

*A STUDY OF PAUL'S  
SECOND EPISTLE TO  
THE CORINTHIANS*

March 2026 - May 2026

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Church of Christ in Humble, Texas

# Purpose Statement

The goal of this class will be :

- To edify the church
- To seek to understand what Paul wrote to the church
- To make application to our circumstances

## Study Suggestions

NOTE - these are only my *suggestions*, if you have a study method that works for you I am not suggesting you should change that.

1. **READ the letter** - It would be helpful for you to read the letter in its entirety in one sitting at least once before we begin this course of study. It would be even more beneficial to read it multiple times in its entirety from different translations. Even better yet would be to read the letter aloud in its entirety at least once. In our first class session, we will read the entire letter, as a letter (without verse and chapter breaks). The text of 2 Corinthians in the NASB '95 is included at the end of this material in **Appendix C**.
2. **WRITE the letter** - While reading the letter in its entirety multiple times serves to help us view the letter as one unit, gives us a sense of the tone the author uses throughout the letter, helps us to make connections, etc., slowing down to take in the letter is helpful as well. One thing that has been immensely helpful to me has been to handwrite the entire book as a scribe or a king would have done with the law in Old Testament times. In Deuteronomy 17, Moses gives instruction for those men who would serve as Kings of Israel to write for himself a copy of the law on a scroll and keep it with him and read it all the days of his life. The benefit of this method is seen both in scripture and is also shown scientifically to help with recall. This can be done in any notebook, or there are companies that print journals designed for this purpose.
3. **Keep a NOTEBOOK** - Another helpful study tool would be to keep a notebook or journal as you study the letter. As you read, prepare for Bible class, and we have our class discussions - record your thoughts, questions, notes in this notebook.
4. **MARK in your bible** - I strongly recommend marking in your physical Bible. It is an excellent way to slow down and think as you read the text, to visualize threads within the text (repeated words or ideas in a section), and to visualize contrasts made within the text (especially if you use multiple colors/shapes for each thread). While I will give several suggestions for markings throughout the material, only mark in your Bible what makes sense to you and will be the most helpful for you. In some sections, I have reproduced the text for you to mark if you don't want to use these markings in your own Bible. There are multiple online resources that allow you to print out scripture, and multiple English translations sell scripture study notebooks that provide the text with ample room to mark on one side and lined notebook paper for notes on the other.

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## ***Proposed Schedule of Classes***

1. Sunday	March 1	2 Corinthians	Reading the Letter
2. Wednesday	March 4	Intro/Lesson 1	Introduction (1:1-11)
3. Sunday	March 8	Lesson 2	Paul Defends His Integrity (1:12 - 2:13)
4. Wednesday	March 11	Lesson 2	Paul Defends His Integrity (1:12 - 2:13)
5. Sunday	March 15	Lesson 2	Paul Defends His Integrity (1:12 - 2:13)
6. Wednesday	March 18	Lesson 2	Paul Defends His Integrity (1:12 - 2:13)
7. Sunday	March 22	Lesson 3	Ministers of Glorious Covenant (2:14 - 3:18)
8. Wednesday	March 25	Lesson 3	Ministers of Glorious Covenant (2:14 - 3:18)
9. Sunday	March 29	—	—
10. Wednesday	April 1	Lesson 4	Sincere, Suffering, Hopeful Ministry (4:1 - 5:10)
11. Sunday	April 5	Lesson 4	Sincere, Suffering, Hopeful Ministry (4:1 - 5:10)
12. Wednesday	April 8	Lesson 4	Sincere, Suffering, Hopeful Ministry (4:1 - 5:10)
13. Sunday	April 12	Lesson 4	Sincere, Suffering, Hopeful Ministry (4:1 - 5:10)
14. Wednesday	April 15	Lesson 5	Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11 - 7:16)
15. Sunday	April 19	Lesson 5	Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11 - 7:16)
16. Wednesday	April 22	Lesson 5	Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11 - 7:16)
17. Sunday	April 26	Lesson 5	Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11 - 7:16)
18. Wednesday	April 29	Lesson 5	Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11 - 7:16)
19. Sunday	May 3	Lesson 5	Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11 - 7:16)
20. Wednesday	May 6	Lesson 6	Instruction Concerning Collection (8:1 - 9:15)
21. Sunday	May 10	Lesson 6	Instruction Concerning Collection (8:1 - 9:15)
22. Wednesday	May 13	Lesson 6	Instruction Concerning Collection (8:1 - 9:15)
23. Sunday	May 17	Lesson 7	Paul Defends His Authority (10:1 - 13:10)
24. Wednesday	May 20	Lesson 7	Paul Defends His Authority (10:1 - 13:10)
25. Sunday	May 24	Lesson 7	Paul Defends His Authority (10:1 - 13:10)
26. Wednesday	May 27	Lesson 7	Paul Defends His Authority (10:1 - 13:10)
27. Sunday	May 31	Lesson 7	Paul Defends His Authority (10:1 - 13:10)
28. Wednesday	June 3	Lesson 8	Conclusion (13:11-14) / Review

## INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

**AUTHOR:** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, along with Timothy (2 Cor. 1:1; 10:1).

### PLACE/TIME OF WRITING:

The text seems to indicate that Paul wrote from somewhere in Macedonia, during his 3rd preaching trip recorded in the book of Acts (2 Cor. 1:15-16; 2:12-13; 7:5-7; 8:1; 9:2-4; Acts 20:1-2). Very little, comparatively, is said of this trip in Acts. This letter was written sometime in the year after Corinth began the collection (2 Cor. 8:10; 9:2), shortly after Paul was in Ephesus.

### MESSENGER:

Titus accompanied by two others (2 Cor. 8:6-8). Paul had delivered the 1 Corinthians letter from Ephesus by the hand of Titus (1 Cor. 16:1-4, 8-9; 2 Cor. 8:6; 12:18). Paul desired to travel to Macedonia and Corinth (1 Cor. 16:5-7), but delayed his trip to see how they would receive 1 Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:15-16; 2:1-3). Paul went to Troas after the riot at Ephesus with the hope that Titus would bring a report from the church at Corinth (2 Cor. 1:8; Acts 20:1). When Titus did not show up at Troas, Paul went ahead to Macedonia (2 Cor. 2:12-13; Acts 20:1) where Titus arrived with a report concerning the saints at Corinth.

