

Commending ourselves as Servants of God

2 Corinthians 6:3-10

In every way that Paul and his companions conducted themselves, they “commended” themselves “as servants of God” (6:3). They served God in the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18-20) urging people to receive God’s grace in Christ as being real and significant (5:21-6:1).

God has great zeal to reconcile people to Himself! Through His servants God makes “an appeal,” begging souls to be reconciled to Himself. God’s deep longing is shown clearly in that “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf” (5:20-21). Paul and his fellow laborers shared this same passion. Not only did Christ beg through them, but they also begged souls from their own hearts. “We also urge you” (6:1). They longed that those who hear the gospel of God’s grace would perceive its great significance, not receiving it “in vain” (6:1). ***They wanted the ministry of reconciliation to not be discredited as if it is insignificant*** (6:3). Thus, through how they served, they commended themselves as being actual servants of God carrying a message which is from God.

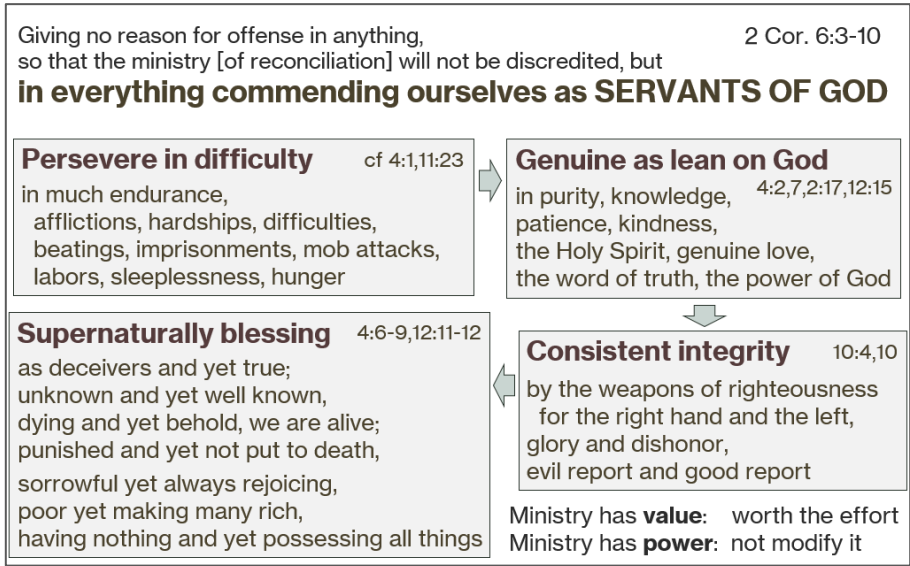
What commends them as God’s servants?

They persevere in difficulty (6:4-5); they have pure, genuine, dependent ways of living (6:6-7a); they have consistent integrity in communicating God’s message faithfully (6:7b-8a); and they bring supernatural blessing that cannot be explained naturally (6:8b-10) – ***it must be God at work!***

These ways are seen in the Lord Jesus. ***How beautiful Christ is in His perseverance*** in the work of salvation even going to the cross, His

genuine love for people and dependent obedience to God, His accomplishing righteousness for us on a righteous basis at great expense, and His supernaturally blessing others in eternal ways! **God’s servants likewise show God is indeed at work in the gospel as they persevere** in the hard work of forwarding the gospel, patiently and lovingly labor for souls in dependence upon the living God, stay true to God’s message whether people honor or malign them, and supernaturally bless people in ways that must be God at work!

This is **unlike the “deceitful workers”** whom Paul wanted the saints to turn away from (12:12-15). “The many” peddle the word of God for self-gain (2:17) and “take pride in appearance and not in heart” (5:12). They claim to be “servants of Christ” but they do not faithfully advance God’s message from sacrificial, selfless labor (11:23-29). In contrast, they exalt themselves and bully people (11:20).



Servants of God show God’s gospel is significant by:

- 1. Persevering in difficulty** (6:4-5) – not losing heart
- God’s servants **keep on when “hard pressed on every side”** (4:8 NKJV). They continue forward when attacked. They are willing to labor, face

sleeplessness, and endure hunger. The gospel is worth it, and their perseverance says so. General difficulty, intentional attacks, and internal **struggles will not make them “lose heart”** (4:1,16). Their life is a dying life. “Death works in us, but life in you” (4:12) and they welcome it, because they know that “this ministry” of the life-giving gospel is divine (3:1-18) and that eternity is real (4:14-18). **How do they persevere? By “the God who gives perseverance”** (Rom 15:5). Look to Him!

2. Genuine ways as they lean on God (6:6-7a) – sincere & dependent
This conviction of the significance of the gospel (3:3-6) leads to “great boldness of speech” (3:12) in communicating the gospel plainly (4:2). If they were ashamed of the gospel, they would turn to the “veil” approach of “walking in trickery” or “distorting the word of God” (4:2). **Their confidence in God’s power to save leads to “sincerity”** in how they minister. They do not turn to “peddling the word of God” (2:17). The gospel does not need to be altered, because it is the best news possible! So, they labor “in purity” (6:6). Their labor is a dependent, consistent labor, done in patience, kindness and genuine love. They truly long for each soul to come into the good of Christ, so **they lay down their lives to bring God’s gospel to others!** Like Paul they say, “I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls” (12:15). It is from sincere hearts enabled by “the Holy Spirit”, with confidence in “the word of truth”, and dependence on “the power of God” (6:6-7). **The work is of God**, and their way of ministering shows this divine reality.

Substance to Message → Sincerity as Ministers

3. Consistent integrity (6:7b-8a) – unchanged message

Thus, their message is God’s gospel and remains the same whether people approve or disapprove of them. They stick with spiritual weapons (10:4) that promote God’s gospel, whether being addressed to people on the right side or left side (6:7b). Whether people speak highly of them or malign them (6:8), **their message remains the same**. Shifty ways and smooth talking that appeals to fickle people would discredit the ministry.

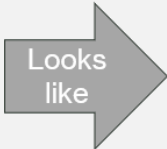
4. Supernaturally blessing (6:8-10) – can't explain naturally

Their lives are an enigma, being full of paradoxes. Somehow they are able to keep going when it certainly looks like they are at their end (6:9). As they carry the treasure of the gospel in “earthen containers” (4:7), it seems that the pressure from every direction would result in their being “crushed” (4:8). ***Because they are supernaturally sustained, it is obvious that “the extraordinary greatness of the power” is “of God and not from ourselves”*** (4:6) This is nothing other than the finger of God!

They are nobodies (12:11) with no fame (6:9), yet God knows them and His approval is what they care about (5:9). They have deep sorrow. How heavy the concern they know (11:28)! Yet at the same time they have a persistent joy through fellowship with God and enjoyment of Christ's great person and work (6:10). How can someone be so burdened and yet so joyful? They must in fact be servants of God Himself.

They have ***no wealth yet enrich so many*** (6:10). Their life is one of extraordinary enriching. Though they seem empty of any possessions, yet they have found their everything in the Lord Jesus, even to the point of overflowing with “rivers of living water” that bless people around them (John 7:38). Praise God who supernaturally sustains His servants and makes them able to bring blessing to others in divinely enabled ways!

May our lives show that the ministry of reconciliation does indeed have divine substance and significance.

☒ Persevering?		Serving a real God carrying a message from Him that has significance
☒ Genuine?		
☒ Faithful?		
☒ Unexplainable?		



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Commending Ourselves as Servants of God (2 Corinthians 6); Page 4