

2 CORINTHIANS

Main Theme: Correcting The Problem Church Relative to Doctrine

Primary Reference Source: The McArthur Study Bible

Background: As recorded in 1 Corinthians 4:17 and 16:10-11, Paul sent Timothy to Corinth while he remained in Ephesus. Paul was informed, possibly by Timothy, that self-styled false apostles had come to Corinth, and they were compounding the problems in the Corinthian church by teaching their false gospel (false doctrine) and assaulting the character of Paul. Since their gospel and doctrinal teaching was opposed to Paul's gospel and doctrinal teaching, they had to convince their following that Paul was the enemy. When Paul received this news, he immediately went to Corinth. This visit (2 Corinthians 2:1) was known as the painful visit. This visit (second visit) was not successful since he was openly insulted (2 Corinthians 2:5-8, 10, and 7:12). Since his presence in Corinth was not beneficial at the time, he returned to Ephesus and wrote what is known as the "severe letter" (2 Corinthians 2:4) and sent it to Corinth through Titus (2 Corinthians 7:5-16). Leaving Ephesus after the riot (Acts 19:23 – 20:1), Paul went to Troas to meet Titus after he delivered the "severe letter" to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 2:12-13). Although Paul had an open door to preach the gospel in Troas, he was unable to minister there because he was troubled by the state of the Corinthian church and their response to his "severe letter." Titus met Paul with the news that the majority of the Corinthians had repented of their rebellion against Paul (2 Corinthians 7:7). "Wise enough to know that some rebellious attitudes still smoldered under the surface, and could erupt again, Paul wrote (possibly from Philippi, cross reference 2 Corinthians 11:9 with Philippians 4:15; also, some early manuscripts list Philippi as the place of the writing) the Corinthians the letter, called 2 Corinthians. In this letter, though the apostle expressed his relief and joy at their repentance (2 Corinthians 7:8-16), his main concern was to defend his apostleship (Chapters 1-7), exhort the Corinthians to resume preparations for the collection for the poor at Jerusalem (Chapters 8-9), and confront the false apostles head on (Chapters 10-13). He then went to Corinth, as he had written (2 Corinthians 12:14 & 13:1-2). The Corinthians participation in the Jerusalem offering (Romans 15:26) implies that Paul's third visit to that church was successful."

SCRIPTURE VERSES AND SCRIPTURE TEXT FROM THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION BIBLE IN BOLD

2 Corinthians Chapter 1

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

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

2 Corinthians 1:1 Paul's identification of himself as an apostle means that he is an official messenger sent by Jesus Christ. This means that Paul did not appoint himself, rather, he was appointed by God, and his letter of 2 Corinthians is not his own message but the words of Christ. Paul's cherished son in the faith, who was also a dominate person in his life and ministry, was Timothy. Timothy was with Paul during the founding of the church at Corinth (Acts 18:1-5).

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

2 Corinthians 1:2 This verse represents Paul's normal greeting in his epistles. Grace means unmerited favor. Peace is one of its benefits. Grace and peace are personified in the person of Jesus Christ.

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

2 Corinthians 1:3 Paul's statement that God is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ reveals that the Lord Jesus is of the same essence as God.

Father of mercies – "Paul borrowed from Jewish liturgical language and a synagogue prayer that called for God to treat the sinful individual with kindness, love, and tenderness."

God of all comfort – "An Old Testament description of God who is the ultimate source of every true act of comfort."

4. who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

2 Corinthians 1:4 "This term (tribulation) refers to crushing pressure, because in Paul's life and ministry there was always something attempting to weaken him, restrict or confine his ministry, or even crush out his life." Paul knew, however, that no matter what confronted him, he knew that God would sustain and strengthen him. God blesses us with His comfort so that we can be a comfort to others.

5. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:5 While we must suffer for the sake of Christ, God provides comfort and consolation through Christ.

6. Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer.

2 Corinthians 1:6 Paul labored and suffered to bring the Corinthians to salvation. When a person receives God's salvation, he or she is empowered to serve, which includes being able to endure suffering. Although we suffer for the cause of Christ as believers, Christ provides His consolation in the midst of suffering.

7. And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.

2 Corinthians 1:7 In serving the Lord and suffering for Him, God gives the provision of His consolation and comfort.

8. For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life.

2 Corinthians 1:8 Paul is alluding to a recent occurrence in or around the city of Ephesus. The details of this situation are not known. Paul faced something that was beyond human survival and he was extremely discouraged. The Greek word for despair literally means the total absence of an exit. "The Corinthians were aware of what had happened to Paul, but did not realize the utter severity of it, or what God was doing through those circumstances."

9. Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead,

2 Corinthians 1:9 This verse provides unmistakable clarity concerning Paul's situation. Paul and his party were so sure that they were going to die that they pronounced the death sentence upon themselves. Paul and his party knew that their only hope was in God's power to raise the dead. God was the only hope of rescue in this extreme circumstance.

10. who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us; in whom we trust that He will still deliver us,

2 Corinthians 1:10 Through the perilous incident, Paul and his companions were more firmly established in trusting the Lord than they had been previously.

11. you also helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the gift granted to us through many.

2 Corinthians 1:11 Paul recognized that his and his companions deliverance from certain death resulted from God's power and sovereign purpose which the faithful Corinthians had prayed for. "Paul was confident that God's sovereign purpose would be accomplished, balanced by the prayerful participation of believers." Paul regarded such prayers as a gift.

12. For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

2 Corinthians 1:12 Paul assured his Corinthian audience that he has no hidden agenda or ulterior motive which has complicated philosophies as its covering. Rather, Paul and his companions conduct themselves in simplicity and godly sincerity given through the grace of God. God's grace is what Paul and his companions desired to manifest to others.

13. For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end

2 Corinthians 1:13 Paul's written communication with the Corinthians was always clear, straightforward, understandable, consistent and genuine. Everything he wrote is open and honest and can be taken at face value. There are no hidden meanings.

14. (as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

2 Corinthians 1:14 "As the Corinthians read and heard Paul's unfolding instruction to them, they continued to understand more." Paul eagerly longed for the Lord's coming when he and the Corinthian believers could rejoice over each other.

15. And in this confidence I intended to come to you before, that you might have a second benefit--

2 Corinthians 1:15 Paul's original plan was to visit the Corinthian church twice so that they might derive further benefit from his teaching. Also, he wanted to share the fact that he rejoiced over them, as addressed in verse 14.

16. to pass by way of you to Macedonia, to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea.

2 Corinthians 1:16 "Paul had planned to leave Ephesus, stop at Corinth on the way to Macedonia, and return to Corinth after his ministry in Macedonia. For some reason, Paul's plans changed and he was unable to stop in Corinth the first time."

17. Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No?

2 Corinthians 1:17 “Paul is probably quoting some actual accusations of dishonesty brought by his opponents.” The false apostles who had invaded the church seized upon Paul’s honest change of schedule as a means to attack his character and discredit him. Paul affirms that his “yes” and “no” responses were genuine; he really meant what he said.

18. But as God is faithful, our word to you was not Yes and No.

2 Corinthians 1:18 Paul is saying that just as God is faithful, he is faithful, and his words are not contradictory being both yes and no.

19. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, Silvanus, and Timothy—was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes.

2 Corinthians 1:19 The teaching of the false apostles was contradictory. This was not true of the teaching of Paul, Timothy, and Silas (The Latin name for Silas is Silvanus). One false teacher would say yes to one claim and another false teacher would say no to the same claim. This is how Paul identified the false teachers as yes and no teachers. On the other hand, when Paul presents an issue, his position is either a consistent yes and yes or a consistent no and no. Paul states that those things which pertain to being in Christ are always yes.

20. For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.

2 Corinthians 1:20 “All God’s Old Testament and New Testament promises of peace, joy, love, goodness, forgiveness, salvation, sanctification, fellowship, hope, glorification, and heaven are made possible and fulfilled in Christ.” It is these promises that Paul taught faithfully, and the appropriate response to such teaching is yes and amen. Amen is the Hebrew word of affirmation.

21. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God,

2 Corinthians 1:21

He who establishes us – “Christ’s saving work of grace stabilizes believers and places them on a firm foundation in Him.”

And has anointed us – “This word is borrowed from a commissioning service that would symbolically set apart kings, prophets, priests, and special servants. The Holy Spirit sets apart believers and empowers them for the service of gospel proclamation and ministry.”

22. who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

2 Corinthians 1:22 “The spirit is the down payment on the believer’s eternal inheritance.” The act of sealing refers to the ancient practice of placing soft wax on a document and imprinting the wax with a stamp that indicates ownership, authorship, authenticity, and protection. Paul’s reference to sealing documents illustrates how believers are sealed in the Holy Spirit.

23. Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth.

2 Corinthians 1:23 Paul states that he did not come earlier to Corinth because he wanted to give them time to repent and correct their sinful behavior.

24. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

2 Corinthians 1:24 Paul did not want to domineer the Corinthians, but he wanted to minister and work with them as partners in the faith.

2 Corinthians Chapter 2

1. But I determined this within myself, that I would not come again to you in sorrow.

2 Corinthians 2:1 Paul did not want to confront carnal, sinful behavior in the Corinthian church as he had before. This was spiritually painful to Paul.

