

**I. Read II Corinthians 6:1-2**

- A. In verse 1, an important and principled perspective toward doing the work of the church is expressed. In the context of chapter 5, verse 21 (recall that chapter divisions were not in the original Greek), “working together” (NAS) means working with God. The Apostle Paul understood that his work was a joint endeavor between him, his associates, and God Himself. We must not infer that Paul saw himself as being on the same level with God, for such a thought would have been abhorrent to God’s Apostle. Nevertheless, he understood that God was using him to accomplish His purposes. Read the following Scripture verses and explain how they convey the same idea.

**1 Corinthians 12:4-7: God the Holy Spirit is the giver of spiritual gifts. He gives those gifts to men, who in turn are responsible to use them to serve through and in the church.**

**Romans 12:3-5: In humility, believers are to employ the gifts and the talents God gives them to the benefit of the church. Their gifts are to be used in the most practical and useful manner, for this is God’s will toward the building up of the Body of Christ.**

**Ephesians 4:11-12: God gives very specific gifts and has established specific offices within the church to accomplish His purposes. He calls particular men to do the work of ministry and promises to equip them for the tasks to which they are called.**

**Romans 10:9-15: Though conversion involves an inner work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men, the particulars of the gospel must be communicated (typically by other men) if the inner work is to come to fruition. God uses men to share the gospel with the lost.**

- B. In the last part of verse 1, Paul writes, “we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain” (NAS). This may mean some have failed to respond appropriately to the gift of salvation in Christ. At the least, Paul is suggesting that some believers may fail to live up to the full potential of God’s gracious gift of redemption, particularly in terms of being salt and light and growing to maturity. Consider the following verses and discuss how they might reflect this sort of failure.

**Hebrews 5:11-14: Believers are responsible not only to grow with respect to faith and knowledge, but also to teach others what they have learned. Further, believers should mature to the point that they can distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, even better and best. The mature and discerning have been inculcated with the truths of God’s Word.**

**Psalms 107:2: Those whom God has redeemed ought to be telling others about their redemption in Christ.**

**Jeremiah 23:1-4: God has called men to shepherd His people as an expression of their love for Christ, yet they have not only failed to do this, they have hurt the flock.**

- C. Teacher Bill Gothard defines grace as “the desire to do God’s will and the power to do it.” Discuss how this definition of grace puts greater responsibility on the believer. **If grace is a matter of changed desires so that true believers *will want to please* God and if, along with that desire, true believers have the power to pursue what pleases God, their**

**failure to respond to the grace of redemption is a shameful act of disobedience and rebellion.**

- D. In verse 2, Paul is speaking eschatologically of our age which the Old Testament prophecies explained would be a time of universal redemption in Christ. Peter quoted the prophet Joel in Acts 2:17-21, explaining that in these "last days" God would "pour forth" His "Spirit" upon all mankind." Further, that during this age God would do great wonders in order to accomplish His work of redemption, and as a consequence, "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." How might this increase the believer's responsibility not to "receive the grace of God in vain"? What should believers be doing in this age?

**Certainly as God has declared His purpose and intention to save many and to redeem His people, those He has already redeemed have a profound responsibility to participate and support God's purpose in any way they can. Believers ought to be going out as laborers unto the harvest, as the fields have already been prepared by God.**

There is a secondary application of the phrase "behold, now is the day of salvation." It is a personal and particular application. How should we understand that personal application? Read Psalm 103:6-9.

**First, that we must never take God's mercy and graciousness for granted. When He speaks to us, calls us to Jesus, burdens us with service, we must respond. There are opportunities to be lost in terms of responding to God's leading. Second, those around us are put in our lives for a reason. We need to see our associations as divine appointments. We must not procrastinate on sharing what we know of redemption. Finally, those who are convicted and called to Christ risk much in delaying their reception of Christ into their hearts and lives, maybe eternity.**