



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

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JUMP START #241

2 Cor. 7:10- “For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

In this section of Corinthians, Paul brings up the subject of sorrow and repentance. The word “sorrow” (or sorrowful) is found seven times in three verses. (8-10) The subject of sorrow doesn’t excite us. I know it doesn’t me. If you were to ask me, “What makes you sad?” UGH! Now, ask me what I’m passionate aboutwhat thrills me, and I can talk your legs off. We try t hide our sorrows. We want to bounce back from sorrow as fast as we can. Many deny they were sad, when asked. Not Paul. He wants to talk about it and he does.

Paul has a specific sorrow in mind. In fact, he realizes that he caused the church to sorrow. He said in verse 8, “For though I caused you sorrow by my letter...” He is referring to **1 Corinthians** and specifically, his rebuking the church for not practicing discipline upon a wayward brother. But that sorrow led the church to change. It eventually led the sinful Christian to repent of his sins. Sorrow can do that.

Paul is careful to qualify what he means. Sorrow that is according to the will of God leads to changes, or repentance. Sorrow itself, may not do that. Sorrow without the word of God can lead to drinking, drugs and even suicide. Case in point is Judas. He was sorry. He returned the money he was given for betraying Jesus. His sorrow was not founded nor supported by the word of God. It ate him up. Guilt, shame and sorrow led him to desperation and then to death. Those same steps followed by some today. This kind of sorrow can bring changes, but they don’t last. These changes are not based upon God and are not true. A guy in jail may have stopped using drugs. But he hasn’t really changed. He just can’t get to his supply. A person may be sorry that he got caught and got in trouble. But if they weren’t caught, they wouldn’t be sorry. Some have stopped bad behavior because a mate or parent threatened to leave or kick them out if they continued. So they stopped, not because of God, but for fear of having to sleep in the street.

The sorrow Paul has in mind is based upon the will of God. The person is sorry because he has disappointed God. It matters not if anyone else found out about it, God knows. He doesn’t stop because he got caught, he quits before he gets caught because it is not right with God. This sorrow brings lasting changes. It is the truest form of repentance. It is a change without regret.

I like the expression Paul uses, “without regret.” You live long enough, there are plenty of regrets. But one you don’t have is repenting and turning to God. Living without regret. Not viewing the old sinful days as the glory days---no, you changed and you are glad you changed. No bragging about the sinful

days of college. Those were wrong. You changed, and boy, you are so glad that you did. You wouldn't do those things again in a million years. God reigns in your heart and you love the Lord too much to view those sinful actions as fun. They weren't. It's by the grace of God that you didn't die that way.

It seems that this spirit is missing some these days. Folks are glad to be a Christian but they seem to be missing that godly sorrow. Wrong isn't really all that wrong to some. Well, it is to God, and always has been. According to the will of God is just how we ought to be living our lives. It's more than going to church, it's having God's will become my will. God's way becomes my way. Not only does a person love God, but they learn to love what God loves, and hate what God hates. They become filled with God and his ways. Looking back over one's life, the regrets you have is that you didn't come to Christ sooner.

A good dose of godly sorrow can do us much good.

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