

2 Corinthians 13:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

Analysis

Now I pray to God that ye do no evil—Paul's priority is their holiness, not his vindication. The Greek *euchomai* (εὐχομαι, "I pray") emphasizes earnest petition. His goal: **that ye should do that which is honest** (to kalon, τὸ καλόν, "the noble/good/beautiful thing")—ethical beauty reflecting God's character.

Not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates—Stunning statement: Paul would rather appear *adokimos* (ἀδόκιμος, "disqualified") himself if it means the Corinthians live righteously. If they repent before his arrival, he won't need to exercise discipline—thus appearing weak ("as reprobates" to those valuing power-displays), but achieving his true goal: their holiness. Pastoral ministry prioritizes flock's spiritual health over leader's reputation—the shepherd-heart of apostolic authority.

Historical Context

Ancient honor-shame cultures obsessed over public reputation and vindication. Paul radically subverts these values, willing to "lose face" (appear as reprobate) if it advances the gospel and sanctifies believers. This echoes Christ, who "made himself of no reputation" (Phil 2:7) and "despised the shame" of the cross (Heb 12:2).

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. What does it reveal about Paul's heart that he'd rather appear disqualified than see the Corinthians continue in sin?
2. How do church leaders today fall into the trap of prioritizing their reputation over their people's holiness?
3. What does 'doing that which is honest' (the noble/beautiful thing) mean for Christian ethics?

Interlinear Text

εὐχόμεαι	δὲ	πρὸς	τὸν	θεὸν	μὴ	ποιῆτε	ὑμᾶς	κακὸν
I pray	Now	to	G3588	God	do	should do	that ye	evil
G2172	G1161	G4314		G2316	G3361	G4160	G5209	G2556
μηδέν	οὐχ	ἵνα	ἡμεῖς	δόκιμοι	φανῶμεν	ἀλλ'	ἵνα	ὑμεῖς
no	not	that	we	approved	should appear	but	that	ye
G3367	G3756	G2443	G2249	G1384	G5316	G235	G2443	G5210
τὸ	καλὸν	ποιῆτε	ἡμεῖς	δὲ	ὥς	ἀδόκιμοι	ῥῶμεν	
G3588	that which is honest	should do	we	Now	as	reprobates	be	
	G2570	G4160	G2249	G1161	G5613	G96	G5600	

Additional Cross-References

James 1:12 (Parallel theme): Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

1 Timothy 2:2 (References God): For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 (Prayer): And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 4:18 (Evil): And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

2 Timothy 2:15 (References God): Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Philippians 4:8 (Parallel theme): Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

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