### BACKGROUND OF THE EPISTLE:

The church at Corinth began when Paul preached the gospel there during his second preaching trip (map in **Appendix A**). He remained with the new converts for a year and a half, something he had not been able to do at previous locations. A record of this visit and their reception of the gospel is recorded in **Acts 18:1-18**.

Before the 1 Corinthian letter, Paul had written to them about association with immoral people. While the Holy Spirit did not see fit to preserve that letter for us, Paul mentions it in **1 Cor. 5:9-11**. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians to address a slew of issues that had been reported to him and that they had written to Paul about. Among the issues Paul dealt with in that first letter were: division, carnal mindedness, appeal to human wisdom, glorying in men, pride, celebrated sin, taking brethren before civil courts, immorality, confusion about marriage, abusing liberty, idolatry, issues concerning the Lord's supper, improper use of spiritual gifts, lacking in love, disorderly assemblies, missed the connection between Christ's resurrection and their own.

## **PURPOSE OF WRITING:**

Titus had delivered to Paul an overall very encouraging report of how the Corinthians had received the first Corinthian letter. There had been repentance on the part of the individual in sin as well as the congregation (**2 Cor. 2:5-6; 7:5-11**). However, he evidently also brought troubling news about those who were tolerating false teachers (**2 Cor. 11:3-4**) and those who were questioning Paul's authority as an Apostle of Christ while themselves claiming to be apostles (**2 Cor. 11:13; 12:11-12; 13:3**). The most likely source of this trouble would have been the Jewish teachers that followed Paul and attempted to bind elements of the Old Law (most prominently circumcision) upon Gentile converts everywhere Paul spread the gospel.

Ultimately, Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to prepare them for his eventual return to them in person. He praises their repentance and encourages them to complete the collection they had begun a year ago - but also warns them in preparation for his planned visit.

Among the things that make this book unique among the letters of Paul is the deeply personal and emotional nature of this letter. While we see Paul's care and concern for brethren in all of his letters - it is a primary focus throughout this letter as he "opens his heart to them".

## **Topical Outline:**

- **Ch. 1-7 - Explanation of His Ministry of Reconciliation**
- **Ch. 8-9 - Instruction on the Collection for the Saints in Jerusalem**
- **Ch. 10-13 - Defense of His Apostleship/Authority - Answering the Critics**

## Textual Outline:

- I. **SALUTATION AND THANKSGIVING (1:1-11)**
  - A. Salutation (1:1-2)
  - B. God's Comfort in Trials: Us to You (1:1-11)
  
- II. **PAUL DEFENDS HIS INTEGRITY (1:12 - 2:13)**
  - A. Paul's Sincerity (1:12-14)
  - B. Paul's Changed Travel Plans (1:15-22)
  - C. Why They Wrote the First Corinthian Letter (1:23-2:4)
  - D. Restore Your Brother (2:5-11)
  - E. Paul's Concern for Them (2:12-13)
  
- III. **PAUL EXPLAINS HIS MINISTRY (2:14 - 7:16)**
  - A. Their Triumph in Christ (2:14-16a)
  - B. Adequacy as Ministers of a More Glorious Covenant From God (2:16b-3:18)
  - C. A Sincere Ministry (4:1-6)
  - D. A Suffering but Hopeful (Confident) Ministry (4:7 - 5:10)
  - E. A Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11-21)
  - F. The Appeal of Their Ministry (6:1 - 7:3)
  - G. Paul's Confidence in Them (7:4-16)
  
- IV. **INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE COLLECTION FOR THE NEEDY SAINTS (8:1 - 9:15)**
  - A. The Example of the Macedonians (8:1-5)
  - B. Paul's Exhortation to Corinth (8:6-15)
  - C. Messengers of the Gift (8:16-24)
  - D. A Plea for Liberality (9:1-15)
  
- V. **PAUL DEFENDS HIS AUTHORITY (10:1 - 13:10)**
  - A. Paul Explains his Conduct (10:1-6)
  - B. Paul Responds to Accusers (10:7-18)
  - C. True and False Apostles (11:1-15)
  - D. Paul's Reluctant Boasting (11:16 - 12:13)
  - E. Warning To Prepare for Paul's Visit (12:14 - 13:10)
  
- VI. **CONCLUDING REMARKS, GREETINGS, AND BENEDICTION (13:11-14)**

## **Lesson 1 : SALUTATION AND THANKSGIVING (1:1-11)**

### **I. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)**

#### **A. Salutation (1:1-2)**

1. Who was with Paul as he wrote (1:1)? What do we know about him?
2. The letter is addressed to which two groups of people (1:1)?
3. Describe how Paul became an Apostle.

#### **B. Thanksgiving - God's Comfort: Us to You (1:3-11)**

1. What three ways does Paul describe God in v.3?
2. Note/mark/list the repeated use of “we/us/our” pronouns. This will be helpful to continue throughout the entire letter.
3. Why did Paul say God comforted “us”?
4. Note/mark/list the “comfort” words throughout this section.
5. Note/mark/list the “affliction” and “suffering” words throughout this section.



## Lesson 2 : PAUL DEFENDS HIS INTEGRITY (1:12-2:13)

### I. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)

### II. **Paul Defends His Integrity (1:12 - 2:13)**

#### A. **Paul's Sincerity (1:12-14)**

1. What was the “testimony of our conscience” that Paul appeals to (**v. 12-13**)?
2. Where else in Paul's letters does he appeal to his conduct while present?
3. Why did Paul need to remind them of this?
4. What was “our” and “your” reason to be proud in the day of the Lord (**v. 14**)? Does Paul use this language elsewhere in his letters?

