"Be a Good Testimony"



(2 Corinthians 6:3-13)

5/29/2011

Introduction: vv.3-4a

**** The World is Watching You! Be a Good Testimony!***

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Maintain your testimony…

A. No matter how others <u>respect</u> you *("By honour and dishonor")*

B. No matter what others <u>say about</u> you *("by evil report and good report")*

C. No matter if others <u>trust</u> you *("as deceivers, and yet true")*

D. No matter how <u>well known</u> you are *("As unknown, and yet well known")*

E. No matter how you <u>feel physically</u> *("as dying, and, behold, we live")*

F. No matter how you <u>feel spiritually</u> *("as chastened, and not killed")*

G. No matter how you <u>feel emotionally</u> *(" As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing")*

H. No matter how "<u>well off" you are financially</u> *("as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things")*

Conclusion: v.11-13

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II. ***Be a Good Testimony…***

By Means of _____ **available** _____ (v.6-7)

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Despite _____ **Others May Have** _____ (v.8-10)

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("as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things")

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“Be a Good Testimony”

(2 Corinthians 6:3-13)

5/29/2011

Introduction: vv.3-4a

After appealing to some within the Corinthian church to come to Christ for salvation (v. 2) and to not receive God’s grace in vain (v. 1), Paul now shows how he could not be blamed for their rejection of Christ and his ministry.

Many unbelievers are quick to justify their unbelief by pointing their finger at the inconsistencies they find in some who call themselves Christians but don’t live like it.

Paul had previously referred to himself (and all believers) as an “ambassador” with the “ministry of reconciliation” (5:18-20).

It is vital that we represent Christ well! (ILLUS: the unfaithful soldier for Greece named Alexander. He was told by Alexander the Great: “either change your ways or change your name.”)

Our lives should adorn the Gospel, not tarnish or detract from it. SEE: Titus 2:5, 8, 10.

“Your walk talks and your talk talks, but your walk talks louder than your talk talks.”

v. 3

“Giving no offence” - giving no one any reason to stumble. May no one trip over our bad testimony and stumble headlong into hell!

“In any thing” – We should be so conscientious that no area of our life be an occasion to fall for someone else.

Eccles. 10:1 Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: *so doth* a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom *and* honour.

Paul uses himself as an example not to exalt himself but to set a pattern that we could follow.

“That the ministry be not blamed” - note: Paul’s concern was not merely for his own personal honor and reputation; rather, his concern was for Christ’s ministry. May our motive for being righteous be a cause greater than our own.

May the world not find fault or defect in our Lord and His cause due to some failure in us. Many are looking for reasons to ridicule our Christianity; they are looking for reasons to excuse their rejection of Christ. May we not disgrace Him and his service!

1 Cor. 8:9 - But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak.

1 Cor. 9:12 - If others be partakers of *this* power over you, *are* not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.

v. 4

"But in all things" - To the contrary of being a stumbling block, Paul describes himself and his associates as being faithful in every way and in everything. It's not that he claimed to be sinless, but that no one could legitimately point their finger at him and make accusation that he was morally and spiritually lacking.

"Approving ourselves" - (*sunistemi*) – lit. to bring together; Paul's words and walk could be brought together so as to commend him as a minister of God. Both hi character and conduct bore witness to the fact that he was a good testimony as God's minister.

We need to be conscientious of our testimony before:

1) Our <u>children</u> (whose salvation is very often influenced by what they see in mom and dad)
2) Our <u>neighbors</u>
3) Our <u>co-workers</u>
4) Our <u>relatives</u>
5) Our <u>church</u> etc.

"The ministers of God" - God's servants (we are not religious kings but humble servants – *diakonoi*).

Notice the prepositions and adverbs in the KJV in context:

In v. 4-5 – "in. . . in. . . in. . ."
In v. 6-7 – "by. . . by. . . by. . ."
In v. 8-10 – "as . . . as . . . as . . ."

What is a good testimony? What kind of testimony should be upheld?

Being an example is a vital element to influencing others for God:

- John 13:15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you
- 1Pe 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:
- Php 3:17¶ Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.
- 2Th 3:9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us
- 1Th 1:7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.
- 1Pe 5:3 Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.
- I Thess.1:6 ¶ And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:
- 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

1 Timothy 4:12
"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

"Example" - *tupos* from which we translate "<u>type</u>."

