

Women's Bible Study – Spring 2008

Shared Lives: *The Relationship Between a Pastor and His People*

Shared Obedience 2 Corinthians 6:3 – 7:16

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Our passage this morning covers almost two chapters; 31 verses in all. We will be using a bit of a different strategy in covering our topic this morning/evening because we have almost twice as much material as we have had in some other lessons. We will break our reading into three segments with an exposition of some themes in between each segment.

Before we begin I want to say that I realize this is a long passage to read out loud, even when broken into several pieces, and I want to explain why I choose to do that. I believe there is great power in the Written Word of God and that it is the Word that will actually speak to our hearts and transform us. A teacher might draw our attention to a passage or a concept, and illustrate it in a way that makes it come alive or helps us see its application in daily life; but, those are just peripheral tools of Bible Study.

The real strength of a Bible Study like this one is the provision of an infrastructure. In other words, a place and a time is provided in which we can remove ourselves from distractions and focus our thoughts on what God is saying through His word. And so to me, the reading of the Word out loud is the most crucial part of our time together. We will begin our reading in 2 Corinthians Chapter 6, verse 3.

³We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. ⁴Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; ⁵in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; ⁶in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; ⁷in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; ⁸through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; ⁹known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; ¹⁰sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything. ¹¹We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. ¹²We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. ¹³As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

Reality and Community

This morning/evening we will be examining the passage by looking at 4 Characteristics of a Life of Obedience. In our very first lesson on 2nd Corinthians back in January; Gretchen said that were two main reasons for us to look deeply into this book of 2nd Corinthians. Do you remember what they were? Two Words: Reality and Community. This passage beautifully illustrates both of these concepts.

4 Characteristics of a Life of Obedience.

1. Living a Life of Obedience is Costly

The first characteristic of a Life of Obedience, is that it is costly. I have learned a lot about Paul this semester in our study. I have always considered him a giant of the faith, a super missionary. My introduction to him as a child was always through maps and arrows documenting his various journeys to unfamiliar places. However, I don't really think I thought of him as a real person. I mean I knew he was a real person, but he didn't seem like a real person. This study has presented us with a very real and personal side of the apostle. In this passage Paul shares with us the costliness of obedience.

Sometimes Paul provides only broad descriptions of his sufferings and sometimes he is very specific. Overall, he says that the ministry was one of great endurance. Generally, he says he has dealt with troubles, hardships, and distresses. Specifically he has endured:

- beatings
- imprisonments
- riots
- hard work
- sleepless nights
- hunger

His obedience to Christ has also required the exercise of:

- purity
- patience
- understanding
- kindness
- Reliance on the Holy Spirit
- truthful speech
- Reliance on the Power of God
- Reliance on weapons of righteousness

Last week we were making our early morning trip to school; in the car by 7:15 a.m. with a hopeful arrival of 7:35. I had all four children in the car, even though only three would be staying at school. It was miserable. For some reason, this morning there was grousing and bickering at every turn. You know the type, "she touched me", "he looked at me", "she smiled at me". I was about to reach my maximum tolerance for bickering, when I had a flash of parenting brilliance.

So, I said, "Children, do you remember some of the stories we have read of missionaries who are called to lay down their lives for Christ? And how we have talked about that someday we might have to make that same choice?" Yes, they remembered and so I added, "You know we have daily opportunities to learn to exercise our spiritual muscles in living for Christ and that helps prepare us for more costly decisions. So, do you think that since we are three minutes from school that you could sit quietly in your seats, refrain from touching one another, and respond with only kind words?"

Silence. The older girls (who had had very minor roles in the conflict from the beginning) were clearly pondering my words. The younger two children paused and then responded with, It would be much easier if she or he would only . . . Obviously, we have a lot more work to do in this area.

I still thought it was one of those profound parenting moments. I congratulated myself all the way home, in the quietness of my vehicle, on such a good idea. How I had been able to point out a great spiritual truth that we could apply to the dailyness of life. The problem was I kept hearing my own advice over and over in my ears, and it was beginning to turn on me. As I sat down to work on this portion of the lesson, on the costliness of obedience, I took a second look at the list of Paul's hardships. I have never been beaten for my obedience for Christ, never been imprisoned, never been in a riot. Maybe I can relate to hard work; but yet the tasks I do for the Lord hardly compare to the hard work of Paul. I have had a few sleepless nights; but those haven't primarily been related to issues of obedience. I have postponed meals on the rarest of occasions in favor of a fast; but I can hardly equate that with serious hunger.