#### B. **Paul's Changed Travel Plans (1:15-22)**

1. Using the map provided in **Appendix B**, in a different color for each, roughly trace out each course below
  - a) Paul's initial travel plans described here (**1:15-16**)
  - b) Paul's intended travel plans at the writing of 1 Corinthians (**1 Cor. 16:5**)
  - c) Paul's actual travels as recorded in **Acts 20:1-2**
2. WHY had Paul's plans changed so much? (Compare **v. 15-16** to **1 Cor. 16:5**)
3. What seems to be the accusation made against Paul because of his changed travel plans (**1:17**)?
4. Why was Paul so concerned with this accusation?
5. Paul says his word was as faithful as what? How could Paul make this claim? (**1:18-20**)

6. This question will come up throughout our study as it is a theme of the letter. Looking ahead and reflecting back on your reading of the whole letter, what are some of the things that were questioned about Paul which he responds to in this letter? (c.f. **1:15-17; 10:10; 11:6; 11:7-9; 12:13**)
  
7. What four things does Paul say God had done for them (**1:21-22**)?
  
8. While in this section, Paul has special emphasis on himself and his companions, how does this compare with what he said God has done for ALL Christians (c.f. **Eph. 1:13-14; 4:30**)?

**C. Why They Wrote First Corinthian Letter (1:23 - 2:4)**

1. What was ultimately the reason Paul did NOT come to Corinth when he had originally planned (**1:23**)?
  
2. What was the personal reason for Paul waiting to visit Corinth again (**2:1-2**)?
  
3. Why had Paul written the first letter? What advantage was there to a letter over a personal visit in this situation? (Consider **1:23; 2:2-4, 9; 7:12**)
  
4. What does Paul's description of his writing tell us about his relationship with these brethren (**2:3-4**)?

**D. Restore Your Brother (2:5-11)**

1. What is Paul referencing in this section (c.f. **1 Cor. 4:14-5:13; 2 Cor. 7:5-12**)?
  
2. Note/mark/list the “sorrow/affliction/anguish” words throughout this section.
  
3. By what part of the Corinthian church had the discipline Paul commanded been carried out (**2:6**)?
  
4. Now that this individual had repented, what does Paul instruct the church to do (**2:7-8**)?
  
5. What was one reason Paul had in writing this instruction to them (**2:9**)?
  
6. How could Satan have gotten an advantage in this circumstance (**2:10-11**)?
  
7. Has discipline “failed” if they don’t repent and return like this individual?
  
8. What is the lesson(s) about chastening in this section?

**E. Paul’s Concern For Them (2:12-13)**

1. What door was opened to Paul in Troas (**2:12**)?
  
2. Why did Paul go on to Macedonia if this door was opened to him (**2:13**)?
  
3. Compare what Paul describes here with **Acts 20:1-7**. What detail does Paul add in 2 Cor. which was absent in Acts?

## Lesson 3 : ADEQUACY AS MINISTERS OF A MORE GLORIOUS COVENANT (2:14 - 3:18)

I. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)

II. Paul Defends his Integrity (1:12 - 2:13)

III. **Paul Explains his Ministry** (2:14 - 7:16)

**A. Their Triumph in Christ** (2:14-16a)

1. Why was Paul thankful to God (2:14a)?
2. What does Paul mean that God “manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place” (Or as the NKJV renders it, “through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge”) (2:14b)?
3. To whom were they a “fragrance of Christ to God” among (2:15)?
4. Considering what we know about the church at Corinth, how was Paul simultaneously an “aroma (fragrance) of death” to some and an “aroma (fragrance) or life” to others (2:16a)?
5. Think of some instances in scripture where the same message, presented the same way, had a different effect on people.

**B. Adequacy as Ministers of a More Glorious Covenant From God** (2:16b- 3:18)

1. Note Paul’s question about adequacy (sufficiency) in 2:16 and the answer in 3:5-6.
2. What is the significance of this point as it relates to the theme of the letter?
3. What was different about how Paul and his companions handled the word of God (2:17)?
4. Why did Paul make this point in a number of the letters he wrote to the churches?

5. What was the purpose of the “letters of commendation” [“epistles of commendation” - NKJV](3:1)? Was there anything wrong with these letters?
6. Why did Paul not need one at Corinth (3:2-3)?
7. What was the source of Paul and his companions’ confidence (3:4-6)?

*\*If you are not inclined to mark in your bible, the text is included at the end of this section for your use for the following suggested markings.\**

8. Note/mark/list references to the “old covenant” and how it is described in this text. (i.e. “of the letter”, “the letter kills”, “ministry of death”)
9. In a different color, note/mark/list references to the “new covenant” and how it is described in this text. (i.e. “of the Spirit”, “gives life”, “abound in glory”)
10. What were Paul and his companions “servants/ministers” of (3:6)?
11. How are the concepts “*the letter of the law*” and “*the spirit of the law*” commonly misused/abused by many religious people today?
12. Compare/contrast the “glory” of the two ministries discussed and describe what is meant by this point.

13. For what reason did Moses wear a veil when he came down from Mt. Sinai, after receiving the law (**3:7, 12-13; c.f. Exo. 34:29-35**)?
14. What point does Paul make about boldness not available to Moses and the veil (**3:12-16**)?
15. In what sense did this “same veil” remain unlifted when some read the old covenant (**3:14-15**)?
16. What is the “liberty” available through the Spirit (**3:17**)?
17. What does Paul say is the effect of those in Christ beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face (**3:18**)?

<sup>5</sup> Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, <sup>6</sup> who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

<sup>7</sup> But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, <sup>8</sup> how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? <sup>9</sup> For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. <sup>10</sup> For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it. <sup>11</sup> For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.