Tupos primarily denoted "a blow" (from a root tup--, seen also in tupto, "to strike"), hence,
(a) an impression, the mark of a "blow," <John 20:25>;
(b) the "impress" of a seal, the stamp made by a die, a figure, image, <Acts 7:43>;
(c) a "form" or mold, <Rom. 6:17> (see RV);
(d) the sense or substance of a letter, <Acts 23:25>;
(e) "an ensample," pattern, <Acts 7:44; Heb. 8:5>, "pattern"; in an ethical sense, <1 Cor. 10:6; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thes. 1:7; 2 Thes. 3:9; 1 Tim. 4:12>,
(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words)
(Copyright (C) 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

As servants of God, we need to be . . .

--a <u>mold</u> worth duplicating.
--a <u>pattern</u> worth copying
--a <u>model</u> worth imitating

**** The World is Watching You! Be a Good Testimony!***

I. ***Be a Good Testimony…***
Regardless of <u>Heavy Pressures</u> that Weigh <u>Upon You</u> (v.4-5)

"In much patience" - patience = *hupomone* – to remain under. To bear up underneath the pressures without <u>running, quitting or giving up</u>. Endurance is the idea here. The world is wondering, "What is it that will make him crack?"

When things are a breeze and life is "no problem," it's easy to act like Mr. Calm Christian.

"In afflictions" – afflictions = *thlipsis* – heavy afflictions; intense pressures; stressful situations.

Our testimony is especially tested when we are in the midst of stressful pressures. This is when we tend to blow it.

"In necessities" - in times of great need. How do we live when calamity strikes? How do we live during hardship? The loss of job, a loved one, or our health.

"In distresses" - lit. when in a narrow space or tight place. How do we manage our testimony when things are tight? (whether finances/ opportunities).

"In stripes" - wounds or beatings because of the Gospel (ILLUS: Steve Camp's beating by the "Act Up" group at an AID's Awareness Conference in CA and his love as he shared the Gospel with them for one hour).

v. 5

"In imprisonments" - not for doing wrong, but jail time for simply living for Christ (EX: Acts 16 and the Philippian jail; in Rome).

"In tumults" - uncivil uprisings and riots where mobs attacked Paul (EX: at Ephesus – Acts 19:29ff).

"In labours" - wearisome work; toil resulting in fatigue. Isn't it amazing how just the mention of work can ruin a person's attitude instantly? Paul was not afraid of old-fashioned, hard work.

"In watchings" - sleepless nights; Paul went without adequate rest for the gospel's sake. He literally went night and day for Christ.

Acts 20:31 - Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Paul had a good testimony even when tired/exhausted.

"In fastings" - Paul voluntarily went without food to get more work done and to have power in prayer. Yet he did not allow grumpiness to get the best of him.

"These descriptions show that the ministry is hard work, often filled with nights of restlessness and days of prayer and fasting (11:23-28). How could anyone remain encouraged in the midst of such a torrential downpour of circumstances? The next list Paul gives us provides an umbrella of attitudes that are essential as we walk through life's inclement situations." (Swindoll, p. 86).

"What a man Paul was – perpetually in the dust of the arena, beaten, bloody, mocked by the crowds, sweating, exhausted, hungry, sleepless – but always enduring.
In point of fact, Paul's sufferings did not disqualify him. Rather, they proved the authenticity of his faith and commitment. The fact that he didn't quit or curse God for his miseries as so many have done but endured testified to his genuine faith. In effect, his endurance declared that the gospel is true and that Jesus is worth it.
So often our words are ignored by others, including our nearest and dearest. But when they observe endurance for Christ in the midst of showers of troubles, they cannot deny the reality of our faith in Christ." (Hughes, p. 133-134).

II. ***Be a Good Testimony…***

By Means of <u>Godly Virtues & Blessings</u> available <u>To You</u> (v.6-7)

v. 6

In verse 6, Paul uses the instrumental use of the preposition (*en*) translated "by" to show how he maintained such a godly testimony.

"By pureness" - *hagnos* (from *hagios* – holy) – to be pure from defilement, not contaminated; rendered "pure" in Phil. 4:8; 1 Tim. 5:22; Ja 3:17; 1 Jn. 3:3 (Vine p. 498).

Notice how purity heads the list of the oral virtues that gave Paul a good testimony. In our lives purity/holiness should rank first in our list of moral virtues. Holiness is a priority/fundamental attribute of God (Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:*) and needs to be in us as well. As James writes, "The wisdom that is from above is <u>first</u> pure, then peaceable, gentle…" Ja. 3:17.