And I realize, or rather the Holy Spirit convicts me, that I too have not yet been asked to lay down my physical life for Christ; but just like I advised the children, there are many ways that I can strengthen my spiritual muscles by exercising obedience in the daily choices with which I am presented. And while the children are young and immature, I am asking them to take steps to strength their spiritual muscles in ways that I need to strengthen my own.

I need to deliberately practice more patience and kindness even when I am frustrated, or tired, or overwhelmed. I need to make daily decisions on purity with regard to what I watch on television, read in books, read on the internet, or even converse with others about. I need to rely more on the Holy Spirit, not myself. I need to be absolutely truthful in every aspect of my speech, being careful not to shade details or embellish stories for my own benefit. I need to rely on the Power of God. I need to rely on the weapons of righteousness: the shield of faith and the sword of the spirit. We must practice obedience in all the areas of life that Christ has given us and those opportunities present themselves daily. A life of obedience is costly.

Paul further illustrates the costliness of obedience by providing four contrasts. He says there is: Glory and Dishonor; Bad Reports and Good Reports. He is Genuine; yet regarded as an imposter. He is known to them and yet treated as a stranger.

And even with these difficulties Paul reminds us that the cost is worth it. He says, we are dying, yet living on; we are beaten, yet not killed; we are sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; we are poor, yet making many rich; we have nothing, and yet we possess everything. Obedience is costly; but our sacrifices are never in vain, they are reaping incredible rewards. 2 Corinthians 4:¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

2. Living a Life of Obedience Requires Transparency.

Recently I ran into a neighbor who had phoned me a while back for some details regarding Autumn Ridge's Saturday night service. She was planning to visit our church and thought that service might be the best fit for her family. I hadn't talked with her since her visit so when I ran into her at a social event, I asked so what did you think of Autumn Ridge and the Saturday night service? After she gave her critique of facilities, worship order, and style, she said, "Well, we really didn't feel comfortable there, because the other families are well, so perfect". After I recovered from my shock, I asked, "So why do you think all the families at Autumn Ridge are perfect?" "Well", she said, "because they look that way."

Not content to let this go, I began to explain that perhaps the evening she had visited she had missed, the family who had recently suffered the devastating death of the mother of five young children, or perhaps she hadn't seen the family who was going through a very painful divorce, or maybe she just didn't have the opportunity to meet the elderly widow who just tragically lost her husband; or perhaps the family that had just lost their family business and had suffered devastating financial loss was not familiar to her.

She stared at me in wonder. You see she assumed that what she saw on the outside was the total picture. What you see on the outside is never the total picture. **Living a Life of Obedience Requires transparency.**

Paul models this perfectly for us throughout this letter to the Corinthians. He opens his life to them. He shares his difficulties, his frustrations, his struggles, his weaknesses and most importantly he reveals how God has been faithful to him through all these experiences. He also asks for some transparency on their part as well. . . ¹¹We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. ¹²We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. ¹³As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

Transparency is a characteristic of the obedient life, to be exercised by all of us. There are a lot of people who are looking at our lives and trying to understand something about our faith. They can't put all the pieces together if we don't open up our lives.

How to Share Your Heart

In living a life of transparency there are some cautions you may want to consider when sharing your heart. You need to use discretion. You will need to use discretion in deciding what you share, where you share, and how you share.

Everything in your life is not necessarily appropriate to share. For example, sharing other people's sins rather than your own is not really transparency. It is not appropriate to share stories that would cause destructive hurt to others; especially

family members. Really personal intimate stories need the permission of the other person involved before you share them.

Environments for sharing need to be chosen carefully. The more sensitive the matter, the smaller the group with which you may want to share. Sharing one to one, rather than in a large group setting is probably more appropriate.

Also, think about how you share. You don't want to use every interaction as an opportunity to dump the entire contents of your life on whatever recipient is close. That tends to serve our needs more than theirs. We should not monopolize every conversation or small group discussion time; we want to give others the opportunity to share as well. We need to have wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit to know when it is helpful to share our stories. We want to make sure the focus is on our God and his nature; not on us and our trials. Yet still we need to be transparent so that others can see how God intervenes in our lives.

