

## Straightened In Your Own Bowels

### I. Introduction:

A. We live in a world of predators that requires us to be on guard (**Psalms 39:1**, **Matthew 7:15-20**, and **Colossians 4:5-6**).

1. We can't believe what people say or trust they don't have hidden agendas (**Proverbs 14:15**, **Proverbs 26:24-26**, and **Colossians 2:8**).
2. We even know sometimes those closest to us can betray us (**Micah 7:5-6**, **Matthew 10:36**, **Luke 22:47-48**, and **II Timothy 4:9-15**).

B. What if our guard gets so high we don't let anyone in? What if we get tired of being hurt? How can we be faithful in such a state?

1. How can you love your brethren if you are constantly on guard (**I Peter 3:8**)?
2. How can you let your brethren love you if you conceal your life because you are so on guard (i.e. **I John 3:14-18**)?
3. How can you do good unto all if you never put yourself in a vulnerable position (**Galatians 6:9-10**)?
4. Think about our example in Jesus (**I Peter 2:21**). Wasn't He hurt, mistreated, etc. (**Mark 8:31**)? Yet, He put even those that abused Him above Himself (**Philippians 2:3-8**).

### II. Body: **II Corinthians 6:11-13**

A. Paul and Timothy (**II Corinthians 1:1**) spoke openly to the saints in Corinth (**II Corinthians 3:12**).

1. We see that Jesus spoke and acted in the open (**John 18:20**).
2. Paul and Timothy did not conceal themselves (**II Corinthians 4:1-3**).
3. Their openness should have revealed the inward affection they had for their brethren (**II Corinthians 2:4**).
4. Even in times of correction, a willingness to speak openly shows forth love (**Proverbs 27:5-6** and **Revelation 3:19**).

B. Paul and Timothy did not close off their hearts to the saints (**II Corinthians 7:1-3**).

1. Take time to think about what it means when a fellow saint says you are in their heart (**Philippians 1:3-8** and **I Thessalonians 2:14-20**).
2. Paul was treating them as though they were his children as we see he did often with those he taught (**Galatians 4:19**, **I Thessalonians 2:11**, **I Timothy 1:2**, and **Titus 1:4**).
3. He did all things for their sakes (**II Corinthians 4:13-15** and **II Corinthians 12:19**).
4. How that type of love would knit them together (**Colossians 2:2**).
5. Such a thing begins with a sincere [unfeigned] love of the brethren (**I Peter 1:22**).

C. The Corinthians were not reciprocating (**I Corinthians 4:1-15**).

1. Think about how Paul felt (**II Corinthians 12:13-15**).

2. They should have known better and should have highly esteemed Paul (**I Thessalonians 5:12-13**).

3. It would have been nice if they just would have realized Paul would love to be treated and cared for as he was doing for them (**Luke 6:31**).

D. Brethren, don't be like the Corinthians. Though it may make you vulnerable, be open to your brethren and relate with one another (**Romans 12:10**).

1. Brotherly love is not a one day affair (**Hebrews 13:1**).

2. Being mindful that when you're with faithful saints you are amongst a spiritual family (**Ephesians 3:15**).

3. How could we confess our faults to one another (**James 5:16**), if we are on guard or felt like we wouldn't receive the help to be restored (**Galatians 6:1-2**)?

4. We want to know one another as we see great efforts Paul made to accomplish this even when he was physically hindered [i.e. imprisoned] (**Philippians 2:19**).

III. Conclusion: Have the endurance to get through the abuses we face in this life and continue to do good as we can see Jesus did (**Hebrews 12:1-3**).