The word "pureness" denotes chastity or sexual purity in thought life and body.

As Paul wrote to Timothy:

1 Timothy 4:12
Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

1 Timothy 5:2
The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.

Today there exist a wider array of contaminates than ever before in human history; and easier access to such contaminates.

1 Peter 2:11
Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

1 Peter 1:14-16
As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Every facet of our daily life should manifest a unique purity:

1.Have Purity in your dealings with your family
2. Have Purity in your friendships and associations
3. Have Purity in your thought life
4. Have Purity in your speech
5. Have Purity in your actions (Mannerisms and behavior)
6. Have Purity in your recreation, entertainment and amusements
(TV, radio, movies, magazines)
If you feel "dirty" after participating, you should not have done it)
7. Have Purity in the places you go

Don't think for a minute that sin is ever justified before the eyes of a holy God!
Don't come to God on your terms but on HIS! Don't make the mistake of thinking that God's ways & standards are like that of the world (Psalm 50:21)

Because God is HOLY:

1) You can't pray if you are not pure (Ps 66:18)

2) You can't worship if you are not pure (Lev.10:3; Ps.99:5)

3) You can't serve if you are not pure (Psalm 2:11; 2Ti 2:21)

4) You can't please God if you are not pure (Heb.11:6; I Sam.15:17,22,23)

As a general guide as to whether or not a practice would match God's Standard, ask yourself the question: "Is it HOLY?"

It should be our daily prayer:
"Lord, set me apart from anything that is unclean in your sight (I Thess.5:23)
so that I may please you and serve you acceptably"(II Tim.2:21)

The times may have changed, but God's will for us to be holy has not changed.

Like the rock of gibraltar, this command to be holy has inalterably stood firm even into the unholy new millennium.

Anything that pollutes, defiles, or profanes is off limits to the Christian who wants to maintain a good testimony.

"By knowledge" – (*gnosis*) – here, a spiritual knowledge of Christ and His Word.

Paul's testimony was good because his knowledge of the Lord was good. Get to know God – get to know His Word; don't just read it but meditate on it.

Psalms 119:11
Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

"By long-suffering" - *(macrothumia)* - the ability to endure the heat of the moment patiently. People often lose their testimony in the heat of an argument or disagreement. We need a spirit that will not give into the temptation to blow up/curse/ or strike out when provoked. Ask God to guard your temper.

Being Spirit-filled (Gal. 5:22) is the key to having longsuffering/patience.

"By kindness" - (*crestotes*) – a term used of God in Luke 6:35.

Luke 6:35-36
But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to* the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

Kindness is love, mercy and grace in action. Kindness is genuine goodness of heart which manifests itself in gentleness of speech, helpfulness in service, and pleasantness in spirit.

Paul would not be a rough, cold, unfriendly evangelist, but rather a personable, easily approachable, warm preacher.

"By the Holy Ghost" - In the midst of moral virtues that make up a good testimony, Paul really get to the source of all virtue: God's Spirit. In the flesh, we are doomed to fail, but under the control of the Holy Spirit, there is nothing but success. Every day we should pray: "Lord, control me with your Spirit. I yield to you."

If you had lived in Ancient Corinth, you would not have smelled the stench of carnal flesh when Paul came into a room. It would have been evident that he was a Spirit-filled servant of God.

Note: the theme of the book of Acts is the Holy Spirit's work in the early church. May God's Spirit be at work in our church as well.

Charles Finney

Finney wrote how God gave him mighty infillings of the Holy Spirit "that went through me, as it seemed, body and soul. I immediately found myself endued with such power from on high that a few words dropped here and there to individuals were the means of their immediate conversion. My words seemed to fasten like barbed arrows in the souls of men. They cut like a sword. They broke the heart like a hammer.
Multitudes can attest to this...Sometimes I would find myself in a great measure empty of this power. I would go and visit, and find that I made no saving impression. I would exhort and pray with the same results. I would then set apart a day for private fasting and prayer...after humbling myself and crying out for help, the power would return upon me with all its freshness. This has been the experience of my life."
Touch the World Through Prayer, W. Duewel, OMS, p. 232