Being the Recipient of a Shared Heart

Just as we have the responsibility to show discernment when we share our hearts, we also have some responsibilities when we have the honor of being the recipient of a shared heart. That is an honor that each of us have in a group like this. We have the responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of those who share with us. We must refrain from passing sensitive information along to those not in the group; even in the form of prayer requests, unless that individual has granted permission. We also have some responsibilities to help care for those who reveal their hurts, by helping them to get help or assistance if that is what is needed, or to lovingly confront them if their behavior is counter to Scripture.

3. Living a Life of Obedience Requires Attention to Holiness.

¹⁴Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? ¹⁵What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

¹⁷"Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you." ¹⁸"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." ¹⁹Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Holiness does not happen by accident. It is intentional. This reference to being yoked to unbelievers takes us back to Deuteronomy 22:10 where the Israelites were commanded in the Mosaic Law, ¹⁰ Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together. There were very logical reasons for this. Commentator John MacArthur says, "Those two

animals do not have the same nature, gait, or strength. Therefore it would be impossible for such a mismatched pair to plow together effectively."¹

Paul uses the same type of logic when he asks 5 Rhetorical Questions of the Corinthians.

1. What do righteousness and wickedness have in common? (Nothing)
2. What fellowship can light have with darkness? (None)
3. What harmony is there between Christ and Belial (ancient word for Satan)? (None)
4. What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? (Nothing)
5. What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? (None)

He is telling us to be very careful about our relationships; especially those that have an enduring permanency to them. Remember our context, Corinth was a city thriving in pagan worship. There were false teachers who had infiltrated the church and were trying to get the people to blend together elements of Christianity, pagan worship, and idolatry. Paul is saying those things cannot be blended because they are completely opposed to one another.

We have to be careful how we interpret this because we can at a quick glance walk away with the impression that we are to have no association with unbelievers. That is clearly not the case. In 1 Corinthians 5 ⁹I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— ¹⁰not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. ¹¹But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

So in this case, Paul is concerned about their association with those who call themselves Christians; but whose behavior is in complete opposition to the teachings of Christ. We often hear teaching on this verse in the context of marriage. In other words, we are not to get involved in a serious dating relationship with an unbeliever because you will be unequally yoked and have serious problems in relating to one another in every aspect of your relationship.

Yet, 1 Corinthians 7:12-13 says, ¹²To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. ¹³And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him.

So if you are already married to an unbeliever, Paul commands that you continue in that relationship. We have to be very careful when we are in the process of establishing permanent enduring relationships like: marriage, business partnerships, and even best friends. Yet, other more informal relationships it seems we must pursue if we are to share our faith and "Go and make disciples of all nations".

¹ MacArthur, John. The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 2 Corinthians. 2003. Moody Publishers. Chicago. page 246.

Easter is this Sunday. As a little girl growing up in Kentucky I can remember the Easter preparations well. My grandmother invested great time, energy, and love into preparing for Easter. She made, yes, made as in selecting the fabric, cutting out the pattern, and sewing on the machine, dresses for my sister, my mother, and I to wear on Easter Sunday. My mother made sure we had the appropriate matching accessories: shoes, tights, and hair bows. My dear grandmother who is now 98 years old, even ordered every year, corsages for each of us to wear on Easter Sunday. We all went to church together; except my dad, and of course she made the traditional Easter Dinner. Those were wonderful times in my life. I have chosen to replicate some of those traditions in our family.

However, the most important part of Easter is not how we dress ourselves on the outside; but how we prepare ourselves on the inside. As we look to these last days before Easter and especially to Good Friday we must pull ourselves away from the dailiness of life, even if only for a few minutes, to prepare our hearts for Easter. Part of that preparation is to acknowledge our sin and repent.