<sup>12</sup> Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech, <sup>13</sup> and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. <sup>14</sup> But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. <sup>15</sup> But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; <sup>16</sup> but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. <sup>18</sup> But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. [2 Corinthians 3:5-18, NASB '95]

## Lesson 4: A SINCERE, SUFFERING, BUT HOPEFUL MINISTRY (4:1-5:10)

- I. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)
- II. Paul Defends his Integrity (1:12 - 2:13)
- III. **Paul Explains his Ministry (2:14 - 7:16)**
  - A. Their Triumph in Christ (2:14-16a)
  - B. Adequacy as Ministers of a More Glorious Covenant From God (2:16b - 3:18)
  - C. **A Sincere Ministry (4:1-6)**
    1. What is “this ministry” Paul mentions in **4:1**?
  
    2. What kept Paul and his companions from “losing heart” (**4:1**)?
  
    3. Note/mark/list other times in **chapters 4 & 5** where Paul talks about their commitment to the ministry and the motivation/explanation he gives for their commitment.
  
    4. What does Paul say about his handling of the word of God (**4:2**)?
  
    5. What are some ways in which people could walk in craftiness and adulterate the word of God? Had Paul encountered such “ministers” before?
  
    6. Compare the three times Paul mentions a “veil” - what is the purpose/reason for the veil? Who put the veil there? How is the veil removed?
      - a) Moses’ veil (**3:13**)
  
      - b) Veil at the reading of OT (**3:14-15**)
  
      - c) Veil of their gospel (**4:3-4**)
  
    7. How does Paul present himself to them (**4:5**)?

8. What has God brought light into (4:6)?

**D. A Suffering but Hopeful Ministry (4:7 - 5:10)**

1. What is “this treasure” and why was it “in earthen vessels” (4:7)?
  
2. Note the several “paradoxes” Paul lists concerning their ministry (4:8-12).
  - a) 4:8a -
  
  - b) 4:8b -
  
  - c) 4:9a -
  
  - d) 4:9b -
  
  - e) 4:10 -
  
  - f) 4:11 -
  
  - g) 4:12 -
  
3. What is Paul’s point about “death” and “dying” in 4:8-12? Where else do we see similar language used in Scripture?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Paul quotes from **Psalm 116:10** in 4:13. Read **Psalm 116**. What was the Psalmist’s response to God’s salvation and deliverance? How does this compare to Paul’s point here?

5. What knowledge did they possess which gave them confidence (**4:14**)?
6. For whose sake did they endure what they did (**4:15**)?

*\*If you are not inclined to mark in your bible, the text is included at the end of this section for your use for the following suggested markings.\**

7. Note/mark/list the words and phrases synonymous with “this earthly tent” in **4:16 - 5:9**.
8. Note/mark/list the words and phrases synonymous with “a building from God” in **4:16 - 5:9**.
9. Describe the difference between the outer man and the inner man.
10. What enabled them to view their sufferings described throughout this section (and elsewhere in the letter) as “momentary, light affliction” (**4:17**)?
11. What enables one to “see” things that are “unseen” (**4:18; 5:7; c.f. Heb. 11:1-3, 13-14, 27**)?
12. Again, what was the foundation of Paul’s knowledge of an eternal home in heaven (**5:1; 4:13-14; 4:7**)?
13. What is the connection between the dwellings described in **5:1-4** and what Paul described in **4:16-18**?

14. Who “prepared [them] for this very purpose”? And what “pledge” did he give (5:5)? While this context is specifically about Paul and his companions - note what he says of all Christians in **Eph. 1:13-14**.
15. What was the source of their “good courage” (5:6-8)?
16. What did Paul say was their aim (5:9)?
17. What motivation does Paul provide for them all to pursue that same aim (5:9-10)? What other passages teach that this should be the aim of all Christians?

<sup>16</sup>Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. <sup>17</sup>For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, <sup>18</sup>while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

<sup>5</sup>For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. <sup>2</sup>For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, <sup>3</sup>inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. <sup>4</sup>For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. <sup>5</sup>Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— <sup>7</sup>for we walk by faith, not by sight— <sup>8</sup>we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. <sup>9</sup>Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. <sup>10</sup>For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. [NASB '95]

## Lesson 5: A MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION AND THE APPEAL OF THEIR MINISTRY (5:11 - 7:16)

- I. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)
- II. Paul Defends his Integrity (1:12 - 2:13)
- III. **Paul Explains his Ministry (2:14 - 7:16)**
  - A. Their Triumph in Christ (2:14-16a)
  - B. Adequacy as Ministers of a More Glorious Covenant From God (2:16b - 3:18)
  - C. A Sincere Ministry (4:1-6)
  - D. A Suffering but Hopeful Ministry (4:7 - 5:10)
  - E. **A Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11-21)**
    1. What knowledge motivated them in their preaching (5:11a)? How does this relate to what Paul mentioned as their aim (5:9-10)?
    2. How does Paul relate this to his relationship with the Corinthians (5:11b)?
    3. What reason does Paul give for defending their ministry (5:12)?
    4. In what way did the love of Christ control/compel them (5:13-15)?
    5. Why did Christ die for all (5:15)?
    6. What does Paul mean by no longer recognizing (or regarding) anyone according to the flesh (5:16)?
    7. How complete is the change one undergoes when they are “in Christ” (5:17)? What other passages teach this same thing?

8. Define “reconciled” as it is used here (**5:18-21**). Who had this “ministry of reconciliation”?
  
9. Who was God in Christ reconciling to himself (**5:19**)?
  
10. As “ambassadors for Christ,” what were Paul and his companions appealing the Corinthians to do (**5:20**)?
  
11. An oft misapplied passage - What does Paul mean when he says, “He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (**5:21**)?

**F. The Appeal of Their Ministry (6:1 - 7:3)**

1. Note/mark/list the references throughout this section (including the reference in **5:20**) to the strong appeals they were making to the Corinthians. (i.e. “we beg you...”, “we also urge you...”, “behold...”).
  
2. How would one receive the grace of God in vain (**6:1**)?
  
3. What scripture is quoted in **6:2** and what is the application made?
  
4. What length did they go to to make sure their ministry not be discredited (**6:3**)?

5. In what things did Paul and others commend themselves as servants of God (**6:4-7a**)?
6. By what things did they commend themselves as servants of God (**6:7b-8a**)?
7. List and describe the contrasting circumstances they faced (**6:8b-10**).
8. What were the Corinthians restrained by and what does this mean (**6:11-13**)?
9. Note/mark/list the words/phrases parallel to “fellowship” in **6:14-18**. In the same section note/mark/list the contrasts on either side of that “fellowship”.