D. L. Moody 1
Speaking to a large audience, D.L. Moody held up a glass and asked, "How can I get the air out of this glass?"
One man shouted, "Suck it out with a pump!"
Moody replied, "That would create a vacuum and shatter the glass."
After numerous other suggestions Moody smiled, picked up a pitcher of water, and filled the glass. "There," he said, "all the air is now removed." He then went on to explain that victory in the Christian life is not accomplished by "sucking out a sin here and there," but by being filled with the Holy Spirit.
Moody Bible Institute's *Today in the Word*, September, 1991, p. 30

D. L. Moody 2
Moody was to have a campaign in England. An elderly pastor protested, "Why do we need this 'Mr. Moody'? He's uneducated, inexperienced, etc. Who does he think he is anyway? Does he think he has a monopoly on the Holy Spirit?"
A younger, wiser pastor rose and responded, "No, but the Holy Spirit has a monopoly on Mr. Moody."
Source unknown

D. L. Moody 3
D. L. Moody said, "I believe firmly that the moment our hearts are emptied of pride and selfishness and ambition and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will fill every corner of our hearts. But if we are full of pride and conceit and ambition and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. We must be emptied before we can be filled."
Taking The Guesswork Out of Applying The Bible, J. Kuhatschek, IVP, pp. 153ff

"By love unfeigned" - by unhypocritical *agape* love. No Christian testimony has any value without love. For love should be the motive behind every good thing we do (1

Cor. 13). Love is that desire to meet someone's needs without strings attached. It is unconditional when demonstrated to others.

To have "unfeigned" love is to have a real, genuine, sincere, unpretentious love. No false motives; no selfish advantage is sought; no self-seeking, ulterior motives.

v. 7

"By the Word of truth" - the Scriptures (*logos*). For Paul, it would be the Old Testament Scriptures.

Paul maintained a good testimony because his life and message was consistent with God's revealed Word.

1 Thessalonians 2:13
For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

John 17:17
Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

God's Word is true, but it must be interpreted and presented in its truth (not lifting texts out of context or twisting a text to suit someone's agenda, but faithfully applying rules of hermeneutics and letting the Word speak for itself).

Paul had a good testimony because he could be counted on to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth

The Testimony of the Reformer Martin Luther (1483-1546)

- 95 Thesis – October 31, 1517; Luther attacks the sale of indulgences and the theological presuppositions that grounds its practice
- Diet of Augsburg – Luther claims that he will only recant if he is shown to be in opposition to scripture
- Debate with John Eck at Leipzig – Luther declares that the Council of Constance had erred in condemning Huss, that any Christian who had the support of scripture had more authority than all the Popes and Councils combined.
- Diet of Worms – Luther: "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of Holy Scriptures or by evident reason—for I can believe neither the Pope nor councils alone, as it is clear that they have erred repeatedly and contradicted themselves—I consider myself convicted by the testimony of Holy Scripture, which is my basis,; my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Thus, I cannot and will not recant, because acting against one's conscience is neither safe nor just. Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen."

"By the power of God" – The ability and strength which God gives.

Paul gives credit where credit is due. He was successful because of God's power working in him and through him.

> **Car that Wouldn't Start**
> In a seminary missions class, Herbert Jackson told how, as a new missionary, he was assigned a car that would not start without a push. After pondering his problem, he devised a plan. He went to the school near his home, got permission to take some children out of class, and had them push his car off. As he made his rounds, he could either park on a hill or leave the engine running. He used this ingenious procedure for two years. Ill health forced the Jackson family to leave, and a new missionary came to that station.
>
> When Jackson proudly began to explain his arrangement for getting the car started, the new man began looking under the hood. Before the explanation was complete, the new missionary interrupted, "Why, Dr. Jackson, I believe the only trouble is this loose cable." He gave the cable a twist, stepped into the car, pushed the switch, and to Jackson's astonishment, the engine roared to life.
>
> For two years needless trouble had become routine. The power was there all the time. Only a loose connection kept Jackson from putting that power to work. Ernest B. Beevers

Ephesians 1:19-20
And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to

the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*,

"The armor of righteousness" - The protective weapons that come via right living (cp. Eph. 6:14). We forfeit our protective gear when we fail to live righteously.

"On the right hand and on the left" - A well-balanced protective gear. Since attacks come from all angles, protection is needed to defend all sides. Hence, Paul is describing armor held in both hands. Both offensive and defensive.

Beginning with "love," Paul now qualifies his nouns.

