

# Treasure in Jars of Clay – Godly Grief

## 2 Corinthians 7:5-11

### Intro

BO: Have you ever done anything that you immediately regret?

Engage: Just a couple of weeks ago Kyle Roberts invited me to lunch as he was going to be heading to live in Dallas. We went to the Burger Barge. I usually get an unhealthy burger there but that day I was feeling especially good and I got something called an ANCHOR. This was a bed of fries, a burger patty in the middle, topped with mushrooms, grilled onions, mozzarella cheese, their dock sauce, bacon, and of course a ton of nacho cheese sauce. This was a poor decision on my part. I know I'm not the only person who immediately regrets decisions.

Vid: Check out this guy attempting to take a shortcut...

Vid: How about this guy trying to slide into a kiddie pool. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NGJYUmcqC2M>

Trans: Tonight we're talking about REGRET. Talking about grieving over your sins.

THT: If you've never grieved and repented over your sin then maybe God can use tonight as the night!

Prvw: We're going to be reminded of the situation going on for Paul's letter and then

Pass: Our passage tonight will be 2 Corinthians 7:5-11

Note: Just a note is that the passage uses the word grief several times. When Paul says grief he clearly does not have in mind emotion of loss of loved ones but rather emotion of loss of sin.

### Situation

Setup: As I'm reading this I want you to think about your own life. I want you to think about this question. Have you ever been hurt by something but later on you realized that it was for your own good?

Read: *5 For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within.*

Ex: I don't know how much you remember about Paul and the situation at Corinth but let me remind you a bit. Paul had an ongoing role of spiritual father to the Corinthians but it wasn't a perfect relationship. He had visited them at one point and it became a very painful visit because some of the Corinthians were believing some false teachers and driving Paul out of the church. So Paul had written a severe letter to the Corinthians (not 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians but another letter that we don't know the contents). Paul had Titus deliver this severe letter to the Corinthians and was to meet up with Titus to hear how it was received. Paul was super concerned about how this letter would be received. He wasn't writing the letter to be mean but rather to help them with their sin.

Read: ***4 For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you. (2 Cor. 2:4)***

Ex: So you have Paul waiting to hear how it was received and Titus finally comes.

***6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. 8 For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. 9 As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.***

Ex: This news was such a relief to Paul. He had been beating himself up for weeks. Should I have been so strong when I said this? Was I just nitpicking at every little thing? Will they completely turn from me and now follow all of the false teachers? But now? Paul is comforted and rejoices because, first, Titus returns and is a friend, but secondly, and I would add, more importantly, Paul hears of the news that, instead of turning away from Paul, the Corinthians listen to his difficult words and repent of their sins!

Trans: From here on out Paul spends his time keying in on exactly what it means to have GODLY GRIEF. He describes this to encourage them as they realize that this kind of grief is exactly what Christians do in the face of sin. These next verses are a helpful measure for us to weigh ourselves against. How do I react when someone shares about the truth of my sin?

### Godly Grief & Worldly Grief

Read: *10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. 11 For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.*

Note: First, a reminder. This is not talking about the loss of a loved one but regret of sin. How do these 2 griefs play out?

1: First, Godly grief or regret of sin leads produces repentance and then salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. In this case, regret is a good thing because it helps you see the reality of your sin and causes you to take action against it.

App: If you are serious about sin in your life then it doesn't stop at merely being sorry about it. It takes an action of repentance or turning from that sin.

2: Second, I want to point out that Godly grief doesn't last forever.

Read: *8 For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while*

App: There are some here who keep beating themselves up for past sins. They don't see God's forgiveness applied to them. Notice that the Corinthians were upset about their sin but they changed their behavior and didn't keep beating themselves up about it.

3: Notice in worldly and godly regret they both regret it. In both godly and worldly regret we see disappointment.

App: I want to point this out because sometimes as Christians we can confuse simply wishing that a sin never happened isn't true Christian repentance. The girl who has been badmouthing a teacher and then the teacher finds out will truly be sorry she got caught. The guy who is making fun of freshmen is genuinely upset when all of his friends stick up for the other kid. The student whose parents find out they've been drinking alcohol, smoking weed, making out with their boyfriend, having sex, or looking at porn that student will be upset when they are grounded for months and can't hang out with friends, be in a sport, or whatever punishment the parent gives them.

Ex: So how do we discern between godly grief and worldly grief? Much of what I'm about to say comes from a John Piper sermon that I listened to on this passage. He says there are 2 ways to discern between godly/worldly griefs: **First, who is offended?** When you get caught by parents, or a friend calls you out when inappropriate then is the main problem that your pride has been wounded. It makes me uncomfortable to be having the conversation. If I'm the focus of the offense then that is worldly grief. However, when our focus in on the fact that God has been offended by my actions and therefore we come before him and fight to

App: So what about you? How do you respond when someone points out when you've clearly been in the wrong? The last part of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians is all about how we are to be clay. We are willing to be molded. Are you willing to be changed by God?

Ex: **The first, who is offend**, now the second way to know if I have godly or worldly grief is, **who do I owe?** When I sin is it all about the fact that I owe my allegiance to God and obedience to his Word or is it that if I keep doing this then I won't have the respect of friends? I'm worried about what people will think if they find out about this thing in my life? Is your reputation among friends what's important or your reputation before God?

Ill: So let's get this out of the theoretical for a bit. The Corinthians had sinned when Paul had a painful visit with them. He wrote them a letter hoping they would see what pain they had caused. They were in fact won over. This is like the guy who speaks up to his Christian friend about the fact that he's been saying things he shouldn't during practice. This is like the girl who speaks up to her friend who has become emotionally invested or obsessed with a guy. This is like the student who speaks up to their friend about how they behaved at the school dance, the way they were a bully during the basketball game, the way they are ignoring their relationship with God and don't come to church.

THT: If you've never grieved and repented over your sin then maybe God can use tonight!

## Application

App: There are two points of application for you tonight. First if you've got sin in your life and you know it then how are you grieving that sin? Afraid of what others think or what God thinks?

Second, if your close friend is obviously sinning, are you willing to risk your relationship so that they can grow in their faith? If you go about loving them and helping them in their sin, it will be for God's glory and you may win your friend over. You may lose a friend but it's worth God's work in their life!