

## BEING COMMENDED BY THE LORD (2 CORINTHIANS 10)

In **1 Corinthians 13**, in what we call "The Love Chapter", the Apostle Paul makes the point that without love our works amount to nothing, and in **verses 4-7** he says, "Love suffers long [ESV: "is patient"] and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself [ESV: "boast"], is not puffed up [ESV: "arrogant"]; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own [I like the ESV of that, it says, "It does not insist on its own way"], is **NOT PROVOKED** [we shall see, as we go along in this message how the "being provoked" is contrary to being commended (approved) by God], thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but **rejoices in the truth** [we too, like the Apostle Peter, are rejoicing in the truth, as he said to Jesus that "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (**Matthew 16:16**)]; bears all things, **believes all things, hopes all things**, endures all things." We then always should have that hope and even belief that we are all going to make it and be saved. Yet in the end, Jesus will separate the sheep from the goats. (**Matthew 25:32**) Now, we find that the Apostle Paul WAS "provoked", in **Acts 17**. It says, "Now while Paul was waiting for them [Silas and Timothy (**vs. 15**) at Athens, his spirit was **provoked** within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. [Let's see how he then deals with that provocation.] So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, "What does this babblers wish to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities"—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus [ar'-ee-o -pag'-us; Mars Hill or Ares Hill, Mars being the Roman equivalent to the Greek Ares, **god of war**<sup>1</sup>], saying, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean." Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new." (**Acts 17:16-21**)

They were being, at that time, entertained with the idea that a new "philosophy" was being presented. Paul then had said, "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to **repent** [metanoeo], because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world **in righteousness** by a man whom he has appointed [Christ Jesus; therefore we want to be found IN HIM for HE IS our Righteousness!]; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead." Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this." So Paul went out from their midst. But some men joined him and **believed...**" (**Acts 17:30-34**) That righteousness can only be attained in Christ Jesus. As the Apostle Paul, in **2 Corinthians 5:21**, explains "For He [God] made Him [Christ Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for

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1 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ares>

us, that **we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**" We are believing on Christ Jesus for dying on the cross for our sins, taking our sins against God upon Himself, and then raising from the dead on the third day, conquering death, sin, and evil thus making a way for us too to overcome that "sting of death", and also overcoming sin and evil. Once we have believed on Christ Jesus and have received Him (**John 1:12-13**), the Apostle Paul tells us what comes next, "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But **if you are led by the Spirit**, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that **those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.** But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, **provoking one another**, envying one another. (**Galatians 5:16-26**)]

Now if we are provoked let it be as the Proverb states, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate." (**Proverbs 8:13**) We are then hating evil and not those who do evil. As Jesus said, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, **love your enemies** [like those who provoke/practice evil], **bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you** [hoping and believing they too will repent], **that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.** For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? **Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.**" (**Matthew 5:43-48**)

As we know and have considered in recent messages, most persons will gladly accept the notion of having blessings from God vs. curses, having life vs. death. Yet, the problem becomes for most people, the submitting to God as their Lord and then obeying Him. Now the Apostle Paul had said, in **Romans 10:9-10**, "that if you confess with your mouth the **Lord Jesus** and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one **believes unto righteousness**, and with the mouth **confession is made unto**

salvation." Therefore, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful [We remain in that hope in His Righteousness]. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:23-25) That ties in with and is not contradictory to what Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." (Matthew 7:21-27) Therefore, saying Jesus is Lord while practicing lawlessness (anomia: without law; adikia: iniquity = without justice) still makes one their own god or lord so to speak. We are expected to follow the Way of Christ as Jesus said, "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

Now when the Apostle Paul said love is not provoked, or "easily provoked" as it says in the KJV, it has undoubtedly led people to say, "ok, I've been patient long enough...", to where they then take matters into their own hands, sometimes in the name of Christ. Just look at the history of the church, you'll find all kinds of examples. That word provoke is parox-uno: para=alongside, oxyno:=swift; ie-letting someone get under your skin so to speak. We aren't embracing that, as Jesus had told His disciples, "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper [parakletos: para-beside, kletos-makes a call (the perfect lawyer); intercessor, consoler, advocate, comforter, as well as working in us the fruit of the Spirit], that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." (John 14:15-18) Right after that, Jesus says, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?" Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our

