

Apostolic Exhortations

Introduction

- A. The counsel of a wise person should be highly valued. When one has lived successfully through many experiences and is willing to communicate what has been learned - the rest of us ought to be ready to be taught.
- B. How much more would all this be true if the one giving counsel would be one uniquely chosen of God for that purpose. What a privilege it could bring into one's life to hear the counsel of God and learn how to please Him! God has made this very experience possible - He has revealed Himself.

I. We Are Exhorted to Be a living Sacrifice for God, Romans 12:1,2.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Observation: This is one of the most important Biblical exhortations given to Christians. Disobedience here dooms a person to failure in the Christian life. We are to surrender to God and then live that way with a daily renewal of the mind so that we may be constantly transformed. Living this way enables us to fulfill the will of God.

II. We Are Exhorted to Love Repentant Christians, II Corinthians 2:8.

Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.

Observation: This verse refers to a man in the church at Corinth that had been disciplined for immorality. He had now repented. Where once the church had neglected to discipline him - now they neglected to receive him back into the Church and into their own lives. We may not fail to love those who repent.

III. We Are Exhorted to Be Reconciled to God, II Corinthians 5:20.

How then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

Observation: This exhortation applies particularly to the non-Christian. The Apostle Paul reminds us that, as ambassadors for Christ, we must urge people to repent, believe and receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. There is no hope of eternal life for the person who does not, by the grace of God, repent and turn to God.

IV. We Are Exhorted to Live in Harmony with the Grace of God, II Cor. 6:1.

We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

Observation: We are reminded by this verse that it is possible to hear about the provision of God and not to respond. This is particularly true for the Christian. We all know much more than we practice. It is probably in this area that the Christian is failing the most. We must be "doers of the Word", James 1:22-27.

V. We Are Exhorted to live Worthy of Our Calling, Ephesians 4:1-3.

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation (calling) wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsoffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Observation: Every believer has the same calling - which is to live so that Jesus Christ will be glorified. Here we are exhorted to live so that we may fulfill that calling. This calls for careful decisions of faith and love in our daily life. In particular, Paul speaks of humility, love, and maintaining Christian unity.

VI. We Are Exhorted to Pray for Our Christian Leaders, Hebrews 13:18,19.

Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Observation: Some people have the mistaken idea that it is easier for a Christian leader to live for God than it would be for others. This is not so. The writer of the Hebrews asked people to pray for him. In particular he was concerned about having a good conscience and being an honest person.

VII. We Are Exhorted to Live without being Subject to Fleshly Desires, I Peter 2:11.

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.

Observation: The believer is given three titles in this verse and is urged to maintain freedom from selfish desires. Too often we find ourselves characterized by ambitions, luxuries and a way of life which places too high a demand and priority upon us. Such desires, we are told, "war against the soul". This expression indicates the battle and resultant loss which is allowed in our lives when we fail to obey God.

VIII. We Are Exhorted to Love One Another, II John 5.

And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

Observation: Here John exhorts us to recognize one another as a person, to give that person rightful place in our life and to do what is right by that person. We are also to love God this way.

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