2. For if I make you sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me?

2 Corinthians 2:2 Paul finds his joy in the Corinthian believers, therefore, if he has to correct them for gross, out of control carnality and sin, this is painful and brings sorrow. If the Corinthians are chastised by him for sin, which promotes sorrow rather than joy, Paul also loses his joy and gladness. Paul desired to build the Corinthians up in the faith through teaching the word, not rebuking them for sin and rebellion.

3. And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, having confidence in you all that my joy is the joy of you all.

2 Corinthians 2:3 “Paul’s reason for writing was that those in sin would repent – then there would be mutual joy when the apostle came.”

4. For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

2 Corinthians 2:4 Paul alludes to his letter of rebuke known as the severe letter. Paul found it very difficult to write such a letter, but he had to because he loved the Corinthian believers.

5. But if anyone has caused grief, he has not grieved me, but all of you to some extent – not to be too severe.

2 Corinthians 2:5 In the Corinthian church there was a man who had sinned. This sin had caused grief for this entire local church body. This man was apparently penitent and Paul sought to soften the charge against him.

**6. This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man,
7. so that, on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow.
8. Therefore I urge you to reaffirm your love to him.
9. For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.**

2 Corinthians 2:6-9 The church at Corinth had followed the biblical process of disciplining the sinning man. Apparently, the man was now being treated as an outcast which produced deep sorrow. Paul says that the process of discipline and punishment was enough; now it was time to show mercy because the man had repented.

10. Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ,

2 Corinthians 2:10 Paul affirms that he has forgiven the sinning man. Paul wanted this same forgiving attitude to be instilled in the Corinthian church.

11. lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

2 Corinthians 2:11 “The devil wants to produce sin and animosity that will destroy church unity. He uses every possible approach to accomplish this – from legalism to libertinism, intolerance to excessive tolerance.” In this case the church was showing intolerance.

12. Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened to me by the Lord,

2 Corinthians 2:12 “God sovereignly provided a great evangelistic opportunity for Paul, which may have led to the planting of the church in Troas (Acts 20:5-12). Because of the success of his preaching, Paul was assured that this opportunity was from God.” Troas was a coastal city north of Ephesus in the western Asia Minor province of Mysia.

13. I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.

2 Corinthians 2:13 The riots in Ephesus probably caused Paul to leave for Troas. It is certain that his main reason for going was to find Titus, who delivered the severe letter to the Corinthians, and inquire as to how the Corinthians had responded. Paul's concern for the Corinthian church highly motivated him to find Titus. Titus was one of Paul's most important Gentile converts and closest associates in ministry. So anxious was he to meet with Titus that he left the open door at Troas and went to Macedonia. Macedonia bordered the shore of the northwest Aegean Sea, north of Achaia. Paul hoped to intersect Titus, who would have to pass through Macedonia, on his journey back to Corinth.

14. Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

2 Corinthians 2:14 "Paul drew from the imagery of the official and exalted Roman ceremony called the Triumph, in which a victorious general was honored with a festive, ceremonial parade through the streets of Rome." Paul was also grateful for the privilege of being used as an influence for Christ wherever he went. The imagery comes from the strong, sweet smell of incense of crushed flowers strewn under horses hooves, produced a powerful aroma that filled the city. By analogy, every believer is transformed and called by the Lord to be an influence for His gospel throughout the world."

15. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

2 Corinthians 2:15 The influence of believers for Christ, spoken of in verse 14, impacts those who are being saved and those who are perishing.

16. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?

2 Corinthians 2:16 "To some, the gospel message brings eternal life and ultimate glorification. To others it is a stumbling stone of offense that brings eternal death." No one in his own strength is capable of serving God in perfectly manifesting Christ to the world. It can only be done in God's strength. (1 Corinthians 15:10, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 1:19, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 2:13, Colossians 1:29)

17. For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

2 Corinthians 2:17 Paul is specifically addressing the false teachers at Corinth. The term peddling from a Greek verb means to corrupt. The word came to refer to con men, who by their cleverness and deception, were able to sell as genuine an inferior product that was only a cheap imitation. "The false teachers in the church were coming with clever, deceptive rhetoric to offer

a degraded, adulterated message that mixed paganism and Jewish tradition. They were dishonest men seeking personal profit and prestige at the expense of gospel truth and people's souls."

2 Corinthians Chapter 3

1. Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?

2 Corinthians 3:1 Paul begins chapter 3 with two questions:

1. "Do we begin again to commend ourselves?"

"The Greek word for commend means to introduce." Paul is asking the rhetorical question does he need to reintroduce himself.

2. "Or do we need, as some others, epistles of commendation to you or letters of commendation from you?"

The false teachers accused Paul of not possessing the appropriate documents to prove his authenticity as a teacher and an apostle. "Such letters were often used to introduce and authenticate someone to the first century churches (1 Corinthians 16:3, 10, & 11). The false teachers undoubtedly arrived in Corinth with such letters, which they may have been forged (Acts 15:1, 5) or obtained under false pretenses from prominent members of the Jerusalem church. Paul's point was that he did not need secondhand testimony when the Corinthians had firsthand proof of his sincere and godly character, as well as the truth of his message that regenerated them."

2. You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

2 Corinthians 3:2 Paul states that he has no written letters testifying to his authenticity. The proofs of his authenticity were the transformed lives of the Corinthians, resulting from his ministry. "Their changed lives were like an open letter that could be seen and read by all men as a testimony to Paul's faithfulness and the truth of his message."

3. clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart.

2 Corinthians 3:3 Paul's teaching was not his own, it was the teaching of Jesus Christ. Since the Corinthian believers received Paul's teaching, they were an epistle of Christ. The word of God given to the Corinthians by Paul was empowered by the Holy Spirit. When the Corinthians received the word of God they were transformed by the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit God was writing His law on the hearts (inner spirit) of the transformed Corinthian believers. "The false teachers claimed external adherence to the Mosaic Law as the basis of salvation, but the transformed lives of the Corinthians proved that salvation was an internal change wrought by God in the heart."

4. And we have such trust though Christ toward God.

2 Corinthians 3:4 Paul knew that his ministry was to preach the gospel and build believers up in the faith. The building of the church is the Lord's work. It is God alone who brings people to faith. God knows His business and He will do all of His good pleasure. Paul knew that his duty was to stay the course and continue toward the goal.

5. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God,

2 Corinthians 3:5 Paul was dependent upon divine revelation and the Holy Spirit's power. "Only God can make a person adequate to do his work, and Paul realized that truth."

6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2 Corinthians 3:6 The New Covenant centers around the sacrificial substitutionary death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection from the dead. The letter is a reference to the old covenant, represented primarily in the Ten Commandments etched in stone. "The letter kills in two ways:

1) it results in a living death. Before Paul was converted, he thought he was saved by keeping the law, but all it did was kill his peace, joy and hope;

2) it results in spiritual death (Romans 7:9-11, Romans 5:12, Galatians 3:10-12). Only Jesus Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit can produce eternal life in one who believes."

7. But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away,

2 Corinthians 3:7 The Old Testament law was a ministry of death since it brings the knowledge of sin and holds up a perfect standard which no sinner can meet. Anyone who cannot meet the demands of the law on his own is condemned.

When God gave the law at Mount Sinai, the glory and awesome power of God covered the mountain. Moses, being exposed to this glory, reflected the glory of God in his face. This glory on Moses face faded away.

8. how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?

9. For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, the ministry of righteousness exceeds much more in glory.

10. For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels.

2 Corinthians 3:8-10 Paul argues that such glory (great glory) attended the giving of the law which brings death, how much more glorious will be the ministry of the Spirit in the New Covenant which brings righteousness and life.

11. For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.

2 Corinthians 3:11 “The law had a fading glory. It was not the final solution or the last word on the plight of sinners. The New Covenant is what remains because it is the consummation of God’s plan of salvation. It has a permanent glory.”

12. Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech --

2 Corinthians 3:12 Our true hope is that there is total and complete forgiveness of sins for those who believe the gospel. The Greek word for boldness is courageously.

13. unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.

2 Corinthians 3:13 The Old Covenant did not have the same kind of hope and confidence. God’s manifest presence to Israel through Moses illuminated face was temporary. Moses covered this fading glory with a veil. This veil symbolized the types and symbols of the Old Covenant which kept the plain simple view of the gospel covered.

14. But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

15. But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart.

16. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

2 Corinthians 3:14-16 “Without Christ the Old Testament is unintelligible. But when a person comes to Christ, the veil is lifted and his spiritual perception is no longer impaired (Isaiah 25:6-8). With the veil removed, believers are able to see the glory of God revealed in Christ (John 1:14). They understand that the law was never given to save them, but to lead them to the One who would.”

17. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

2 Corinthians 3:17 Through the Holy Spirit we have liberty, which is freedom from sin. The believer is set free from the impossible task of attaining his own righteousness by keeping the perfect standard of the law. Since the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled perfectly in Jesus Christ, those who trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation are no longer under the law’s condemnation.

18. 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 by the Spirit of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 3:18 Through the word of God believers can see Christ intimately. As they gaze at the glory of the Lord, believers are continually being transformed into Christ likeness. “The ultimate goal of the believer is to be like Christ (Romans 8:29, 1 John 3:2), and by continually focusing on Him the Spirit transforms the believer more and more into His image.” This verse describes progressive sanctification. “The more believers grow in their knowledge of Christ, the more He is revealed in their lives.” As they grow, believers move from one level of glory to another and from one level of manifesting Christ to another.

2 Corinthians Chapter 4

1. Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart.

