It helps me to continue to actively seek the Lord.)

Application: Identify one significant relationship you have with someone who doesn't trust Jesus with their life. What is one step you can take to show them who Jesus is?

(Leaders you can share your own example. For me my sister is someone who is not a believer in Jesus. I love my sister so much, but there are times that I disagree with things that she does that contradict the word of God. I know she

does not know, and I have been able to share my beliefs. She has listened, but has not acknowledged Jesus in her life.)

While Christians are called to embody God's saving work in the world for non-Christians, their most formative relationships must be with other Christians. As we strive to bring our holiness to completion, we need brothers and sisters to partner with us and move toward Jesus. As you evaluate the formative relationships in your life, identify who you can cultivate impactful relationships with fellow believers. Paul was able to meet that need for the Corinthian church, and their spiritual life was better for it.

BIG IDEA: God dwells within us and He calls us holy.

[Leader note: you can add this section anywhere you see fit in the message and word it how you'd like.] Each week of this series, we're exploring more of the Big Picture of God's story and how he is calling us home. It's like we're putting together a big puzzle. The little pieces by themselves might not make much sense, but as you put the pieces together, the big picture starts to become clear. So each week we're going to add some pieces to our puzzle to see what God has in store for us. Here's how we left our puzzle last week. [Show first image below]. Let's add a couple pieces from week 7! [Show image two below]. We have one week left to go!

Image #6



Image #7



Questions:

Questions:

1. What stood out to you from the message and why?
2. In what ways have you been negatively affected by being close to those who are not following Jesus? Looking back, did they need to suffer in that way? Why, or why not?
3. What are ways that we can show what Jesus is like to people without pushing them away? What is your experience talking with people close to you about the gospel who need to hear it?
4. If we have relationships with people who act in unChristlike ways, what about those relationships might need to change?
5. If your most formative relationships are already with other Christians, what can you do to strengthen those relationships?