

## Clogged Arteries

II Corinthians 6:11-13

This is one of those times when the old King James English is rather difficult for us to understand. There is no real problem with this passage – as long as you can understand language that was common four hundred years ago. So, let's examine this passage, using the New King James Version:

*“O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections. Now in return for the same (I speak as unto children) you also be open.”*

It is often difficult to drop in on the middle of a conversation. In Paul's letters, God leads him to go from one theme to another, using long trains of thought, often using very long sentences. In the middle of some great themes, Paul suddenly bursts out with an impassioned plea to the Corinthian church. Paul has opened his heart to them. Yet, they seem to be holding back. Something is restraining them like a clogged artery. What is interrupting the flow of communication and spiritual growth? Does Paul need to change something? Is he not clear enough? Does he not care enough? Under the inspiration of God's Spirit, Paul carefully says that it is not he or his partners in ministry that has held back from them (cp. Romans 1:9-12; Galatians 4:19; Philippians 1:3-8). It is that the Corinthian church has mixed affections. He had stated some of their needs in his first letter (I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-4; 5:1-2; 6:1-8; 11:17-22, etc.). At the same time, he was careful to encourage them and affirm them (I Corinthians 1:2-9; 15:58; 16:23-24). By the time Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians, they were showing growth and improvement (II Corinthians 1:21 – 2:11; 7:6-16).

In our lesson today, we want to capture this impassioned plea and ask ourselves, “Do we have things that close our hearts to the ministry of God's Word, to the ministers of God's Word, or to the fellowship of the saints?” The statements that follow Paul's impassioned plea are serious areas of concern (II Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1). In the lessons to follow, we will look for the things that can restrain our hearts, or the things that can open our hearts, we want to notice three themes that are presented by Paul in II Corinthians 5 – 7.

**Christ's love creates ministry – II Corinthians 5:14-21**

**Christ's reputation needs protection – II Corinthians 6:1-10**

**Christian response to the gospel call needs purification – II Corinthians 6:11 – 7:1**