2 Corinthians 4:1 Paul was acutely aware of the mercy of God given to him through believing the gospel. Paul knew that everyone needed this mercy (salvation) so he could not lose heart. Also, since Paul received his ministry from God, he could not abandon his calling. While the work was hard, he trusted in the Lord to strengthen him.

2. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

2 Corinthians 4:2 “The false teachers accused Paul of being a deceiver who was twisting and perverting the teaching of Jesus and the Old Testament Scripture.” The false teachers said that the source of Paul’s perverted teaching were hidden things of shame (a reference to secret immoralities and hypocrisy hidden deep in his life). Paul responds to this accusation by saying that believers turn away from such sins and pursue godliness.

3. But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

2 Corinthians 4:3 Paul’s objective in preaching the gospel was to manifest truth. He always did his best to articulate the essential truths of the gospel clearly. If the gospel appears veiled to some, it is not because of the messenger or the message, but the persistent unbelief of the hearers.

4. whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

2 Corinthians 4:4 Unbelievers have had their minds blinded by the god of this world. The god of this world is Satan. “Satan blinds men to God’s truth through the world system he has created.” The world mind-set is expressed by the ideals, opinions, goals, hopes, and views of the majority of people. The light of the gospel of the glory of Christ is the exact opposite of this world system and its author, the god of this world. This is why so many people in the world are

incoherent to the gospel message and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the exact representation of the one true God Himself (Colossians 1:15, 2:9, & Hebrews 1:3).

5. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.

2 Corinthians 4:5 Paul never promoted himself. He always taught and preached Jesus Christ as Lord. With regard to himself and his fellow workers in the ministry, all are considered to be bondservants (Slaves). "The false teachers accused Paul of preaching for his own benefit, yet they were the ones guilty of doing so."

6. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:6 "The same God who created physical light in the universe is the same God who must create supernatural light in the soul and usher believers from the kingdom of darkness to His kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13)." The light is expressed as knowing that Jesus Christ is the glory of God. This means that Jesus Christ is God incarnate. This is the theme of John's gospel.

7. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

2 Corinthians 4:7 "By using frail and expendable people, God makes it clear that salvation is the result of His power and not any power His messengers could generate." The great power of God empowers frail and expendable people through saving faith, to put the glory of God on display.

8. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;

9. persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed --

2 Corinthians 4:8-9 Because of the power of God in Paul's life, he is able to endure even the most intense tribulations.

10. always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

2 Corinthians 4:10 Paul lived his life for the sake of the gospel. This lifestyle naturally brings about suffering for the sake of Jesus Christ. Preaching the gospel and suffering for His sake puts the resurrection power of Christ on display.

11. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

2 Corinthians 4:11 The ultimate form of suffering for Jesus' sake is execution. By enduring suffering to the point of death, the resurrection power of Christ is put on display. This resurrection power is especially visible to those who believe the gospel message.

12. So then death is working in us, but life in you.

2 Corinthians 4:12 "Paul faced death every day, yet he was willing to pay that price if it meant salvation for those to whom he preached (Philippians 2:17, Colossians 1:24, 2 Timothy 2:10)."

13. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak,

14. knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.

2 Corinthians 4:13-14 Paul says that he and his Corinthian brethren are of one mind concerning the faith. Paul says he believes and proclaims the faith, as do his Corinthian brethren, quoting Psalm 116:10. Like Paul, the psalmist was in the midst of troubles, and he confidently asked God to deliver him. Both Paul and the psalmist believed that the Lord God is the Deliverer and a sure help in time of trouble. The ultimate deliverance is from death. God demonstrates that He will deliver us from death by raising Jesus Christ from the dead.

15. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

2 Corinthians 4:15 For God made all things for believers to enjoy, and He has provided the provision for our salvation in Jesus Christ. All this is grace which promotes thanksgiving, and magnifies the glory of God.

16. Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

2 Corinthians 4:16 "The physical body is in the process of decay and will eventually die." While the physical body is decaying, the inner self of the believer continues to grow and mature into Christ likeness (Ephesians 3:16-20). With regard to the physical body, on the surface (generally speaking) Paul was referring to the normal aging process, but Paul's lifestyle sped up that process. "While not an old man, Paul wore himself out in ministry, both in the effort and pace he maintained, plus the number of beatings and attacks he absorbed from his enemies."

17. For our sight affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

2 Corinthians 4:17 "For Paul, the future glory he would experience with the Lord far outweighed any suffering he experienced in this world." From the human perspective, the persecutions which Paul endured seemed unbearable. When viewed from the perspective of eternity, however, his afflictions appear insignificant and lasting a brief moment.

18. while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4:18 The visible realm of this world is temporary, but the invisible realm of God is eternal. Endurance is based on one's ability to look beyond the physical to the spiritual. Pursuing God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the souls of men consumed Paul.

2 Corinthians Chapter 5

- 1. For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.**
- 2. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,**

2 Corinthians 5:1-2 Paul describes our present earthly bodies as temporary tents. Man's earthly existence in a physical body is only temporary. On the other hand the resurrected, glorified body is more like a permanent building. This permanent glorified body, given by God is solid, secure, certain, and permanent, as opposed to the frail, temporary, and uncertain nature of a physical body. It is interesting to note that the temple started out in a tent after leaving Egypt, but was replaced by a building in the Promised Land. Paul longed for his resurrection body which would forever express his transformed nature. All believers ought to long to exchange their earthly bodies for glorified ones.

- 3. if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.**

2 Corinthians 5:3 The next life does not entail disembodied spirits floating around eternity, but that we would have a real, eternal, resurrection body, through which we will give eternal praise, honor, and glory to God.

- 4. For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.**

2 Corinthians 5:4 Paul earnestly desired eternal life where he would continuously glorify God in His presence, as opposed to this present temporary existence, characterized by sin and death.

- 5. Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.**

2 Corinthians 5:5 As Christians, we along with Paul long for our eternal life in the presence of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God, given to us as a guarantee at the time of our salvation, gives us a foretaste of heaven and increases our longing for redemption.

- 6. So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.**

2 Corinthians 5:6 “While a believer is alive on earth he is away from the fullness of God’s presence.” While on earth, however, we have contact with the Lord through prayer, the indwelling Spirit, and the written word of God.

7. For we walk by faith, not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7 To walk by faith not by sight means that the believer has a living hope for the heavenly kingdom of God which he has not seen. The source of this hope is Scripture.

8. We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:8 Since heaven is a better place, Paul would rather be with the Lord than remain on earth.

9. Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 Every Christian must remember that we are inevitably and ultimately accountable to the Lord Jesus. The term judgment seat is a reference to the place where the Lord will sit to evaluate believer’s lives for the purpose of giving them eternal rewards. “It is translated from the Greek word bema, which was an elevated platform where victorious athletes went to receive their crowns. The term is also used in the New Testament to refer to the place of judging, as when Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate, but here the reference is definitely from the athletic analogy. Corinth had such a platform where both athletic rewards and legal justice were dispensed, so the Corinthians understood Paul’s reference.” In this context, Paul is not speaking about sin because this was dealt with at the cross. Rather, Paul is addressing activities which have eternal significance (That which advances the Kingdom of God). Paul addressed this issue before with the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

11. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in you consciences.

2 Corinthians 5:11 Realizing the awesomeness of God and that nothing is hidden from His sight, he is motivated to persuade men to live a life that is worthy of the gospel. Paul states that his true spiritual condition of sincerity and integrity was well known by God. This was also true of those who ministered with him. Paul told the Corinthian believers that their own consciences would testify to this truth.

12. For we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have an answer for those who boast in appearance and not in heart.

2 Corinthians 5:12 Paul gave the Corinthians the true gospel. In this the Corinthians could boast. The false teachers of Corinth taught a false gospel with an emphasis on externalism.

13. For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you.

2 Corinthians 5:13 The statement “beside ourselves” means to be insane or out of one’s mind. Paul used the expression to describe himself as one dogmatically devoted to the truth. The truth of God sounds like insanity to those who are of the world and reject the gospel message. The statement “of sound mind” means to be moderate, sober minded, and in complete control. Those who believe the gospel message and receive the truth of God see Paul as having a sound mind. The Corinthian believers fall into this category.

14. For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

2 Corinthians 5:14 “Christ’s loving substitutionary death motivated Paul’s service for Him (Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 3:19).”

“One died for all” – This is a reference to Christ’s substitutionary death. “God’s wrath against sin required death; Jesus took that wrath and died in the sinner’s place.” “Thus He took away God’s wrath and satisfied God’s justice as a perfect sacrifice.”

“then all died” – “Everyone who died in Christ receives the benefits of His substitutionary death.” The complete statement, “...”if one died for all, then all died”, means “Christ died for all who died in Him.”

15. and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

2 Corinthians 5:15 “For all genuine believers their death in Christ is not only a death to sin, but a resurrection to a new life of righteousness.” This verse adds clarification as to who is appropriated the benefits of Christ’s gift of salvation through His sacrificial death. It is those who genuinely believe the gospel.

16. Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

2 Corinthians 5:16 Since Paul’s conversion, he evaluated and interacted with people according to their spiritual needs. Paul no longer evaluated and interacted with people according to external, human, worldly standards. In the same way Paul does not come to Christ in some fallible humanistic way, rather, Paul comes to Christ as the One who is the lover of his soul, and was obedient to the point of death so as to ransom his salvation.

17. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17

In Christ – “Those two words comprise a brief but most profound statement of the inexhaustible significance of the believer’s redemption, which includes the following:

1. The believer’s security in Christ, who bore in His body God’s judgment against sin;
2. The believer’s acceptance in Him with whom God alone is well pleased;
3. the believer’s future assurance in Him who is the resurrection to eternal life and the sole guarantor of the believer’s inheritance in heaven; and
4. the believer’s participation in the divine nature of Christ, the everlasting Word (2 Peter 1:4).

new creation – “This describes something that is created at a qualitatively new level of excellence. It refers to regeneration or the new birth (John 3:3, Ephesians 2:1-3, Titus 3:5, 1 Peter 1:23, 1 John 2:29 – 3:9, 1 John 5:4).”

old things have passed away – “After a person is regenerate, old value systems, priorities, beliefs, loves, and plans are gone. Evil and sin are still present, but the believer sees them in a new perspective, and they no longer control him.”

All thingsnew – “The Greek grammar indicates that this newness is a continuing condition of fact. The believer’s new spiritual perception of everything is a constant reality for him, and he now lives for eternity, not temporal things. James identifies this transformation as the faith that produces works.” (James 2:14-26)

18. Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

2 Corinthians 5:18 All things related to a person’s salvation and transformed life in Christ are accomplished by God.

ministry of reconciliation – God has called believers to proclaim the gospel of reconciliation to those outside the faith because God wills to be reconciled with sinners. Christians are to serve unbelievers to reveal Christ to them. Christian service authenticates the Christian message.

19. that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:19

God was in Christ – “God by His own will and design used His Son, the only acceptable and perfect sacrifice, as the means to reconcile sinners to Himself (Acts 2:23, Colossians 1:19-20, 1 Timothy 2:5-6).”

reconciling the world – “The intrinsic merit of Christ’s reconciling death is infinite and the offer is unlimited. However, actual atonement was made only for those who believe. The rest of humanity will pay the price personally for their own sin in eternal hell.”

not imputing – “This is the heart of the doctrine of justification whereby God declares the repentant sinner righteous and does not count his sins against him because He covers him with the righteousness of Christ the moment he placed whole hearted faith in Christ and His sacrificial death.”

word of reconciliation – The Lord has given to all believers the gospel ministry, the purpose of which is to enable unbelievers to be reconciled to God.

20. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20 The term ambassador is related to the more familiar Greek word often translated “elder”. It describes a mature and experienced man who represents a king in another country. “Paul thus described his role – and the role of all believers – as a messenger representing the King of heaven with the gospel, who pleads with the people of the world to be reconciled to God who is their rightful King. As believers present the gospel, God speaks through them and urges unbelieving sinners to come in an attitude of faith and accept the gospel, which means to repent of their sins and believe on Jesus.”

21. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21 “Here Paul summarizes the heart of the gospel, resolving the mystery and paradox, and explaining how sinners can be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. These 15 Greek words express the doctrines of imputation and substitution like no other single verse.”

who knew no sin – The Lord Jesus is God the Son. As God, it is impossible for Him to sin. (Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 7:26, 1 Peter 1:19, 1 Peter 2:22-24, 1 Peter 3:18, Revelation 5:2-10)

to be sin for us – “God the Father, using the principle of imputation, treated Christ as if He were a sinner though He was not, and had Him die as a substitute to pay the penalty for the sins of those who believe in Him. On the cross, He did not become a sinner (as some suggest), but remained as holy as ever.” Christ was treated as if He were guilty of all the sins that were placed upon Him at the cross, although He committed none. The wrath of God was exhausted on Him and the just requirement of God’s law met for those for whom He died.”

that we might become the righteousness of God in Him – “The righteousness that is credited to the believer’s account is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, God’s Son. As Christ was not a sinner, but was treated as if He were, so believers who have not yet been made righteous (until glorification) are treated as if they were righteous. He bore their sins so that they could bear His righteousness. God treated Him (Christ) as if He committed believers sins, and treats believers as if they did only the righteous deeds of the sinless Son of God.”

2 Corinthians Chapter 6

1. We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

2 Corinthians 6:1 Some of the Corinthians were not truly saved but were deceived by a false gospel promoted by the false teachers. This is a gospel of works.

2. For He says:

**“In an acceptable time I have heard you,
And in the day of salvation I have helped you.”**

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

2 Corinthians 6:2 Paul emphasized his point for all to receive the true gospel by quoting Isaiah 49:8. “He was passionately concerned that the Corinthians adhere to the truth because it was God’s time to save and they were messengers for helping to spread that message. Paul also made clear through the Isaiah passage that this is the time when God listens to sinners and responds to those who are repentant. (Isaiah 55:6) The time of God’s grace will come to an end. (Genesis 6:3, Proverbs 1:24-33, John 9:4) Paul says “now is the day of salvation.”

3. We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed.

2 Corinthians 6:3 The faithful ambassador of Christ does nothing to discredit his ministry, the gospel, or the Lord.

4. But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses,

2 Corinthians 6:4 Commend means to introduce. Paul and his companions were introducing themselves as ministers of God. Some of the convincing proofs for Paul being a minister of God include patient endurance of tribulations, needs, and distresses. Other convincing proofs for Paul being a true minister of God are itemized in verses 5 through 10.

5. in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings;

2 Corinthians 6:5 Paul also proved that he was a true man of God as demonstrated by patient endurance of beatings, persecutions by angry mobs, diligence in ministry labors, deprivations of sleep, and deprivations of food.

6. by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love,

2 Corinthians 6:6 Paul also demonstrated patient endurance because he possesses purity, knowledge, longsuffering, kindness, and sincere love.

7. by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,

2 Corinthians 6:7

“by the word of truth” – This is a reference to Scripture, the revealed word of God. Paul’s entire ministry operated within the direction and guidance of divine revelation.

“by the power of God” – Paul’s message and ministry focuses on the power of God. (1 Corinthians 1:18)

“by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left” – Paul regarded Christ’s righteousness, which has been imputed to him, as his armor (Ephesians 6:10-18). Having this armor on the right hand and the left indicates defensive and offensive armor.

8. by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;

2 Corinthians 6:8 In the course of his ministry, Paul took the good with the bad. “Paul’s opponents at Corinth accused him of being an imposter and a false prophet.”

9. as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed;

2 Corinthians 6:9 Paul became unknown by, dead to, and chastened by his former world (The world of the leading Jews and Pharisees). Paul became well known by, alive, and not killed in his current world (The Christian community).

10. as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

2 Corinthians 6:10 “The spiritual wealth Paul possessed and imparted did much to make his hearers spiritually wealthy.” Believers being in Christ caused Paul to greatly rejoice. Being in Christ is synonymous with possessing all things, because all things come from Christ (Hebrews 1:3).

11. O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open.

2 Corinthians 6:11 Paul’s love for the Corinthians was that they would know Christ totally, without restriction.

12. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections.

2 Corinthians 6:12 The Corinthians on the other hand, restricted their own growth in the Lord through their sinful affections.

13. Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open.

2 Corinthians 6:13 Paul encouraged the Corinthians to put sinful restrictions aside, and be open to scriptural teaching as Paul himself was open to scriptural teaching.

14. Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

2 Corinthians 6:14 One of the sinful restrictions of the Corinthians was being married to unbelievers.

Unequally yoked together – “An illustration taken from Old Testament prohibitions to Israel regarding the work-related joining together of two different kinds of livestock. By this analogy, Paul taught that it is not right to join together in common spiritual enterprise with those who are not of the same nature (unbelievers). “It is impossible under such an arrangement for things to be done to God’s glory.”

15. And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?

2 Corinthians 6:15 Paul progressively builds the argument against spiritual alliances with unbelievers by asking a self-evident question. What has Christ to do with Belial? Belial is the ancient name for Satan. Satan, the worthless one, contrasts sharply with Christ the worthy One.

16. And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

**“I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people.”**

2 Corinthians 6:16 Paul asks another self-evident question. What has the temple of God to do with idols? “Believers individually are spiritual houses in which the Spirit of Christ dwells. Paul’s quotation below is based on several Old Testament texts, including Leviticus 26:11-12, Ezekiel 37:26-27, and Jeremiah 31:33.

“I will dwell in them
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people.”

17. Therefore

**“Come out from among them
And be separate, say the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you.”**

2 Corinthians 6:17 “Paul drew from Isaiah 52:11 and elaborated on the command to be spiritually separated. It is not only irrational and sacrilegious but disobedient to be bound together with unbelievers. When believers are saved, they are to disengage themselves from all forms of false religion and make a clean break from all sinful habits and old idolatrous patterns.”

**18. “I will be a Father to you,
And you shall be My sons and daughters,
Says the Lord Almighty.”**

2 Corinthians 6:18 “As a result of separating themselves from false doctrine and practice, believers will know the full richness of what it means to be children of God (Romans 8:14-17, 2 Samuel 7:14, Ezekiel 20:34).”

2 Corinthians Chapter 7

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

2 Corinthians 7:1 Everything that is of the world, the flesh and the sin contaminated spirit of man, is filthiness. Everything that has to do with false religion, fleshly appetites, spiritual pride, and self sufficiency needs to be cleansed out of one’s life. The goal of every believer should be the perfecting of holiness in the fear of God. “The Greek word for ‘perfecting’ means ‘to finish’ or ‘to complete.’ ‘Holiness’ refers to separation from all that would defile both the body and the mind. Complete or perfect holiness was embodied only in Christ thus believers are to pursue Him.”