<sup>14</sup>Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup>Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup>Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said,

“I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM;  
AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.

<sup>17</sup>“Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE,” says the Lord.

“AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN;  
And I will welcome you.

<sup>18</sup>“And I will be a father to you,  
And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,”  
Says the Lord Almighty.

10. List and read the passages quoted by Paul in **6:16-18** and describe the application of them to the point Paul is making here.

11. What are “these promises” Paul refers to in **7:1**?
  
12. In light of these, Paul urges them to do three things, describe each of these.
  - a) Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh
  
  - b) [Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement] of the spirit
  
  - c) Perfecting holiness in the fear of God
  
13. How does Paul describe his relationship with the Corinthians in **7:2-3**?

**G. Paul’s Confidence in Them (7:4-16)**

1. Why was Paul confident and able to boast concerning the Corinthians even in his affliction (**7:4**)?

*\*If you are not inclined to mark in your bible, the text is included at the end of this section for your use for the following suggested markings.\**

2. Note/mark/list “comfort” in this section, and note the cause of this comfort.
  
3. Note/mark/list “sorrow” in this section.
  
4. Note/mark/list “joy/rejoice” and related words in this section. Also note the cause of the joy in each instance.
  
5. What was the role that Titus played in the comfort Paul describes (**7:6-7, 13-16**)?
  
6. Compare what is said in this section about comfort with how Paul began the letter in **1:3-7**.

7. Contrast the two types of “sorrow” Paul mentions in this text.
8. What does this section teach us in involved in repentance?
9. Explain each of the six things that resulted from their godly sorrow and repentance (7:11).
10. What was *not* the reason Paul wrote? What *was* the reason (7:12)?
11. What can we learn from the relationship of the Corinthians, Paul, and Titus from this section?

<sup>4</sup>Great is my confidence in you; great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.

<sup>5</sup>For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within. <sup>6</sup>But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; <sup>7</sup>and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more. <sup>8</sup>For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—*for* I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while— <sup>9</sup>I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of* repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of God*, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. <sup>10</sup>For the sorrow that is according to *the will of God* produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. <sup>11</sup>For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. <sup>12</sup>So although I wrote to you, *it was* not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God. <sup>13</sup>For this reason we have been comforted.

And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. <sup>14</sup>For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be *the* truth. <sup>15</sup>His affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. <sup>16</sup>I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you. [NASB '95]

## Lesson 6 : INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE COLLECTION FOR NEEDY SAINTS (8:1 - 9:15)

- I. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)
- II. Paul Defends his Integrity (1:12 - 2:13)
- III. Paul Explains his Ministry (2:14 - 7:16)
- IV. Instruction Concerning the Collection for Needy Saints (8:1 - 9:15)**

In conjunction with this 2 chapter section dealing with the collection, read the following passages and consider what is said about 1) who was contributing, 2) who they were taking up a collection for, 3) the apostle who was overseeing the completion of the collection, and 4) the time frame for the collection and its disbursement.

	Who Was Contributing	Who Were the Recipients	Apostle Overseeing	Time Frame
2 Cor. 8-9				
1 Cor. 16:1-4				
Rom. 15:22-27				
Acts 24:11-18				
Put Together:				

### A. The Example of the Macedonians (8:1-5)

1. Note (and it would be helpful to mark in your Bible) each of the ways that Paul describes the gift/attitude of the Macedonians in his urging Corinth to complete their offering. What do each of these tell us about how the Macedonians viewed this offering?
  - a) “Grace of God” (:1b)
  - b) “Abundance of joy” (:2a)
  - c) “Their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality” (:2b)
  - d) “Beyond their ability” (:3a)

- e) “Of their own Accord” (:3b)
  - f) “Begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support” (:4a)
  - g) “They first gave themselves to the Lord” (:5b)
  - h) “And to us by the will of God” (:5c)
2. Was it “easy” for the Macedonians to contribute?
  3. Who was identified as the **recipient** of this offering (8:4)?
  4. Ultimately, what motivated such generosity among the Macedonians?

**B. Paul’s Exhortations to Corinth (8:6-15)**

1. Continue to note the language used to describe this gift and the attitude associated with it. (Again, it would be helpful to mark these in your Bible)
2. What task had Paul given to Titus (8:6)?
3. What was Paul’s desire for the Corinthians (8:7)?
4. Does Paul **command** them to give (8:8)? Why or why not?
5. What does he repeatedly appeal to throughout this chapter, specifically in:
  - a) (8:1-5)
  - b) (8:9)
  - c) (8:24)
6. What was Paul’s **opinion/advice** regarding their gift (8:10-11)?

7. What Old Testament example does Paul use to illustrate the principle of **equality** in this section (**8:12-15**)? Locate and read this account in the OT - how does this example illustrate his point?

**C. Messengers of the Gift (8:16-24)**

1. What does Paul commend Titus for in relation to this offering (**8:16-17**)?
2. What was said of each of the brethren mentioned in connection with handling the funds for needy saints (**8:16-19, 22-23**)?
  - a) Titus -
  - b) The “appointed” brother -
  - c) “Our brother” -
3. Why was this essential to mention (**8:20-21**)?
4. What would be the “proof” of the Corinthian’s love (**8:24**)?

**D. A Plea for Liberality (9:1-15)**

1. For the second time in this letter, note who Paul identifies as the **recipient** of this offering in **9:1**.
2. Why was it superfluous for Paul to write about this (**9:1-2**)?
3. What was the result of the Corinthians’ zeal (**9:2**)? What can we learn from this about influence?
4. Why had Paul sent brethren to them before his coming (**9:3-5**)?