It's not just love, it's unfeigned love.
It's not just the Word, it's a truthful word.
It's not just power, it's God's power.
It's not just armor, it's the armor that comes through righteousness.

"These descriptions show that the ministry is hard work, often filled with nights of restlessness and days of prayer and fasting (11:23-28). How could anyone remain encouraged in the midst of such a torrential downpour of circumstances? The next list Paul gives us provides an umbrella of attitudes that are essential as we walk through life's inclement situations.

"In 6:6-7, Paul lists nine qualities. Four can be seen by other people, and five lie hidden beneath the surface.

The visible qualities are purity—a clean, uncluttered lifestyle; knowledge—a practical awareness of truth; patience—a calm in the midst of the storm; and kindness—the opposite of severity and meanness.

"The unseen qualities are the Holy Spirit—our source of strength who controls us; genuine love—seeking the highest good of others, no matter what the consequences; the word of truth—honest and accurate speech; the power of God—supernatural enablement; and the weapons of righteousness – listed in Ephesians 6:10-20." (Swindoll, p. 86)

Swindoll, p. 87 (for END): "A large group of people over the age of ninety-five were asked the question, If you could live your life over again, what would you do differently? Their answers fell into three dominant categories. They said they would reflect more, risk more, and do more things that would live on after their death. What is your life

amounting to? Are you playing everything safe? Will anything you're doing now live on after your death?"

III. ***Be a Good Testimony…***
Despite <u>Negative Opinions</u> Others May Have <u>About You</u> (v.8-10)

In continuing his point from verse four, Paul continues to demonstrate that he could commend himself as an inoffensive good servant of the Gospel, no matter what others said about him.

What we have in verses 8-10 involves a contrast between the world's opinion and treatment of the Christian minister (servant), and God's opinion and treatment. We will often find ourselves in the midst of two views or two perspectives. One will be in error (the world's) and one will always be 100% accurate (God's).

Can you handle being made fun of?

Can you handle being lied about and still keep your chin up?

The only ones who can make it through such are those who are very secure in their relationship with God. Insecurities are a major reason why many succumb to the pressure of ridicule and slander.

For example, teens give in to "peer pressure" when they are insecure. You need to know who you are "in Christ." You need to know what you believe and why you believe it.

To last with endurance and faithfulness in the ministry, God's servants must develop a "thick skin." We who seek to live for Christ will come under attack; we will face adversity; we will sooner or later be slandered.

Everyone who amounted to anything in the Bible faced the pressure of ill repute, negative opinion and verbal attack.

Examples:

--Moses by Korah & Aaron & Miriam
--Joseph by Potipher's wife
--David by his own son, Absalom
--Mordecai by Haman
--Isaiah & Jeremiah by Israel & Judah
--Daniel by the princes of Medo-Persia
--Jesus Christ by the Jews of His day

People may and will have their opinions of you and me. All that matters "at the end of the day" is what God thinks of us. Does He approve? Living to solely please God will bring you through much contention and pressure you will face from people (including your enemies and "friends").

Maintain your testimony…

A. No matter how others <u>respect</u> you *("By honour and dishonor")*

"By honour" (*doxa* – lit. glory) **and dishonor"** (*atimios* – disvalue, to give no esteem; to disrespect).

The Christian life will often entail <u>extreme</u> treatment. Some will go to the extreme of giving glory (which ultimately belongs only to God – Is. 42:8) to a servant of God and others will go to the opposite extreme of dishonoring one to whom honor is due.

Paul knew what it was like to have people come at him from both vantage points.

On one occasion (at Lystra), he had both extremes hit him just moments apart from each other (Acts 14:8-19).

While people are to honor their pastor (1 Thes. 5:2-13)-- yea, give him "double honor" (1 Tim. 5:17)—many a pastor has to "stick to the stuff" and put up with a dose of dishonor.

Maintain your testimony…

B. No matter what others <u>say about</u> you *("by evil report and good report")*

Paul also endured both extremes of slander **("evil report")** and of praise (**"good report")**.

When people tell bold-faced lies about you, take courage; you are not the first. Nehemiah was lied about by Sanballat and Tobia, and our Lord Jesus was lied about by hired false witnesses (Mk. 14:59).

Jesus did not need to receive testimony from man (Jn. 5:34); He had his credentials from God the Father.