2. Open your hearts to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have cheated no one.

2 Corinthians 7:2 The word wronged means unjust treatment, harming someone, or causing one to fall into sin. The term corrupted means to promote false doctrine, using money to promote evil schemes, or encouraging immoral behavior. Paul could never be accused of causing any Corinthian to fall into sin or encouraging immoral behavior.

3. I do not say this to condemn; for I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together.

2 Corinthians 7:3 Paul wanted to inherit the Kingdom of God with the Corinthians in the life to come (After Death), and partner with them in ministry in this life. Paul's statement was an expression of his deep love for the Corinthian people.

4. Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my boasting on your behalf. I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.

2 Corinthians 7:4 "Boldness can be translated confidence." Paul was confident of God's ongoing work in the lives of the Corinthians.

5. For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears.

2 Corinthians 7:5 When Paul came to Macedonia from Troas, he and his party were afflicted by outside troubles and conflicts. The term conflicts refer to quarrels and disputes. Paul also had internal fears – his concern for the Corinthian church and the anti-Paul faction there.

6. Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

2 Corinthians 7:6 Paul and his party came to despair from their tribulations and inner fears. But God comforted them through the coming of Titus. Paul refers to himself and his party as downcast. To be downcast means to be humiliated; to be lowly in the economic, social, or emotional sense.

7. and not only by his coming, but also by the consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

2 Corinthians 7:7 Titus gave an encouraging report regarding the repentance of the Corinthians and their positive response to Paul's letter (severe letter delivered by Titus). "Paul was encouraged by the manner in which the Corinthians comforted Titus, since he brought them such a confrontational letter."

8. For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while.

2 Corinthians 7:8 Paul's confrontational letter, known as the severe letter, caused true sorrow and repentance for sin on the part of the Corinthian church. This repentance led to a renewed joy in their salvation. Although Paul regretted to send the epistle, he did not regret the godly repentance and renewed faith through obedience.

9. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.

2 Corinthians 7:9 “The letter produced a sorrow in the Corinthian believers that led them to repent of their sins. ‘Repentance’ refers to the desire to turn from sin and restore one’s relationship to God.”

10. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

2 Corinthians 7:10 The term ‘godly sorrow’ refers to sorrow that is according to the will of God and produced by the Holy Spirit. “True repentance cannot occur apart from such a genuine sorrow over one’s sin.” “Repentance is at the very heart of and proves one’s salvation: unbelievers repent of their sin initially when they are saved, and then as believers, repent of their sins continually to keep the joy and blessing of their relationship to God.”

“Human sorrow is unsanctified remorse and has no redemptive capability.” This sorrow does not lead to repentance.” It is nothing more than the wounded pride of getting caught in a sin and having one’s lusts go unfulfilled.”

11. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

2 Corinthians 7:11

diligence – Better translated earnestness or eagerness. The initial reaction of true repentance is to aggressively pursue righteousness.

Clearing of yourselves – True repentance clears sin out of the life of the believer.

Indignation – Repentance leads to anger over one’s sin and displeasure at the shame it has brought on the Lord’s name and His people.

Fear – Recognition that God is holy and He chastens and judges sin.

Vehement Desire – The drive of the repentant sinner to restore the relationship with the one sinned against.

Zeal – The repentant sinner wants to seek the Lord, and hates the sin which obstructs his way.

Vindication – The repentant sinner wants to see justice done in his life. Jesus Christ vindicated him, so he wants to live a life worthy of his calling.

to be clear in this matter – The essence of repentance is the aggressive pursuit of holiness.

12. Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

2 Corinthians 7:12 Paul's severe letter was not written to just the one who engaged in wrong behavior, or for the one who was the victim of the wrong behavior. The epistle was written to instruct the church. This showed that Paul and those associated with him cared for the church.

13. Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all.

14. For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true.

15. And his affections are greater for you as he remembers the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him.

16. Therefore I rejoice that I have confidence in you in everything.

2 Corinthians 7:13-16 Paul concludes the chapter by stating that he rejoices in the report of Titus that the Corinthians received the truth. The truth of Paul's severe letter was received by the Corinthian church with fear and trembling. Receiving the truth of his epistle with an obedient heart caused Paul to rejoice and have confidence in the Corinthian church in everything.

2 Corinthians Chapter 8

1. Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia:

2 Corinthians 8:1 "Macedonia was the northern Roman province of Greece. Paul's reference was to the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea (Acts 17:11). This was basically an impoverished province that had been ravaged by many wars and even then was being plundered by Roman authority and commerce." "Paul did not merely commend those churches for a noble human work, but instead gave the credit to God for what He did through them. (See 2 Corinthians 8:2)

2. that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality.

2 Corinthians 8:2 The surplus joy of the Corinthian church enabled them to rise above their own desperate condition and give to the Lord's work. Their desperate condition involved deep poverty. This type of poverty is the most severe type of economic deprivation, the kind that caused a person to become a beggar. In spite of this the Corinthians showed liberality. "The Greek word for liberality can be translated 'generosity' or 'sincerity.'" "It is the opposite of duplicity or being double-minded." "The Macedonian believers were rich in their single-minded, selfless generosity to God and to others."

3. For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing,

2 Corinthians 8:3 Paul highlighted three elements of the Macedonian's giving which summed up the concept of freewill giving:"

1. According to their ability – "Giving is proportionate – God sets no fixed amount or percentage and expects His people to give based on what they have."
2. Beyond their ability – "Giving is sacrificial." Giving must be in proportions that are sacrificial.
3. Freely willing – "Giving is voluntary – God's people are not to give out of compulsion, manipulation, or intimidation."

"Freewill giving has always been God's plan. Freewill giving is not to be confused with tithing, which related to the national taxation system of Israel (Leviticus 27:30) and is paralleled in the New Testament and the present by paying taxes."

4. imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

2 Corinthians 8:4 "The Macedonian Christians implored Paul for the special grace of being able to have fellowship and be partners in supporting the poor saints in Jerusalem. They viewed giving as a privilege not an obligation."

5. And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.

2 Corinthians 8:5 The giving by the Macedonian Christians exceeded Paul's expectations. Generous giving follows personal dedication. Personal dedication means to present oneself as a sacrifice to God. (Romans 12:1-2, 1 Peter 2:5) The Macedonians recognized that God was with Paul and his ministry team, so they committed themselves to them.

6. So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well.

2 Corinthians 8:6 Titus initially encouraged the Corinthians to begin a collection for the poor Jerusalem saints at least one year earlier. When Titus returned to Corinth with Paul's severe letter, he carried out Paul's instructions to finish the collection of money. (2 Corinthians 8:10)

7. But as you abound in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us – see that you abound in this grace also.

2 Corinthians 8:7 Paul reminded the Corinthians to continue to be a giving people. This is what Paul referred to when he said abound in this grace. Paul acknowledges that while it is important to excel in faith, speech, knowledge, and in all diligence, it is important not to forget to excel in giving as well.

8. I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others.

2 Corinthians 8:8 Paul's teaching on giving was not a commandment, but the act of giving is a manifestation of one's love for God. Freewill giving is never according to obligation or command.

9. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9

though He was rich – This is a reference to the eternality and pre-existence of Christ. “As the second person of the Trinity, Christ is as rich as God is rich. He owns everything, and possesses all power, authority, sovereignty, glory, honor, and majesty.”

He became poor – This is a reference to Christ's incarnation. When Christ left His place with God and took on human form, He laid aside the independent exercise of all His divine prerogatives and was obedient to the point of death, even the death on the cross (Philippians 2:5-8).

that you might become rich – Christ's substitutionary death on the cross satisfied God's justice by judging sin in the person of His own Son. Since Christ satisfies God's justice, He is the justifier of all who believe in Him for salvation. Christ alone purchased the salvation of those who believe and we are joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17).

10. And in this I give advice: It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and were desiring to do a year ago;

11. but now you also must complete the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to desire it, so there also may be a completion out of what you have.

2 Corinthians 8:10-11 Paul admonished the Corinthian church, in light of what Christ gave, to be faithful in providing the monetary gift for the Jerusalem church. This gift had been in the planning stages for over a year. “They needed this reminder since they likely stopped the process due to the influence of the false teachers, who probably accused Paul of being a huckster who would keep the money for himself.”

12. For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one has, and not according to what he does not have.

2 Corinthians 8:12 Giving begins with a willing mind. The person must want to give to promote the Lord's work.

According to what one has – If one has much, he can give much; if one has little, he can give little. “Whatever one has is the resource out of which he should give. That is why there are no set amounts or percentages for giving anywhere stated in the New Testament.”

not according to what he does not have – “Believers do not need to go into debt to give, nor lower themselves to a poverty level.”

- 13. For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened;**
14. but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may supply their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack – that there may be equality.

2 Corinthians 8:13-14 The term equality can be translated “balance” or “equilibrium.” The idea Paul is trying to get across is that believers who have more should assist those who have less to meet basic needs.

- 15. As it is written, “He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack.”**

2 Corinthians 8:15 In this verse Paul is quoting from Exodus 16:18. “The collecting of manna by the Israelites in the wilderness was an appropriate illustration of sharing resources. Some were able to gather more than others, and apparently shared it so that no one lacked what they needed.”

- 16. But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus.**
17. For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord.

2 Corinthians 8:16-17 Titus showed the same care for the Corinthian church as did Paul. Titus demonstrated this by willingly going to the Corinthian church.

