

How To Be An Ambassador of Christ In A Broken World

- Do you ever feel pressure from others to do things that you know are wrong?

Statesman Edmund Burke (1729-97) is famous for saying: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." The problem with the church at Corinth was that they were letting the corruption of their society slip into their lives, home, and church and they were doing nothing to correct it. Instead of influencing their corrupt society with good, they were allowing their culture to influence them with bad.

The Church at Corinth existed in a broken and corrupt society. It was well known for commerce, culture, and corruption. The expression "a Corinthian girl" and "to live like a Corinthian" was synonymous with luxury, license, and lewdness. Corinth was the home of the temple of Venus, also known as Aphrodite (af-ro-dit-e), the goddess of love. The temple housed about 1,000 prostitutes. The people believed that they were communing with the gods by having sexual relations with these prostitutes. Many other temples were in the city that promoted the mystery cults from Egypt and Asia.

The two epistles of First and Second Corinthians teach us that we must not let our ungodly world shape our values, morals, beliefs, and behaviors. We are called to a higher, better, more virtuous value system—God's value system. We must seek to live God's way and glorify Him. Even more, as Christians, God has called us to **represent Him** and His Word in the midst of a corrupt society. We are to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13-16) influencing culture with Godliness and righteousness. One of the key emphasis of 2 Corinthians is that we are Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20) in a corrupt society.

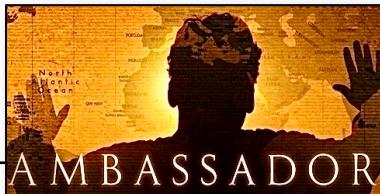
Central Lesson:
Every Christian is an ambassador of Christ calling people to come to Christ (God).

Author: The book identifies the Apostle **PAUL** as the author (1:1). The vocabulary, style, logic, and theological development are consistent with Paul's other epistles.

Date: Second Corinthians was written shortly after First Corinthians. Second Corinthians was written about A.D. **55** to **57** from the region of Macedonia in the city of Philippi, according to tradition.

Title: The title of the book is named after the recipients—Christians living in the city of **CORINTH**.

Paul was the founder of this church. He came to Corinth on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:1-18). Paul met Aquila (a-quil' a) and Priscilla (pris-cill-a) and stayed in their home and worked bi-vocationally in their tent-making business (Acts 18:2-3). Every Sabbath, Paul attended the synagogue



and took part in its services. He sought to persuade the people that Jesus is the Messiah (Acts 18:4). Silas and Timothy joined him later and "**Paul spent all his time preaching the word. He testified to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah**" (Acts 18:5). Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half (Acts 18:11).

Although the New Testament contains two letters to the church at Corinth (First and Second Corinthians), Paul wrote **more than two letters** (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9-11 a letter before First Corinthians. Also, cf. 2 Cor. 2:3-4 a letter between First and Second Corinthians). These other letters are **lost to us today**. Also, there is evidence from the epistles that Paul visited Corinth more than the two times recorded in Acts.

Key Verse: 2 Corinthians 5:20. "**So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, 'Come back to God!'**" [NIV - "Be reconciled to God.]

Key Chapter: 2 Corinthians 5. It describes that we should seek to please God with our lives (5:9) no longer living for ourselves (5:15) but serving Christ as His ambassadors (5:20) through whom God's message of reconciliation is proclaimed (5:17-21).

Key Words: **AMBASSADORS** (5:20). An official representative.

Outline: The Life Application Bible outlines the book as:

- I. Paul explains his action (1:1-2:11)
- II. Paul defends his ministry (2:12-7:16)
- III. Paul defends the collection (Chapters 8-9)
- IV. Paul defends his authority (Chapters 10-13)

Principles for How to Represent Christ as His Ambassador.

1. Learn to handle **HARDSHIP** (1:3-11).
2. Learn to resolve **CONFLICT** (1:12-2:11).
3. Keep a clear conscience (2:12-17).
4. Live & serve by the power of the Holy Spirit (Chapter 3).
5. Learn to deal with **DISCOURAGEMENT** (Chapter 4).
6. Maintain right **MOTIVES**—live to please God (5:9).
7. Find ways to call people to **COME** to Christ (5:20).
8. Maintain moral **PURITY** (Chapter 6-7:1).
9. Learn to handle **REJECTION** (Chapter 7).
10. Demonstrate integrity & responsibility—especially in handling money (Chapter 8).
11. Be prepared & **ORGANIZED** (Chapter 9).
12. Utilize God's weapons in battling spiritual warfare (Chapter 10).
13. Be **SECURE** in your calling & purpose in life (Chapter 11).
14. Guard against **CONCEIT** and **PRIDE** (Chapter 12).
15. Focus your life on the spiritual growth of others (Chapter 13).

Central Lesson: **Every Christian is an ambassador of Christ calling people to come to Christ (God).**

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.