

“RELATIONAL ISSUES”

(2Corinthians 12:11-21)

August 27, 2017

Some people wonder if there is ANYTHING that all humans have in common. First, we are all under the condemnation of sin and need a SAVIOR. Thankfully, God has provided an answer in his Son, Jesus Christ. Another thing that ALL human beings have in common: relational issues!

Near the end of Paul's second preserved letter to the Corinthian church, we find him working on his relational issues with them:

I. His REMINDER to them

Paul reminds the church in Corinth that while he was with them, God gave him the power to perform signs, wonders and miracles – all proofs that his ministry among them was not only defensible, but was empowered by GOD himself.

II. His RELATIONSHIP to them

Paul speaks to them in a FATHERLY manner. He is not interested in their possessions, but in their PERSONS.

Paul appeals to God as his WITNESS. He acknowledges that all he has done, said and written, has been in God's SIGHT. Sometimes, we forget that the same is true of US.

Paul is planning a third trip to see them, but he has some concerns and reservations as he discusses honestly:

III. His REGRETS about them

When a pastor offers counsel the biggest heartache is when the recipients of that advice don't take it or accept it or act upon it. That is Paul's fear here and he lists:

Eight vices that Paul hoped to NOT find:

1) QUARRELING from the Greek Eris, the goddess of discord.

It is amazingly sad how many people, even Christians, seem to THRIVE on quarreling with others.

But avoid foolish controversies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless.

Titus 3:9

2) JEALOUSLY -meaning being zealous for one's OWN desires or opinion.

One of the most unfortunate examples in the church today is the attitude of so many about MUSIC.

Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?

Proverbs 27:4

3) Outbursts of ANGER - it is a relationship killer.

Words can and do _____, so outbursts of anger can **PERMANENTLY** damage relationships. Part of healthy Christian growth is learning to **CONTROL** anger.
Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret – it leads only to evil. Psalm 37:8

4) FACTIONS - The only “side” we should be concerned about is the side of JESUS.

How can we best SERVE him and SHARE him with our neighbors, our friends, our world? No other factions should exist in his church!

*I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you may agree with one another so that there may be **no divisions among you** and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought. 1Corinthians 1:10*

5) SLANDER another word for backbiting.

In the legal world, people can be sued for this. It casts doubt about their character or actions, without giving THEM the opportunity to confront their accusers with the truth. When you hear a person being slandered, you need to stop the speaker and direct them to the person they are talking about. Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind. 1Peter 2:1

6) GOSSIP Every gossip is serving SATAN’S agenda. Every gossip is sin.

If you hear gossip, it is YOUR responsibility to stop the speaker and direct them to the person they are talking about. God HATES gossip!

A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends. Proverbs 16:28

7) ARROGANCE being swelled up or puffed up about one's self – importance.

Pride was the ORIGINAL sin, which got Satan kicked out of heaven.

The arrogance of man will be brought low and the pride of men humbled; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day... Isaiah 2:17

8) DISORDER – sometimes translated “tumults.”

In Greek, it usually had to do with political disturbances. How much worse in his eyes are those who create tumults or disorder in the CHURCH? Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned. Titus 3:10-11

Paul knew the DANGER of a divisive person in the church, and he strongly advised against putting up with it.

I call upon you today, to EXAMINE yourselves, your attitudes, your words, your activities. Are they a CURSE or a BLESSING? Are they helpful or damaging?

Are they GODhonorng or SELF indulgent?

Let us deal with our relational issues in godly ways, always seeking his will ABOVE our own.