

BEING RECONCILED TO GOD

- Context:** What appears spiritual on the surface of someone's life does not necessarily mean that the real issues of life in God are resolved in their heart.
- v.13 (1) We should do our best to appear reasonable and spiritual for others (persuading men v.11), but sometimes what we do for God may make people wonder about us.
- v.14 (2) Jesus' love for us and for the world preoccupies us. It compels us and constrains us to do what we do. It arrests us and holds us in place when things get hard.
- vs.15 (3) Honest ministry is based on an understanding of the exchange Jesus has made with us: He took our place and died for us; we are supposed to take His place and live for Him.
- v.16 (4) Everyone (regardless of their station in life, their wealth, their background or their natural skills) is dead. We have all died "ahead of time", so that we could start living our resurrected life now.
- v.17 (5) Therefore, we are new creations (buildings) whose former way of living to please ourselves has been replaced with a way of living to please the Lord. Pleasing the Lord will not always be pleasing to ourselves or to others.
- v.18 (6) God can redeem everything in our mortal life. True spirituality is made of triumph in the face of death; treasure held in cheap clay pots; transformation of the old into the new.
- vs.18 (7) All of this is our reconciliation to God -- our way of mortal life being reconciled to His way of eternal life. We are being brought back into line with God, being made anew, consistent and compatible with Him.
- vs.19 (8) That is what true spiritual ministry is all about: serving, aiding, waiting upon others so that their lives are reconciled to God, starting with their inner spirit when they are born again, then progressing outward to the way they think, feel and live.
- v.20 (9) True ministry, then, has nothing to do with validating or enriching us; it has everything to do with humbly and purposefully drawing people into closer harmony with the Lord. The more our own lives are lined up with His, the better ambassadors we become.