**home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me."**

(John 14:21-24) His Word/commandments are summed in what Jesus said are the Great Commandments of God, to love Him with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind and to also love our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31; Matthew 22:37-40). Therefore, right after Paul's love chapter, in 1 Corinthians 14:1, he says to "pursue love". And listen to this, in Hebrews 10, which I read earlier where we are told to not forsake the assembling together and to exhort one another, guess what? That word exhorting/encouraging is "parakalountes" which is from "parakaleo" which means "to call to one's side, to exhort, to encourage, to comfort, to urge"<sup>2</sup>, the same of what the Holy Spirit (Parakletos) does with us, as we are being brought into the unity of the faith and hope in Christ Jesus, where we will be commended by God and receive blessings from God and then life eternal in Christ Jesus!

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**[2 Corinthians 10:1-6 (The Spiritual War)]**

Now I, Paul, myself am **pleading with you** by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you. But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the **obedience of Christ**, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

[We have many, many examples in the Old Testament of how God took care of those who came against His people. Sometimes individuals, sometimes kings, and sometimes nations. God makes it quite clear to us in His Word that He is not just judging His people but ALL people and kings and nations. As **Romans 12:19** tells us, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." (**Romans 12:19**) That is how we can "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand [is near]. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will **guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**" (**Philippians 4:4-7**) We are to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." (**Proverbs 3:5-6**)

**[2 Corinthians 10:7-11 (Reality of Paul's Authority)]**

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2 <https://biblehub.com/greek/3870.htm>

Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's. For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed—lest I seem to terrify you by letters. "For his letters," they say, "are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.

[It is hard to imagine, in hindsight, that there were some people who were actually coming against the apostles at times. Yet there were those also who came against Christ Jesus. And there will also then be those who oppose us in the truth that is in Christ. They are ultimately opposing Christ Jesus then and not us, if we are truly surrendered to Christ. As Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." (**Galatians 2:20**) If we go outside of our calling in sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ (Great Commission and Great Commandments), then we may be taking on that abuse ourselves. "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might **live for righteousness**—by whose stripes you were healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls." (**1 Peter 2:21-25**)]

#### [**2 Corinthians 10:12-17 (Limits of Paul's Authority)**]

For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men's labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment. But "**he who glories, let him glory in the Lord.**" For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

[That word commends, is the Greek word "synistesin", is the combination of "syn", which we get the word "synonym", means "union, together with" and "histemi" meaning "to stand"<sup>3</sup>. So it is the one who stands WITH/IN CHRIST who is approved. It is the one who has the parakletos, who stands with us and is in us. It is not in those who take on the provocation of the evil and sins of the world. We are standing with Christ, in the Spirit, in Truth against the evil and wickedness in this world in love, hoping all things and believing all things. There is a spirit in this world that we call the spirit of Jezebel. It is the spirit of manipulation of other people. There are two phases to that. 1. with kindness, flattery, luring others into their web of evil, deceit, and lies 2. If that doesn't work, it leads to threats and intimidation and eventually violence. We are given examples of that spirit of Jezebel, who was the wicked wife of King Ahab. At first Ahab and Jezebel tolerated the prophet Elijah. But it eventually led to Jezebel putting to death the prophets, anticipating Elijah to be one of them. God turned that around on them. In **1 Kings 18**, on Mt. Carmel, Elijah had a contest between the 450 prophets of Baal to see who's god/God would be able to light their sacrifice with fire. Of course God won that and Elijah had those prophets killed (that was though in the Old Testament/Covenant). God did not allow Elijah to be martyred but eventually took him up in a chariot of fire. (**2 Kings 2:11**) In **1 Kings 21**, we have a perfect example of that spirit of Jezebel. Naboth had a vineyard next to the palace of Ahab and Jezebel. Ahab pleaded with Naboth to sell his vineyard to him yet Naboth refused as it was his inheritance. Jezebel took matters into her own hands by having a couple of scoundrels give false witness to Naboth blaspheming God and the king and he was put to death.

The Apostle Peter can close it out for us today, as he tells us, "But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in **holy conduct** and **godliness**, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which **righteousness dwells**. Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent [spoudazo: diligent, make every effort, eager] to be found by Him **in peace**, without spot and blameless; and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation." (**2 Peter 3:8-15a**)] Blessed are the peacemakers!(**Matt.5:9**)

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3 <https://biblehub.com/greek/4921.htm>