5. Explain the principle Paul is teaching about giving through the illustration he uses in **9:6**.
6. Describe the three principles Paul gives concerning giving that is pleasing to God (**9:7**).
  - a) “As he has purposed in his heart”
  - b) “Not grudgingly or under compulsion”
  - c) “A cheerful giver”
7. What is the point Paul makes about God’s grace in relation to giving (**9:8-11**)?
8. From what Psalm does Paul quote (**9:9**)? What is the subject of this Psalm? How does this relate to what Paul is teaching?
9. For the third time in this letter, note who Paul identifies as the **recipient** of this offering in **9:12**.
10. List at least 4 things which would be accomplished by the the Corinthians following through with their generous giving (**9:12-14**).
11. Why would the needy saints glorify God because of this gift from the Corinthians (**9:13,14; 8:1-2; 6-7; 9**)?
12. What is God’s “indefinable gift” in this context (**9:15**)?

## Lesson 7: PAUL DEFENDS HIS AUTHORITY (10:1 - 13:10)

- I. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)
- II. Paul Defends his Integrity (1:12 - 2:13)
- III. Paul Explains his Ministry (2:14 - 7:16)
- IV. Instruction Concerning the Collection of Needy Saints (8:1 - 9:15)
- V. **Paul Defends his Authority (10:1 - 13:10)**
  - A. **Paul Explains his Conduct (10:1-6)**
    1. What are some of the accusations against Paul in this chapter (10:1-2, 10)?
    2. What is the difference between “*walk[ing] in the flesh*” and “*war[ring] according to the flesh*” (10:3)?
    3. Contrast what some were saying about Paul and what he says about the warfare he was engaged in (10:1, 4-6).
  - B. **Paul Responds to Accusers (10:7-18)**
    1. What was the problem with the Corinthians' perspective (10:7)?
    2. What was the source of their authority? What was the purpose of their authority (10:8-9)?
    3. What does Paul assure the Corinthians of concerning his words and his deeds (10:10-11)?
    4. What does Paul seem to indicate his accusers were doing and why would he not engage in the same thing himself (10:12)?

5. What was the “sphere” of Paul’s labor (**10:13-16**)?
6. What does it mean to “boast (glory) in the Lord” (**10:17**)?
7. What is the true standard of approval (**10:18**)?
8. In what way has Paul demonstrated his approval/commendation from the Lord already in this chapter?

**C. True and False Apostles (11:1-15)**

1. What did Paul consider to be “foolishness” (**11:1**)?
2. How does Paul describe his relationship with Corinth (**11:2**)?
3. What was Paul’s deep fear/concern for these brethren (**11:3-4**)?
4. What had Paul made evident to them concerning his teaching in relation to “the most eminent apostles” (**11:5-6**)?
5. What does it seem was implied about Paul since he did not take support from the Corinthians (**11:7**)?
6. List the reasons Paul gave for not taking financial support from Corinth (**11:7-12; 1 Cor. 9:1-27**).
7. How was Paul supported while he was at Corinth (**11:8-9; Acts 18:1-4**)?
8. Despite these accusations, why was Paul going to continue laboring for them without accepting their financial support (**11:10-12**)?

9. How does Paul identify his adversaries (**11:13-15**)?
  
10. Explain Paul's use of irony in the following statements, and note other places in this last section where Paul seems to use irony:
  - a) *"You bear this beautifully (11:4)"*
  
  - b) *"For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles (super-apostles) (11:5)"*
  
  - c) *"For you, being so wise, tolerate the foolish gladly (11:19)"*
  
  - d) *"To my shame I must say that we have been weak by comparison (11:21)"*

**D. Paul's Reluctant Boasting (11:16 - 12:13)**

1. Why does Paul excuse himself before boasting? What made Paul's boasting necessary (**11:16-19**)?
  
2. What kind of behavior had they tolerated from these false apostles (**11:20-21**) and how does this compare to how Paul had treated them?
  
3. How did Paul compare to his accusers (**11:21-23a**)?
  
4. What does **v. 22** reveal about who these false teachers were?
  
5. What is the nature of Paul's adversities as a servant of Christ (**11:23b-27**)? Where can we read of some of these events?

6. Beyond these physical things, what else did Paul endure daily (**11:28-29**)?
7. If Paul was forced to boast, what would he choose to boast in (**11:30-31**)?
8. How did Paul arrive in Damascus initially (**Acts 9:1-2**)? How did he leave (**11:32-33; Acts 9:23-25**)?
9. Why would it not be profitable for Paul to boast (**12:1**)?
10. What happened to some man Paul knew (**12:2-4**)?
11. While Paul refused to boast of himself, on whose behalf would he boast (**12:5a**)?
12. Unlike his adversaries, what was the one thing Paul would boast of (**11:30; 12:5b, 9**)?
13. Why was Paul given a “thorn in the flesh” (**12:6-7**)?
14. What was Paul’s request and God’s answer concerning this “thorn”, and how did Paul embrace the Lord’s answer (**12:8-10**)?
15. While Paul had to resort to foolish boasting to appeal to the Corinthians, how should the interaction with Corinth have gone? Why (**12:11-13**)?

**E. Warning To Prepare for Paul's Visit (12:14 - 13:10)**

1. How had Paul always treated them (12:14-15a)? How had this evidently been reciprocated by them to Paul (12:15b; 6:11-13)?
  
2. What seems to have been the accusation against Paul in 12:16-18, and what was his response?
  
3. While we have discussed Paul's defense throughout the letter, what is he *really* doing here (12:19)?
  
4. What was Paul's fear now concerning Corinth (12:20-21)?
  
5. What words would be established by two or three witnesses and why did they need to be established "by the testimony of two or three" (13:1)?
  