- 18. And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches,**

2 Corinthians 8:18 Accompanying Titus was another man who was a well known preacher. “This man is unnamed because he was so well known, prominent, and unimpeachable.”

- 19. and not only that, but who was also chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us to the glory of the Lord Himself and to show your ready mind,**
20. avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us –
21. providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.
22. And we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, because of the great confidence which we have in you.

2 Corinthians 8:19-22 This man was chosen by the churches to assist Paul and Titus and protect them from false accusations regarding the mishandling of money. The money at issue was the collection for the Jerusalem church. Paul was concerned about not bringing dishonor to Christ over a controversy about money.

23. If anyone inquires about Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren are inquired about, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ.

2 Corinthians 8:23

partner and fellow worker – “Titus and Paul’s ‘partner’ – his close companion – and fellow laborer among the Corinthians. They already knew of his outstanding character.”

messengers of the churches – “The two men who went with Titus were apostles in the sense of being commissioned and sent by the churches. They were not apostles of Christ, because they were not eyewitnesses of the resurrected Lord or commissioned directly by Him.”

glory of Christ – “The greatest of all commendations is to be characterized as bringing glory to Christ. Such was the case of the two messengers.”

24. Therefore show to them, and before the churches the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf.

2 Corinthians 8:24 Paul’s instruction to the Corinthians was to show full support for Titus and the messengers before all the churches contributing to the monetary gift for the Jerusalem church.

[2 Corinthians Chapter 9](#)

1. Now concerning the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you;

2 Corinthians 9:1 Paul says that it is not necessary for him to explain the monetary gift that was being given to the Jerusalem church.

2. for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority.

2 Corinthians 9:2

for I know your willingness – “Paul was simply calling the Corinthians back to their original eagerness and readiness to participate in the offering project.”

your zeal has stirred up the majority – The Corinthian church’s zeal to give the monetary gift to the Jerusalem church inspired the other churches to do the same.

Macedonians – The province of Macedonia was located in the northern part of Greece.

Achaia – A province in southern Greece where Corinth was located. Achaia was ready to send the monetary gift a year ago.

- 3. Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready;**
- 4. lest if some Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this confident boasting.**

2 Corinthians 9:3-4 Paul sent Titus plus two brothers to prepare the Corinthians to get ready to send off the monetary gift to the Jerusalem church. Paul did not want those in Macedonia accompanying him to find the Corinthian believers unprepared. This would cause Paul's boasting of the Corinthian believers to be an embarrassment.

- 5. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which you had previously promised, that it may be ready as a matter of generosity and not a grudging obligation.**

2 Corinthians 9:5 Titus and the other two brethren went to Corinth to make sure that the financial gift was prepared reflecting generosity and not a last minute grudging obligation that was not a reflection of true sacrificial giving.

- 6. But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.**

2 Corinthians 9:6 “The simple, self-evident agrarian principle – which Paul applied to Christian giving – that the harvest is directly, proportionate to the amount of seed sown.” “God gives a return on the amount one invests with Him. Invest a little, receive a little, and vice versa.”

- 7. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.**

2 Corinthians 9:7

as he purposes – “The term translated ‘purposes’ occurs only here in the New Testament and indicates a predetermined plan of action that is done from the heart voluntarily, but not impulsively.”

of necessity – This refers to external pressure and coercion, quite possibly accompanied by legalism. Believers are not to give based on the demands of others, or according to any arbitrary standards or set amounts.

God loves a cheerful giver – “God has a unique, special love for those who are happily committed to generous giving. The Greek word for cheerful is the word from which we get

hilarious, which suggests that God loves a heart that is enthusiastically thrilled with the pleasure of giving.”

8. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:8 “God possesses an infinite amount of grace, and He gives it lavishly, without holding back.” In this context, grace refers to God’s provision of material resources to help those who are in need. God is all sufficient to meet all the believer’s needs. This provision from God (material things, our life, our bodies, food, clothing, money, and THE FAITH) is given to believers to equip them for every good work.

9. As it is written:

**“He has dispersed abroad,
He has given to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever.”**

2 Corinthians 9:9 Paul quotes Psalm 112:9 to demonstrate his point that giving by believers to the less fortunate is an extension of God’s temporal grace. Those who give to the poor act as God’s ambassadors.

10. Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness,

11. while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

2 Corinthians 9:10-11 Paul quotes Isaiah 55:10 to demonstrate that God supplies seed to grow food to the sower (farmer), and bread for food for everyone. In the same way that God can multiply food through sowing seed, which results in bread for everyone; God can multiply the harvest of good spiritual seeds that have been planted.

12. For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God,

2 Corinthians 9:12

For the administration of the service – “Administration, which can also be translated service, is a priestly word from which we get liturgy. Paul viewed the entire collection project as a spiritual, worshipful enterprise that was primarily being offered to God to glorify Him.”

Supplies the needs of the saints – “The Greek word for ‘supplies’ is a doubly intense term that could be rendered really, fully supplying. This indicates that the Jerusalem church had an extremely great need. Many of its members had gone to Jerusalem as pilgrims to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, had been converted through Peter’s message, and had then remained in the city without adequate financial support. Many residents of Jerusalem had undoubtedly lost their jobs in the waves of persecution that came after the martyrdom of Stephen. However, the

Corinthians were wealthy enough (they had not yet suffered persecution and deprivation like the Macedonians – 2 Corinthians 8:1-4) to help meet the huge need with a generous monetary gift.”

13. while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men,

2 Corinthians 9:13 Through giving to the desperate need of the Jerusalem church, the Corinthian believers demonstrate obedient submission to God’s word. Though proper response to and participation in Paul’s collection ministry, the Jewish believers would witness the authenticity of the Gentile conversions (Corinthians).

14. and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you.

2 Corinthians 9:14 “When the Jerusalem believers recognized God was at work in the Corinthian church as a result of its outreach through the collection, they would have become friends in Christ and prayed for the Corinthians, thanking God for their generosity.” Prayer and giving is at the heart of authentic Christian unity.

15. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!

2 Corinthians 9:15 “Paul summarized his discourse by comparing the believer’s act of giving with what God did in giving Jesus Christ (Romans 8:32).” Through Christian giving we give thanks to God for His indescribable gift.

2 Corinthians Chapter 10

1. Now I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ – who in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you.

2 Corinthians 10:1 The book of 2 Corinthians is divided into two parts, chapters 1-9 which addresses the repentant majority and chapters 10-13 which addresses the minority still influenced by the false teachers.

meekness – “The humble and gentle attitude that expresses itself in patient endurance of unfair treatment. A meek person is not bitter or angry, and he does not seek revenge when wronged.”

gentleness – “This term is similar in meaning to meekness.” When used in reference to Jesus Christ, a person in position of authority, it refers to leniency.

lowly.....bold – This Pauline statement is more fully developed in 2 Corinthians 10:10. There were some in Corinth who accused Paul of being bold only in writing letters, but weak in physical appearance and speech. Paul used this as a badge of honor, promising his own humbleness and gentleness.

2. But I beg you that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.

2 Corinthians 10:2 There were some in Corinth who spoke against Paul. They accused him of walking according to the flesh. Paul said that he desperately seeks to not confront or boldly come against this minority group of people who oppose him. Rather, he wishes to be meek and gentle even with those who are quarrelsome.

3. For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.

2 Corinthians 10:3 In response to those who accused him of walking according to the flesh, Paul affirmed that he did walk in the flesh, in the physical sense, but he did not fight spiritual battles using human ingenuity, worldly wisdom, or clever methodologies. Worldly wisdom, clever methodologies, and human ingenuity is walking in the flesh in the spiritual sense.

4. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,

2 Corinthians 10:4 The weapons of warfare, referenced by Paul, are not physical weapons for engaging in physical warfare with human beings but spiritual warfare. The satanic lies that pervade the world system and enslave people are formidable spiritual strongholds. Use of the term strongholds would be readily understandable to the Corinthians, since Corinth, like most ancient cities, had a fortress in which its residents could take refuge. Only the truth of God's word can defeat the spiritual strongholds manned by the forces of hell. "Believers are not instructed in the New Testament to assault demons or Satan but to assault error with the truth. That is our battle."

5. casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

2 Corinthians 10:5 "Thoughts, ideas, speculations, reasonings, philosophies, and false religions are the ideological forts in which men barricade themselves against God and the gospel." As believers, it must be our goal to bring every thought into obedient submission to Jesus Christ.

Bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ – This pictures the total destruction of the fortresses of worldly wisdom. Worldly wisdom is rooted in carnality and satanic lies. False worldly wisdom is overthrown by the truth.

6. and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled.

2 Corinthians 10:6 Wrong thinking ultimately leads to wrong behavior. Paul was ready to deal severely with those in the church who are enemies of the faith. Paul was ready to purge out those who are disobedient, as he did at Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:19-20).

7. Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he is Christ's, even so we are Christ's.

2 Corinthians 10:7 Paul clearly states here that anyone who believes that he is in Christ must also believe that Paul and the other apostles are in Christ. As an apostle, Paul was an eyewitness to the Lord. Paul and the other apostles were also empowered by the Holy Spirit to work miracles and signs and wonders, validating their apostolic office and their position in Christ. Not recognizing the authority and authenticity of the apostles is a sign of a false profession of faith.

