



**YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!**  
**Winter 2018-19 Leader Commentary**

**Unit 1: You on Mission**  
**Session 2: Up to the Task (see pp. 106-109)**

**The Question:** Why should I do missions?

**The Point:** All believers are qualified to do missions.

**Background Passage:** 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

**Focal Passage:** 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, “Why should I do missions?” and drive home this one truth: All believers are qualified to do missions.

**Focus on These Points**

***Compelled by Love***  
***(2 Cor. 5:14-15)***

Paul’s reverence for God motivated him to “persuade people” (5:11) with the gospel of Christ. He shared about his own Christian walk to encourage the Corinthian church members in theirs. He didn’t know of a better way to demonstrate his godly motivation to them, especially since the church was teeming with people who took “pride in outward appearance rather than in the heart” (5:12). However, Paul’s words may have unintentionally come across as prideful.

Some of Paul’s opponents claimed his extreme religious study had driven him insane (Acts 26:24; 2 Cor. 5:13). Paul preached that salvation was only by God’s grace through faith. As a result, he was deemed a madman in his opponents’ eyes; they couldn’t wrap their narrow minds around the concept. The attacks on Paul’s character were numerous. In short, his best efforts weren’t always appreciated. A rocky relationship between Paul and the Corinthian church developed. Still, Paul didn’t plan to turn his back on the Corinthians. He actively sought reconciliation and kept reaching out to the Corinthian believers. He loved them. Although the crux of this passage demonstrates God’s efforts to reconcile sinners to Him, we can apply these same principles toward damaged relationships we have with other Christians.

Paul’s motivation for all of his work was based on his reverence or “fear of the Lord” (v. 11) and “the love of Christ” (v. 14). He had concluded that “one died for all,” that is, Christ. So, “then all died,” (v.14) meaning all people are dead in sin. Here, Paul is reinforcing a simple, persuasive fact that’s crucial in understanding person-to-person reconciliation: Since all people are broken and require Christ’s atonement, we should reconcile with other believers. Period. No obstacle should be too great a hindrance for reconciliation to occur when both parties are in Christ. If Christ who had no sin, died on a cross to pave the way for sinners to be reconciled to God, how can we possibly be content with remaining estranged from other believers? How can we not love? How can we not forgive each other?

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When we accept Christ as Savior, we are “those who live” according to Paul (v. 15), and Christ indwells us through the Spirit. Compelled by Christ’s act of love, Paul was able to continue his ministry to the Corinthians.

### ***Changed by Christ*** **(2 Cor. 5:16-17)**

Prior to his conversion, Paul was a typical Pharisee. His view of the world pitted Jews against Gentiles. He saw Jews as observant, law-abiding folks. And, then, there were Gentiles—everyone else. However, when Paul came to know Christ as Savior, everything changed. He couldn’t view others “from a worldly perspective” (v. 16). Things that once divided Jews and Gentiles no longer applied. Because Christ loved all people regardless of religious background, ethnicity, social status, and gender, Paul followed His example. He loved them, too.

Both Old and New Testaments mention “the new heavens and the new earth” that God will bring at the end of the age (Isa. 66:22 and 2 Pet. 3:13).

When Paul used the phrase “new creation” (v. 17), he was drawing from Old Testament language to describe believers whose transformation would be fully realized and enjoyed in the new heavens and new earth. Christ’s death had allowed them to have a small sample of the way things would be in the new world to come. Paul’s missionary work was driven by the act of love Christ showed on the cross. Because Paul identified with Christ in His death and resurrection, he underwent an internal renewal or regeneration. Elsewhere in Scripture this process is described by the phrase “born again” as in John 3:3 during Jesus’ discourse with Nicodemus.

### ***Chosen as Ambassadors*** **(2 Cor. 5:18-21)**

God gives us new life. Paul knew this firsthand. When Paul was a Pharisee, he believed that keeping the religious laws in legalistic fashion would earn him God’s approval. But, after trusting Christ as Savior and Lord, Paul realized “everything is from God” (v. 18) through grace. Because God “has reconciled us to himself” (v. 18), we are now entrusted with the “ministry of reconciliation” (v. 18). Paul gives a brief definition of this ministry in verse 19, stating that it is initiated by God, in that God reconciled the world “to himself” through Christ; He wants sinners to be in right relationship with Him. However, a right relationship can’t be achieved when sin is present. Sin separates us from God who is the Source of life. Romans 6:23 reveals “the wages of sin is death.” In Christ, though, we receive a priceless gift from God—eternal life. This gift is only free to Christians because God isn’t “counting” our “trespasses against” (v. 19) us. *Counting* in ancient times was used to describe the act of calculating a debt. And, our sin-debt earns us death. Thankfully, God zeroes out believers’ debts because Christ paid it all. Through Christ, we can receive new life.

God desires that the gospel message be shared. As new creations, we must embrace our role as “ambassadors for Christ” (v. 20). In the last portion of verse 20, Paul turns the readers’ focus to God letting the audience know under whose authority he spoke (“on Christ’s behalf”), and the message from his Master was: “Be reconciled to God.” False teachers wanted loyal people to

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follow them and the message they preached. Conversely, Paul pointed people to God. His goal was to glorify Him.

Through Jesus' sacrifice, God made a way for our sins to be atoned for (v. 21). When we accept God's gift of grace in faith, we "become the righteousness of God" (v. 21). What we couldn't attain on our own is now ours through Christ.