

2 Corinthians 7:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.

Analysis

For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent—Hoti ei kai elypēsa hymas en tē epistolē, ou metamelomai, ei kai metelomēn (ὅτι εἰ καὶ ἐλύπησα ὑμᾶς ἐν τῇ ἐπιστολῇ, οὐ μεταμέλομαι, εἰ καὶ μετεμελόμην, "although I caused you sorrow with the letter, I do not regret it, though I did regret it"). Paul uses metameleomai (μεταμέλεομαι, "to regret") not metanoeō (μετανοέω, "to repent")—he questioned his timing/harshness, not the truth spoken. Elypēsa (ἐλύπησα, "I caused sorrow") from lypeō (λυπέω, "to grieve/pain").

For I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season—Blepō gar hoti hē epistolē ekeinē ei kai pros hōran elypēsen hymas (βλέπω γὰρ ὅτι ἡ ἐπιστολὴ ἐκείνη εἰ καὶ πρὸς ὥραν ἐλύπησεν ὑμᾶς, "I see that letter grieved you, though only for a while"). Temporary pain produced lasting gain—a pastoral calculus faithful leaders must embrace. Paul distinguishes method (the letter's severity, which he momentarily regretted) from message (confronting sin, which he never regretted).

Historical Context

The 'severe letter' (probably lost, though some identify it with 1 Corinthians or chapters 10-13) was delivered by Titus. Paul's anxiety (2:13) about its reception shows even apostles wrestle with doubt after difficult confrontations. His relief

that the sorrow was 'for a season' (pros hōran, "for an hour") teaches that godly discipline may cause immediate pain but shouldn't produce permanent estrangement.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. When have I avoided necessary confrontation because I feared causing 'sorrow,' and what was the long-term cost?
2. How do I distinguish between godly regret over my tone/timing (which Paul felt) versus compromise on truth (which he rejected)?
3. If someone's correction causes me temporary sorrow, do I immediately dismiss them or wait to see if the pain produces spiritual fruit?

Interlinear Text

ὅτι	εἰ	καὶ	έλύπησεν	ὑμᾶς	ἐν	τῇ	ἐπιστολῇ	οὐ
For	G1487	G2532	I made	you	with	G3588	a letter	not
G3754			G3076	G5209	G1722		G1992	G3756
μετεμελόμην	εἰ	καὶ	μετεμελόμην	βλέπω	γὰρ	ὅτι	ἡ	
I did repent	G1487	G2532	I did repent	I perceive	for	For	G3588	
G3338			G3338	G991	G1063	G3754		
ἐπιστολῇ	ἐκείνῃ	εἰ	καὶ	πρὸς	ώραν	έλύπησεν	ὑμᾶς	
a letter	the same	G1487	G2532	for	a season	I made	you	
G1992	G1565			G4314	G5610	G3076	G5209	

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 3:19 (Repentance): As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

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