8. For even if I should boast somewhat more about our authority, which the Lord gave us for edification and not for your destruction, I shall not be ashamed --

2 Corinthians 10:8 “The debate with the false apostles had forced Paul to emphasize his authority more than he cared to; Paul’s claims for his authority normally were restrained by his humility. But no matter how much he said about his authority, Paul would never be ashamed. Since he had the authority of which he spoke, he would never be proved guilty of making an empty boast. The Lord gave Paul his authority to edify and strengthen the church; that he had done so at Corinth proves the genuineness of his claim to apostolic calling. Far from edifying the Corinthian church, the false apostles had brought confusion, divisiveness, and turmoil to it. That showed that their authority did not come from the Lord, who seeks only to build His church, not tear it down.”

9. lest I seem to terrify you by letters.

2 Corinthians 10:9 Paul’s goal was not to terrify the Corinthians but to bring them to repentance, because he loved them.

10. “For his letters,” they say, “are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.”

2 Corinthians 10:10 “In their continuing attempt to discredit Paul, the false apostles claimed that in contrast to his bold, forceful letters, in person he lacked the presence, charisma, and personality of a truly great leader.” “And in a culture that highly valued skillful rhetoric and eloquent oration, Paul’s contemptible speech was also taken as evidence that he was a weak, ineffective person.”

11. Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.

2 Corinthians 10:11 “Paul denied the false charges against him and affirmed his integrity. What he was in his letters he was to be when present with them.”

12. For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.

2 Corinthians 10:12

class ourselves or compare ourselves – “It is a mark of Paul’s humility that he refused to compare himself with others, or engage in self-promotion. His only personal concern was what the Lord thought of him, though he needed to defend his apostleship so that the Corinthians would not, in turning from him, turn from truth to lies.”

Comparing themselves among themselves – “Paul pointed out the folly of the false apostles’ boasting. They invented false standards that they could meet, then proclaimed themselves superior for meeting them.”

13. We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us – a sphere which especially includes you.

2 Corinthians 10:13 “In contrast to the proud, arrogant, boastful false apostles, Paul refused to say anything about himself or his ministry that was not true and God-given.”

the limits of the sphere which God appointed us – Paul’s boast was within his sphere of influence, which included the Corinthian church. His boast was not in himself but in what God had done through him, those associated with him and the believers at Corinth. The Corinthian believers were primarily Gentiles. Paul was called by God to be an apostle to the Gentiles. (Romans 11:13-14, 1 Timothy 2:7, 2 Timothy 1:11)

14. For we are not overextending ourselves (as though our authority did not extend to you), for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ;

2 Corinthians 10:14 Paul reminds the Corinthians that it was he and those associated with him who brought them the gospel in the first place. This sets Paul apart as a unique teacher.

15. not boasting of things beyond measure, that is, in other men’s labors, but having hope, that as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere,

2 Corinthians 10:15 By building up the Corinthian believers in the faith, they would become partners with Paul in expanding the gospel ministry. Paul and his ministry team would be able to boast (be greatly enlarged) as God increases the Corinthian’s faith.

16. to preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man’s sphere of accomplishment.

2 Corinthians 10:16 The expansion of the gospel ministry would even move into areas beyond Corinth, due to the faith of the Corinthians that was increasing and maturing progressively. As the church matures and develops in the faith, Paul and his team can preach the gospel and

establish churches in other areas. For Paul this included Rome (Acts 19:21) and Spain (Romans 15:24, 28).

17. But “he who glories, let him glory in the Lord.”

2 Corinthians 10:17 Paul did not boast in himself, his boast was in the Lord.

18. For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

2 Corinthians 10:18 “Self-commendation is both meaningless and foolish; the only true meaningful commendation comes from God.”

2 Corinthians Chapter 11

1. Oh, that you would bear with me in a little folly – and indeed you do bear with me.

2 Corinthians 11:1 Having just pointed out the folly of the self-commendation of the false teachers, Paul begins this section of his epistle addressing his own credentials as an apostle. Paul considered talking about himself as folly. Paul believed that the only boasting that is not folly is boasting in the Lord.

2. For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2

I am jealous for you – Paul was deeply concerned for the spiritual purity of the Corinthian believers.

godly jealousy – Paul was deeply concerned and committed to see godliness formed in the Corinthian believers.

I have betrothed you to one husband – The church (including the Corinthian church) is the bride and Jesus Christ is the bridegroom. As their spiritual father, Paul betroths the Corinthian church (Paul’s spiritual daughter) to Jesus Christ (Bridegroom & Husband). (Ephesians 5:22-32, Revelation 19:7)

Chaste virgin – “Having betrothed or pledged the Corinthians to Christ, Paul wanted them to be pure until the marriage day finally arrived (Revelation 19:7). It was that passionate concern which provoked Paul’s jealousy and prompted him to set forth his apostolic credentials.” (Paul lists his credentials in 2 Corinthians 11:5-12)

3. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:3 “Paul compared the danger facing the Corinthian church to Eve’s deception by Satan. He feared the Corinthians, like Eve, would fall prey to satanic lies and have their minds corrupted. The tragic result would be the abandonment of their simple devotion to Christ in favor of the sophisticated error of the false apostles. Paul’s allusion to Genesis 3 implies that the false apostles were Satan’s emissaries – a truth that he later made explicit.”

4. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted – you may well put up with it!

2 Corinthians 11:4 “The false apostles came into the Corinthian church from the outside – just as Satan did into the Garden. Likely they were Palestinian Jews who allegedly sought to bring the Corinthians under the sway of the Jerusalem church. They were in a sense Judaizers, seeking to impose Jewish customs on the Corinthians. Unlike the Judaizers who plagued the Galatian churches (Galatians 5:2), however, the false apostles at Corinth apparently did not insist that the Corinthians be circumcised. Nor did they practice a rigid legalism; in fact, they apparently encouraged licentiousness (2 Corinthians 12:21). Their fascination with rhetoric and oratory (2 Corinthians 10:10) suggests they had been influenced by Greek culture and philosophy. They claimed falsely (Acts 15:24) to represent the Jerusalem church, even possessing letters of commendation.”

another Jesus...a different spirit...a different gospel – Despite the false teachers’ vicious attacks on Paul, Paul’s quarrel with the false apostles was not personal, but doctrinal. “He could tolerate those hostile to him, as long as they preached the gospel of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:15-18). Those who adulterated the true gospel, however, received Paul’s strongest condemnation (Galatians 1:6-9). Though the precise details of what the false apostles taught are unknown and don’t matter, they preached another Jesus and a different spirit, which added up to a different gospel.”

you may well put up with it – Paul feared that the Corinthians would embrace the false teaching of the false apostles, which leads to perdition (hell).

5. For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles.

2 Corinthians 11:5 The false apostles, who said they were from the Jerusalem church, stated that Paul was inferior to the twelve apostles. In response to this put down, Paul clearly states that he is in no way inferior to the twelve apostles. A second way to interpret this passage is that Paul is making a sarcastic remark that he is equal to the twelve apostles, since he knew the false teachers outwardly showed high regard for the original twelve apostles.

6. Even though I am untrained in speech, yet I am not in knowledge. But we have been thoroughly manifested among you in all things.

2 Corinthians 11:6 “Paul acknowledged his lack of training in the rhetorical skills so prized in Greek culture (Acts 18:24); he was a preacher of the gospel, not a professional orator.”

I am not in knowledge – In reference to the gospel, Paul lacked no knowledge. Paul received the gospel directly from God (Galatians 1:12 & Ephesians 3:1-5)

7. Did I commit sin in humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge?

2 Corinthians 11:7 Paul preached the priceless gospel to the Corinthian believers free of charge. The false teachers accused Paul of being a counterfeit, since he refused to charge for his services (1 Corinthians 9:1-15). “Greek culture measured the importance of a teacher by the fee he could command.” “They convinced the Corinthians to be offended by Paul’s refusal to accept support from them, offering that as evidence that he did not love them. Paul’s resort to manual labor to support himself (Acts 18:1-3) also embarrassed the Corinthians, who felt such work to be beneath the dignity of an apostle.” “With biting irony Paul asked his accusers how foregoing his right to support could possibly be a sin.”

8. I robbed other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you.

2 Corinthians 11:8 Paul did not actually take money (rob) from churches without their consent. Rather, other churches supported Paul while he ministered in Corinth.

9. And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself.

10. As the truth of Christ is in me, no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia.

2 Corinthians 11:9-10 Silas and Timothy brought money from Philippi (Philippians 4:14) and possibly Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 3:6).

11. Why? Because I do not love you? God knows!

2 Corinthians 11:11 Paul asks a rhetorical question. Do you think that I pour myself out for your benefit to establish you in the gospel because I don’t love you?

12. But what I do, I will also continue to do, that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast.

2 Corinthians 11:12 Paul would continue to preach the true gospel free of charge, which acts as a barrier to block the teaching of the false teachers. Establishing the Corinthian believers in the true gospel also prevents the false teachers from gaining recognition. The false teachers sought recognition and desired to be considered on the same level as Paul and the original twelve apostles.

13. For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:13 Paul states clearly that the ultimate objective of the false apostles is to gain recognition. These false teachers do not want just any recognition; they want to be recognized as apostles of Christ even though they do not preach the true gospel.

14. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

15. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 “Since the Prince of Darkness masquerades as an angel of light – that is, deceptively, disguised as a messenger of truth – it is not surprising that his emissaries do as well. Satan deceived Eve and holds unbelievers captive; his emissaries were attempting to deceive and enslave the Corinthians.” The terrifying end of the false apostles will be God’s judgment.