4. Living a Life of Obedience requires Acknowledgement of Sin and a Willingness to repent.

²Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. ³I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. ⁴I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

⁵For when we came into Macedonia, this body of ours had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. ⁶But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

⁸Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— ⁹yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹²So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. ¹³By all this we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. ¹⁴I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. ¹⁵And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

This has been a very timely week for me to study this passage. In a small group that I attend we have been studying the Life of David in a Heart Like His by Beth Moore. This week has been the study of David's Sin with Bathsheba, that coupled with the devastating news regarding the Governor of New York has provided much opportunity for me to think about the importance of acknowledging sin and confessing it early; in the stages of thought, and word, before it ever gets to the point of action. We have to intentionally ask ourselves some tough questions to prod us to identify and acknowledge our sins. A place to begin is the 10 Commandments. When can ask ourselves:

- Have I put any people or things or priorities before God?
- Have I taken the name of the Lord in Vain, or used it in any way that promotes disrespect or dishonor?
- Have I remembered the Sabbath day and kept it holy?
- Have I honored my father and mother?
- Have I committed murder? In thought, in word, or in deed?
- Have I committed adultery? In thought, in word, or in deed?
- Have I stolen?
- Have I committed false witness against my neighbor?
- Have I coveted anything that belongs to anyone else?

Maybe you scored pretty well on that list. Consider these taken from I Saw the Lord by Anne Graham Lotz²:

Ingratitude

For what blessing, or answered prayer, have you neglected to thank God?

Neglect of Bible Reading

How many days have you gone without opening your Bible? How many days have you read it yet cannot remember what you have read?

Unbelief

What promise has God given that you doubt will be fulfilled? Are you doubting that He is willing to forgive any and all of your sin?

Prayerlessness

How often are your prayers just spiritual "chatter"---offered without fervent or focused faith" And remember, daydreaming or fantasizing is not prayer.

Unconcern for the lost:

Who do you know who has never received Christ as Savior? When have you shared the gospel with that person? Never?

Ignorance of the lost:

Did you skip church when a missionary was scheduled to speak because you thought he or she would be boring? Can you even name one missionary who is on your prayer list?

² Lotz, Anne Graham. I Saw the Lord: A Wake-Up Call for Your Heart; 2006. Zondervan. Publishing. Michigan. Pages 118-120.

Hypocrisy:

Are you pretending to be more spiritual than you are? Are you pretending to be anything that you are not?

Pride: Are you impressed with your own reputation and accomplishments? Are you offended and resentful when someone else receives attention? When sitting in church, instead of preparing your heart for worship, are you wondering if people have noticed your appearance?

Neglect of family:

What have you truly sacrificed for their spiritual, physical, and emotional well-being? Nothing? Very little?

Neglect of God's family:

Who has fallen into sin or disgrace within your church? What have you done to reach out to that person in love? Or is there someone within your church family who has lost a job or is in some physical or practical need, and you have said glibly, "I'm praying for you," yet have done nothing to help? And then did you quickly forget, and didn't pray?

I'll stop there with her first 10, they provide plenty of opportunities for us to have Godly Sorrow and Repentance. We have to be intentional about confession; we have to be regular about it. We can examine ourselves daily in our quiet time, and maybe take a weekly inventory as well. I found this inventory from Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, pastored by John Piper. This is an assessment each pastor completes and turns in on a weekly basis. While it doesn't fit our needs exactly; the principle is a useful exercise. A copy is included with your notes.

We are to examine ourselves when we come to the Communion Table. We can take advantage of specific Christian Holidays throughout the year like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter to reflect on our spiritual health. Certain seasons of our lives also encourage us to examine ourselves like: Births, Deaths, and Illnesses.

This confession leads us to Godly Sorrow, which leads us to repentance. The members of the Corinthian Church had a lot to examine, to confess, and to have Godly Sorrow over. They had gossiped among each other about Paul. They had damaged his reputation. They had compromised the Gospel. They were guilty of many sins; but Paul sees that they have come to a place of Godly Sorrow over their sin.

That is what we want over our sin, Godly Sorrow, not Worldly Sorrow. This Chart differentiating between the two is from the book, *Having a Mary Spirit*.³ She uses the terms Conviction and Condemnation; but she is talking about Godly Sorrow verses Worldly Sorrow.

Conviction (Godly Sorrow)	Condemnation (Worldly Sorrow)
• Pinpoints problems	• Obscures problems
• Targets Specific Actions	• Makes general accusations
• Leads to repentance (godly sorrow)	• Leads to regret (worldly sorrow)
• Offers solutions	• Appoints Blame
• Makes Us Hopeful	• Makes Us Hopeless
• Enables Us to Change	• Keeps Us From Change
• Brings us Closer to God	• Drives Us away from God

Paul was overjoyed at their Godly Sorrow because it brought repentance and the blessing associated with it. He was ready to extend forgiveness and to move forward with them to the work of the Kingdom. Paul challenges deeply us with his example of what it means to live a Godly life. As we draw near to the Cross in this Easter Season may we remember the cost, the need to share what Christ had done in our lives, the importance of being Holy, and the place of Godly Sorrow.

