

# FORGIVENESS IS THE KEY TO DISARMING SATAN'S SCHEMES

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the reverberating \_\_\_\_\_ of sin. (vs. 4-7)

2. \_\_\_\_\_ loving, gospel-affirming \_\_\_\_\_. (vs. 8-10)

3. \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of our response. (v. 11)

TRANSFORMED

## 2 Corinthians 2:4-11

<sup>[4]</sup> For I wrote to you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

<sup>[5]</sup> Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. <sup>[6]</sup> For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, <sup>[7]</sup> so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. <sup>[8]</sup> So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. <sup>[9]</sup> For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. <sup>[10]</sup> Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, <sup>[11]</sup> so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs. (ESV)

# Forgiveness is the Key to Disarming Satan's Schemes

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June 20, 2021

**Open:** When do you find it most difficult to forgive someone?

**Read & Discuss:** 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

1. Some believe the person Paul speaks of in verse 5 is the one who led an opposition against Paul in Corinth. If so, how did he cause pain to all the Corinthians? In general, how does a sin against one member of a Christian community negatively impact the entire community (v. 5)?
2. In verse 6 Paul speaks of "punishment by the majority," which likely involved some sort of ostracism from many of the believers in Corinth. Have you ever experienced or witnessed such an act by a group? What was it like, and what was the result?
3. Paul calls on the Corinthian believers to now stop their "punishment" of this man (v. 6), lest he be "overwhelmed by excessive sorrow." (v. 7). If the goal of church discipline is to bring correction, how do we do this well? Where could church discipline go wrong?
4. When Paul encourages the Corinthians to forgive this man, he also tells them to "comfort him" (v. 7) and to "reaffirm [their] love for him" (v. 8). Are these two components necessary aspects of true forgiveness? If so, why? What might make these especially difficult?
5. In verse 9 Paul says he asked the Corinthians to forgive the one who sinned so that Paul might know if they were "obedient in everything." How is our willingness to forgive others a good test of the sincerity of our faith and of the measure of our spiritual maturity?
6. In verse 10, Paul says he forgives this man for the spiritual good of the Corinthians. How does our forgiveness of others lead to good in the lives of others in the church?
7. Why would Satan want to keep us from forgiving each other (v. 11)? If we know that failing to forgive others falls straight into Satan's design for us, why do we so often still fall prey to his schemes? What would help us be better prepared to withstand Satan's schemes in this area?

**Apply:** What's a step you can take this week toward either forgiving someone who has wronged you or seeking forgiveness from someone you have wronged?

**Pray:** Pray that we would not be outwitted by Satan's schemes, but that we would instead be eager to forgive each other, consistent with the character of Christ.

**T R A N S F O R M E D**

## 2 Corinthians 2:5-11

<sup>5</sup> Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. <sup>6</sup> For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, <sup>7</sup> so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. <sup>8</sup> So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. <sup>9</sup> For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. <sup>10</sup> Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, <sup>11</sup> so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs. (ESV)