6. What were the Corinthians seeking and why (13:2-3)?
  
7. What is Paul's point about weakness and power concerning Christ and them (13:4)?
  
8. Why did Paul tell them to "test" and "examine" themselves (13:5-6)?
  
9. Why would some still think of Paul as "disqualified" (13:7-8)?
  
10. For what reason would they be glad if they were "weak" and Corinth was "strong" (13:9)?
  
11. What was Paul's purpose in writing this epistle (13:10)?

## Lesson 8: CONCLUDING REMARKS, GREETINGS, AND BENEDICTION (13:11-14) – REVIEW

- I. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)
- II. Paul Defends his Integrity (1:12 - 2:13)
- III. Paul Explains his Ministry (2:14 - 7:16)
- IV. Instruction Concerning the Collection for Needy Saints (8:1 - 9:15)
- V. Paul Defends his Authority (10:1 - 13:10)
- VI. Concluding Remarks, Greetings, and Benediction (13:11-14)**
  1. Describe the meaning of each of these instructions found in **v. 11**
    - a) Rejoice
    - b) Be made Complete
    - c) Be Comforted
    - d) Be like-minded
    - e) Live in peace
  2. What blessing is attached to those who heed this instruction (**13:11**)?
  3. What is the “holy kiss” (**13:12**)?
  4. What three things does Paul desire to be with them (**13:14**):
    - a) The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord Jesus Christ
    - b) The \_\_\_\_\_ of God
    - c) The \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit

**REVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1. Give a brief summary of the founding of the church at Corinth.**
- 2. What were some of the issues at Corinth Paul addressed in 1 Corinthians?**
- 3. What kind of a report did Titus bring of their reception of that letter?**
- 4. Why did Paul and Timothy write 2 Corinthians?**
- 5. To whom did they address this letter?**
- 6. What are 3 main divisions in the text of this letter?**
- 7. Why had Paul's travel plans changed? What did Paul have to respond to in describing his changed plans?**
- 8. How does Paul differentiate between the old and the new covenant in this letter?**
- 9. Give an overview of Paul's description of his ministry.**
- 10. What are some key takeaways from Paul's instruction concerning the collection?**
- 11. List some of the charges/accusations Paul responds to throughout the letter.**
- 12. What are some key takeaways from this letter?**

# APPENDIX A. MAP OF PAUL'S 2ND PREACHING TRIP



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# APPENDIX B. MAP OF PAUL'S 3RD PREACHING TRIP



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## APPENDIX C. TEXT OF 2 CORINTHIANS

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy *our* brother,

To the church of God which is at Corinth with all the saints who are throughout Achaia:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ. But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; or if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which is effective in the patient enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; and our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing that as you are sharers of our sufferings, so also you are *sharers* of our comfort.

For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came *to us* in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; who delivered us from so great a *peril of death*, and will deliver *us*, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through *the prayers of many*.

For our proud confidence is this: the testimony of our conscience, that in holiness and godly sincerity, not in fleshly wisdom but in the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you. For we write nothing else to you than what you read and understand, and I hope you will understand until the end; just as you also partially did understand us, that we are your reason to be proud as you also are ours, in the day of our Lord Jesus.

In this confidence I intended at first to come to you, so that you might twice receive a blessing; that is, to pass your way into Macedonia, and again from Macedonia to come to you, and by you to be helped on my journey to Judea. Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, so that with me there will be yes, yes and no, no *at the same time*? But as God is faithful, our word to you is not yes and no. For the Son of God, Christ Jesus, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silvanus and Timothy—was not yes and no, but is yes in Him. For as many as are the promises of God, in Him they are yes; therefore also through Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed us and gave *us* the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge.

But I call God as witness to my soul, that to spare you I did not come again to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith, but are workers with you for your joy; for in your faith you are standing firm.

But I determined this for my own sake, that I would not come to you in sorrow again. For if I cause you sorrow, who then makes me glad but the one whom I made sorrowful? This is the very thing I wrote you, so that when I came, I would not have sorrow from those who ought to make me rejoice; having confidence in you all that my joy would be *the joy* of you all. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you.

But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree—in order not to say too much—to all of you. Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which *was inflicted* by the majority, so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort *him*, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love for him. For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. But one whom you forgive anything, I *forgive* also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, *I did it* for your sakes in the presence of Christ, so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.

Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord, I had no rest for my spirit, not finding Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I went on to Macedonia.

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men; being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate *as* servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading *as* it was, how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses *it*. For if that which fades away *was* with glory, much more that which remains *is* in glory.

Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech, and *are* not like Moses, *who* used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away. But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is

liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; *we are* afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you.

But having the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you. For all things *are* for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God.

Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this *house* we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life. Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.

Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord— for we walk by faith, not by sight— we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord. Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. We are not again commending ourselves to you but *are* giving you an occasion to be proud of us, so that you will have *an answer* for those who take pride in appearance and not in heart. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are of sound mind, it is for you. For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain— for He says,

“At the acceptable time I listened to you,  
And on the day of salvation I helped you.”

Behold, now is “the acceptable time,” behold, now is “the day of salvation”— giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited, but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger, in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in genuine love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left, by glory and dishonor, by evil report and good report; *regarded* as deceivers and yet true; as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet behold, we live; as punished yet not put to death, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things.

Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. Now in a like exchange—I speak as to children—open wide *to us* also.

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said,

“I will dwell in them and walk among them;  
And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.  
“Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate,” says the Lord.  
“And do not touch what is unclean;  
And I will welcome you.  
“And I will be a father to you,

And you shall be sons and daughters to Me,”  
Says the Lord Almighty.

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Make room for us *in your hearts*; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one. I do not speak to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together. Great is my confidence in you; great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.

For even when we came into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were afflicted on every side: conflicts without, fears within. But God, who comforts the depressed, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not only by his coming, but also by the comfort with which he was comforted in you, as he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me; so that I rejoiced even more. For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it—*for* I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while— I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of* repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of* God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter. So although I wrote to you, *it was* not for the sake of the offender nor for the sake of the one offended, but that your earnestness on our behalf might be made known to you in the sight of God. For this reason we have been comforted.

And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be *the* truth. His affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you.

Now, brethren, we *wish to* make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the churches of Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, *they gave* of their own accord, begging us with much urging for the favor of participation in the support of the saints, and *this*, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God. So we urged Titus that as he had previously made a beginning, so he would also complete in you this gracious work as well.