³ Weaver, Joanna. *Having a Mary Spirit: Allowing God to Change Us From the Inside Out*. 2006 Waterbrook Press, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Page 37.

Personal & Ministry Accountability

Name: _____

Date: _____

- | | Need Help | Stable |
|---|-------------------|---------|
| 1. How are you doing in the following areas? | | |
| Your consistency in satisfying personal devotions. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 | |
| Your battling against ungodly thoughts (unbelief, bitterness, resentment, lust, pride, jealousy, covetousness, racism, etc.) | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 | |
| Your energy for the week ahead. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 | |
| Your feelings of effectiveness in your pastoral role. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 | |
| 2. Weekly R&R modules* invested: _____ | | |
| 3. Did you work on the Fighter Verse early in the week? | Yes | No |
| 4. Did you take a day off this past week (three consecutive R&R modules*)?
(If no, how to you plan to compensate for it in the near future?) | Yes | No |
| 5. Have I been with a man or woman in the past week in a way that could be viewed as compromising? | Yes | No |
| 6. Have any of my financial dealings failed to be filled with integrity? | Yes | No |
| 7. Have I viewed sexually explicit material? | Yes | No |
| 8. Have I neglected to give appropriate time to my family? | Yes | No |
| 9. Is there any thing that you would like me or the pastoral staff to pray with you about or hold you accountable for or rejoice over (significant stresses, temptations, or joys)? | | |
| 10. Do you have any items for the agenda of the next pastors' meeting? | | |
| 11. How is your family joy and harmony? | Need Help | Stable |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 | |
| 12. Assess your eating and exercise this past week: | Unhealthy | Healthy |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 | |
| 13. Report honoraria you have received since the last report. | | |

Signature: _____

This resource was created by Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN.

** For the purpose of time invested into ministry and time off for rest and family, the pastors split the each day into 3 Rest & Rejuvenation modules (morning, afternoon, & evening) or 21 modules a week. They have pledged to take off 7-10 R&R modules a week, and to take off 3 of these modules consecutively (to fulfill a Sabbath principle). Most pastors take their Sabbath on Fridays, and choose 4-7 other modules a week to take off. For the full explanation, see the Policy Handbook, 2.50 Office Hours, Work Schedules, & Locations, available under Resources at <http://www.hopeingod.org/AdminstrationEmployeeHandbook.aspx>*

Intensive Study Questions for Shared Obedience

1. Read 2 Corinthians 6:3-7:16. In 2 Corinthians 6:3-13 Paul mentions a variety of hardships. List the hardships that Paul had encountered during his life.
2. Why do you think those hardships might have earned him a reasonable hearing from those in the Corinthian church?
3. Reflect on the seasons of your life. List some of the hardships you have encountered in your life. What are some spiritual lessons you learned from those hardships and how have they helped you to minister to others?
4. Considering, 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1, who is the specific audience that Paul is addressing with his admonition, “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers”? What are the questions Paul asks in this passage and what are the answers?
5. How do these verses fit with 1 Corinthians 5:9-11 and 1 Corinthians 7:12-13? Considering all of the passages you have just read, what does Paul mean by “Do not be yoked together with unbelievers”?
6. Considering 2 Corinthians 7, What are the characteristics of Godly Sorrow?
7. Can you think of a time in your life when you were suffering from ungodly sorrow? What impact did that have on you?
8. Read 2 Corinthians 6:11-13. What do you think is the biggest barrier among Christian women today, to open our hearts to fellow believers and not withhold our affection?

Discussion Questions for Shared Obedience

1. Why do you think Paul's hardships might have earned him a reasonable hearing from those in the Corinthian church?
2. What are some hardships you have encountered in your life? What are some spiritual lessons you learned from those hardships and how have they helped you to minister to others?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 6:11-13. What do you think is the biggest barrier among Christian women today, to open our hearts to fellow believers and not withhold our affection?
4. Can you identify any relationships in your life that may be concerning with regard to the admonition to not be unequally yoked with unbelievers?