Maintain your testimony…

C. No matter if others <u>trust</u> you *("as deceivers, and yet true")*

"As deceivers, and yet true" –

To this day the liberal theologians and the feminists view Paul as a fraud. Yet he believed the truth, lived for the truth, and told the truth. His message totally conformed to the truth of the Old Testament and the truth of the Word of Christ, and the truth of the other apostles. There exists a perfect harmony between Paul's writings and the rest of Scripture.

Our Lord Jesus faced murmurers who said "He deceived the people" (Jn. 7:12).

Maintain your testimony…

D. No matter how <u>well known</u> you are *("As unknown, and yet well known")*

"As unknown, and yet well known" – to be ignorant; pass. – to be unknown. It refers to being nonentities, not worth knowing, without proper credentials (Plummer). They did not receive recognition in the world of their day because the world, its literature, politics, and scholarship took no notice of them. They were not the source of daily conversation and were not sought out as great orators.

Can you live without notoriety?

Are you humble enough to be unpopular?

You can, if you live for God's glory and exaltation.

Maintain your testimony…

E. No matter how you <u>feel physically</u> *("as dying, and, behold, we live")*

"As an apostle, Paul was like a man under sentence of death" (Barrett, cited by Rogers, p. 405).

Paul on several occasions came a hair's breadth (width) away from death (as at Lystra – Acts 14). "But see!" says Paul, "I live."

Maintain your testimony…

F. No matter how you <u>feel spiritually</u> *("as chastened, and not killed")*

"Chastened" – child-trained or disciplined.

Paul received a thorn in the flesh (to keep him humble and dependent (2 Cor. 12:7).

God spanks all of His kids, not to kill them but to mature them.

Maintain your testimony…

G. No matter how you <u>feel emotionally</u> *(" As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing")*

Paul knew what pain/grief/sorrow felt like, but he also experienced gladness and joy. Such emotional extremes are not to be viewed as unheard of or symptoms or split personality, but as part of life on a sin-cursed earth.

Paul did as he preached. He "rejoiced in the Lord always." (Phil. 4:4).

"Friends had failed him, converts had turned upon him, and his works were threatened by wicked men. 'But,' as Philip Hughes explains, 'no sorrow, no disappointment, however severe, could ever interrupt, let alone extinguish, the joy of his salvation with its vision of unclouded glory to come, for his joy was founded upon the sovereign supremacy of God, who overrules all things and causes them to work together for good to those He has called." (cf. Romans 8:18, 28)." Hughes, p. 136).

Maintain your testimony…

H. No matter how "<u>well off" you are financially</u>
("as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things")

"As poor" - like the church of Smyrna (Rev. 2:9), Paul knew material poverty yet he was rich; Paul could have made a lot of money (he certainly had a business mind), but he lived to make others spiritually rich. He was just like his Lord Jesus.

2 Corinthians 8:9
For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

He lived for the true success of others! He lived for their "wealth" –

1 Corinthians 10:4
And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

Paul, who knew what it was like to be "abased" (Phil. 4:12), at times did suffer the loss of all things. Yet all the while in Christ, he possessed everything!

Conclusion: v.11-13

Paul was open and transparent before the Corinthians.

Their estrangement or distance from Paul was not due to anything he had done, but was due to their own lack of affection for him.

V. 13 – Now Paul asks for a little openness in return. He says in effect, "I opened up my heart to you, now you open your heart to me and listen to me."

"Paul concludes with a mounting song of triumphant endurance that rides on the down-up rhythm of paradox. The first half of each of the seven paradoxes, read together, is like a dirge: "as imposters. . . as unknown . . . as dying .. . . as punished . . . as sorrowful . . . as poor . . . as having nothing." But the second half is a dance. Each of the seven paradoxes of endurance ends in triumph." (Hughes, p. p. 135).

"Paul has spoken from his heart—that is, he has opened before them what makes him tick, his inner motives for ministry. His heart is seen in the depth of his endurance for the gospel. And here he is not attempting to get the Corinthians to like him but is calling them to respond to the heart-evidence before them. They must now understand that his endurance in suffering proves that his ministry is the real thing. His endurance amidst suffering has shown him to be living out the life of Christ in him.

"It is the same for us today. We commend the gospel to our families and the church and the world by our faithful endurance. The call to follow Christ is a call to endure in sufferings, by the graces of the Spirit, through righteousness, riding the triumphant, exultant paradoxes of Christ, thereby demonstrating that our faith in Christ is real and that he is worth our full allegiance." (Hughes, p. 137).