But just as you abound in everything, in faith and utterance and knowledge and in all earnestness and in the love we inspired in you, *see* that you abound in this gracious work also. I am not speaking *this* as a command, but as proving through the earnestness of others the sincerity of your love also. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich. I give *my* opinion in this matter, for this is to your advantage, who were the first to begin a year ago not only to do *this*, but also to desire *to do it*. But now finish doing it also, so that just as *there was* the readiness to desire it, so *there may be* also the completion of it by your ability. For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what *a person* has, not according to what he does not have. For *this* is not for the ease of others *and* for your affliction, but by way of equality— at this present time your abundance *being a supply* for their need, so that their abundance also may become *a supply* for your need, that there may be equality; as it is written, “He who *gathered* much did not have too much, and he who *gathered* little had no lack.”

But thanks be to God who puts the same earnestness on your behalf in the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest, he has gone to you of his own accord. We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in *the things of* the gospel *has spread* through all the churches; and not only *this*, but he has also been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord Himself, and *to show* our readiness, taking precaution so that no one will discredit us in our administration of this generous gift; for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men. We have sent with them our brother, whom we have often tested and found diligent in many

things, but now even more diligent because of *his* great confidence in you. As for Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker among you; as for our brethren, *they are* messengers of the churches, a glory to Christ. Therefore openly before the churches, show them the proof of your love and of our reason for boasting about you.

For it is superfluous for me to write to you about this ministry to the saints; for I know your readiness, of which I boast about you to the Macedonians, *namely*, that Achaia has been prepared since last year, and your zeal has stirred up most of them. But I have sent the brethren, in order that our boasting about you may not be made empty in this case, so that, as I was saying, you may be prepared; otherwise if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to speak of you—will be put to shame by this confidence. So I thought it necessary to urge the brethren that they would go on ahead to you and arrange beforehand your previously promised bountiful gift, so that the same would be ready as a bountiful gift and not affected by covetousness.

Now this *I say*, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one *must do* just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; as it is written,

“He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor,  
His righteousness endures forever.”

Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God. Because of the proof given by this ministry, they will glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your contribution to them and to all, while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

Now I, Paul, myself urge you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent! I ask that when I am present I *need* not be bold with the confidence with which I propose to be courageous against some, who regard us as if we walked according to the flesh. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, and we are ready to punish all disobedience, whenever your obedience is complete.

You are looking at things as they are outwardly. If anyone is confident in himself that he is Christ's, let him consider this again within himself, that just as he is Christ's, so also are we. For even if I boast somewhat further about our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be put to shame, for I do not wish to seem as if I would terrify you by my letters. For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his personal presence is unimpressive and his speech contemptible." Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when absent, such persons *we are* also in deed when present.

For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding. But we will not boast beyond *our* measure, but within the measure of the sphere which God apportioned to us as a measure, to reach even as far as you. For we are not overextending ourselves, as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come even as far as you in the gospel of Christ; not boasting beyond *our* measure, *that is*, in other men's labors, but with the hope that as your faith grows, we will be, within our sphere, enlarged even more by you, so as to preach the gospel even to the regions beyond you, *and* not to boast in what has been accomplished in the sphere of another. But he who boasts is to boast in the Lord. For it is not he who commends himself that is approved, but he whom the Lord commends.

I wish that you would bear with me in a little foolishness; but indeed you are bearing with me. For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you *as* a pure virgin. But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity *of devotion* to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear *this* beautifully. For I consider myself not in the least inferior to the most eminent apostles. But even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I am not *so* in knowledge; in fact, in every way we have made *this* evident to you in all things.

Or did I commit a sin in humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you without charge? I robbed other churches by taking wages *from them* to serve you; and when I was present with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone; for when the brethren came from Macedonia they fully supplied my need, and in everything I kept myself from being a burden to you, and will continue to do so. As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be stopped in the regions of Achaia. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows *I do!*

But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Again I say, let no one think me foolish; but if *you do*, receive me even as foolish, so that I also may boast a little. What I am saying, I am not saying as the Lord would, but as in foolishness, in this confidence of boasting. Since many boast according to the flesh, I will boast also. For you, being *so* wise, tolerate the foolish gladly. For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, anyone devours you, anyone takes advantage of you, anyone exalts himself, anyone hits you in the face. To *my* shame I *must* say that we have been weak *by comparison*.

But in whatever respect anyone *else* is bold—I speak in foolishness—I am just as bold myself. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. *I have been* on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches. Who is weak without my being weak? Who is led into sin without my intense concern?

If I have to boast, I will boast of what pertains to my weakness. The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, He who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the ethnarch under Aretas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenes in order to seize me, and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and *so* escaped his hands.

Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a man was caught up to the third heaven. And I know how such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows— was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak. On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to *my* weaknesses. For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain *from this*, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees *in* me or hears from me.

Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I

will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

I have become foolish; you yourselves compelled me. Actually I should have been commended by you, for in no respect was I inferior to the most eminent apostles, even though I am a nobody. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles. For in what respect were you treated as inferior to the rest of the churches, except that I myself did not become a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

Here for this third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for *their* parents, but parents for *their* children. I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? But be that as it may, I did not burden you myself; nevertheless, crafty fellow that I am, I took you in by deceit. *Certainly* I have not taken advantage of you through any of those whom I have sent to you, have I? I urged Titus *to go*, and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take any advantage of you, did he? Did we not conduct ourselves in the same spirit *and walk* in the same steps?

All this time you have been thinking that we are defending ourselves to you. *Actually*, it is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ; and all for your upbuilding, beloved. For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps *there will be* strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances; I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.

This is the third time I am coming to you. Every fact is to be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses. I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest *as well*, that if I come again I will not spare *anyone*, since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, and who is not

weak toward you, but mighty in you. For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God *directed* toward you.

Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test? But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test. Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved. For we can do nothing against the truth, but *only* for the truth. For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete. For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I *need* not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

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