16. I say again, let no one think me a fool. I otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little.

2 Corinthians 11:16 Paul’s statement ‘let no one think me a fool’ means that Paul preached the true gospel of Jesus Christ. The true gospel is not foolishness. If, however, he (Paul) is received as a fool by those who do not believe, these unbelievers should allow him a chance to speak so that he can explain himself. Before Paul could present the gospel he needed to boast about himself which he considered foolishness. This was to lay down his qualifications to those who don’t believe so that they would listen.

17. What I speak, I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting.

18. Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast.

2 Corinthians 11:17-18 Because many boast according to the flesh, Paul must also boast. The boasting of the false teachers was against Paul. Paul considered such boasting and even his own to be total foolishness.

19. For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise!

2 Corinthians 11:19 Paul sarcastically wrote that the Corinthians should have no trouble bearing with a fool like him, since they themselves were so wise.

20. For you put up with it if one brings you into bondage, if one devours you, if one takes from you, if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face.

2 Corinthians 11:20 Paul tells the Corinthians that they should be able to put up with him since they have already put up with the abuse from the false teachers. Paul describes literally and metaphorically in verse 20 the abuse inflicted on the Corinthians from the false teachers.

21. To our shame I say that we were too weak for that! But in whatever anyone is bold – I speak foolishly – I am bold also.

2 Corinthians 11:21 “Paul’s sarcasm reached its peak as he noted that he was too weak to abuse the Corinthians as the false apostles had done.”

22. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So am I.

2 Corinthians 11:22 To each of the questions concerning the qualifications used by the false teachers to derive their authority, Paul states simply and powerfully that he meets the same qualifications.

23. Are they ministers of Christ? – I speak as a fool – I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often.

2 Corinthians 11:23 Paul had already emphatically denied that the false teachers were true ministers, however, some of the Corinthians still believed they were. “Paul accepted that belief for the sake of argument then went on to show that his ministry was in every way superior to the false apostles’ so-called ministry.” Paul’s introduction before enumerating the trials and tribulations of his own ministry was....”I speak as a fool....” “Once again Paul expressed his extreme distaste for the boasting the Corinthians had forced him into.”

24. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one.

2 Corinthians 11:24 “Deuteronomy 25:1-3 set 40 as the maximum number that could legally be administered (Beatings with stripes); in Paul’s day the Jews reduced that number by one to avoid accidentally going over the maximum. Jesus warned that His followers would receive such beatings.”

25. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep;

2 Corinthians 11:25 Paul endured the following:

beaten with rods – “Refers to Roman beatings with flexible sticks tied together.”

once I was stoned – A reference to Lystra (Acts 14:19-20).

three times I was shipwrecked – These three shipwrecks exclude the shipwreck on his journey as a prisoner to Rome (Acts 27), which had not yet taken place. Paul had been on several sea voyages up to this time (Acts 8:30, Acts 11:25-26, Acts 13:4, 13, Acts 14:25-26, Acts 16:11, Acts 17:14-15, and Acts 18:18, 21), giving ample opportunity for the three shipwrecks to have occurred.

a night and a day I have been in the deep – “At least one of the shipwrecks was so severe that Paul spent an entire day floating on the wreckage, waiting to be rescued.”

- 26. in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren;**
27. in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness --

2 Corinthians 11:26-27 Paul’s missionary journeys were often accompanied by perils and tribulations. For Paul, an aggressive missionary pastor, such perils and tribulations were extremely treacherous.

- 28. besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches.**
29. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn with indignation?

2 Corinthians 11:28-29 “Far worse than the occasional physical suffering Paul endured was the constant, daily burden of concern for the churches that he felt. Those who were weak in faith, or were made to stumble into sin caused him intense emotional pain.”

- 30. If I must boast, I will boast in the things which concern my infirmity.**

2 Corinthians 11:30 The way Paul desired to boast was in his infirmities. When Paul boasts in this way, God gets all the glory and Paul gets none.

- 31. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying.**

2 Corinthians 11:31 Paul declares that God is witness to the truthfulness of his testimony. Paul had just itemized an incredible list of sufferings. He had to affirm that he was telling the truth, that these things really happened.

- 32. In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of Damascus with a garrison, desiring to arrest me;**
33. but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

2 Corinthians 11:32-33 To demonstrate his weakness and infirmity, Paul recounts his humiliating escape from Damascus. “The Acts narrative names the hostile Jews as those who sought Paul’s life, whereas Paul here mentioned the governor under the Nabatean Arab king Aretas (9 B.C. – 40 A.D.) as the one who sought him.”

2 Corinthians Chapter 12

1. It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:

2 Corinthians 12:1 Seven of Paul's visions are recorded in Acts (Acts 9:12, 9:3, 16:9-10, 18:9, 22:17-18, 23:11, and 27:23-24)

2. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a one was caught up to the third heaven.

3. And I know such a man – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows --

4. how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

2 Corinthians 12:2-4 “Since it took place 14 years before the writing of 2 Corinthians, the specific vision Paul relates cannot be identified with any incident recorded in Acts. It probably took place between his return to Tarsus from Jerusalem (Acts 9:30) and the start of his missionary journeys (Acts 13:1-3).” The third heaven or “Paradise” is the abode of God. The first heaven is earth's atmosphere, and the second heaven is interplanetary and interstellar space.

5. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities.

2 Corinthians 12:5 Paul was reluctant to boast of himself, so he referred to himself in the third person with regard to his vision. The context of 2 Corinthians 12:1-5 makes it obvious that he was speaking about himself. Since Paul's boast is in reference to himself in 2 Corinthians 12:1, the one who saw the heavenly vision must be Paul.

6. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.

2 Corinthians 12:6 “If Paul wished to boast about his unique experience he would not be a fool, because it really happened. He refrained from boasting about it, however, because he wanted the Corinthians to judge him based on their observations of his ministry, not on his visions.”

7. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

2 Corinthians 12:7 “Paul's use of the word messenger (Greek word for angelos or angel) from Satan suggests the ‘thorn in the flesh’ was a demon person not a physical illness. Of the 188 uses of the Greek word, angelos, in the New Testament, at least 180 are in reference to angels. This angel was from Satan, a demon afflicting Paul. Possibly, the best explanation for this demon was that he was indwelling the ring leader of the Corinthian conspiracy, the leader of the false apostles. Through them he was tearing up Paul's beloved church and thus driving a painful

stake through Paul. Further support for this view comes from the context of chapters 10-13, which is one of the fighting adversaries (the false prophets).” “Finally, the Old Testament describes Israel’s personal opponents as thorns (Numbers 33:55, Joshua 23:13, Judges 2:3, Ezekiel 28:24).” The Satanic attack, while wreaking havoc on the church, served a useful purpose in humbling Paul, who having had so many revelations, including a trip to heaven and back, would have been proud.

8. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

2 Corinthians 12:8 “Paul, longing for relief from this painful hindrance to his ministry, went to his Lord, begging Him (the use of the definite article with ‘Lord’ shows Paul’s prayer was directed to Jesus) to remove it. The demons are only subject to His (Jesus) authority. The 3-fold repetition of Paul’s request parallels that of Jesus in Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-41). Both Paul and Jesus had their requests denied, but were granted grace to endure their ordeals.”

9. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:9 Like all of us, Paul had to endure a fallen and sinful world ruled by the god of this world. The Lord God, however, supplies the grace necessary to endure all the trials and tribulations that come. This was true in Paul’s life. “The weaker the human instrument, the more clearly God’s grace shines forth.” Paul knew this. This is why he did not want to boast about himself.

10. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

2 Corinthians 12:10 In spite of his trials and tribulations, Paul rejoiced in the fact the power of Christ was revealed through him to manifest the gospel. Paul’s classic statement concerning this infusion of power is, “For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

11. I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.

2 Corinthians 12:11 Paul did not want to talk about himself. He considered this to be foolish boasting, but he believed that he was compelled to do this by the Corinthians. Paul again states that he was in no way inferior to the twelve apostles in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 11:5), but even then he knows that he is nothing.

12. Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

2 Corinthians 12:12 “The purpose of miraculous signs was to authenticate the apostles as God’s messengers (Acts 2:22, Acts 2:43, Acts 4:30, Acts 5:12, Acts 13:3, Romans 15:18-19, & Hebrews 2:3-4).” Paul states that apostolic signs and wonders were something the Corinthian church bore witness to through Paul’s work of bringing the gospel to them. Paul clearly states that his apostleship has been authenticated.

13. For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!

2 Corinthians 12:13 “Paul had not slighted the Corinthians except by refusing to be a burden. With a touch of irony, he begged their forgiveness for that wrong.”

14. Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

2 Corinthians 12:14 The first visit was recorded in Acts 18, the second visit was the painful visit (2 Corinthians 2:1), and in the upcoming third visit Paul wished to continue his practice of refusing to accept support from the Corinthians. “Paul sought the Corinthians not their money.” Paul identified himself as a parent to the Corinthians, stating that it is the parents who are responsible for their children, not the children for the parents.

15. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

2 Corinthians 12:15 Paul was willing to invest his life in the Corinthian church. Paul knew that the more abundantly that he gave of himself through love, the less that he would be loved in return. This is because Paul stood in opposition to the spiritual immaturity and sin of the Corinthian church.

16. But be that as it may, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning!

17. Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you?

18. I urged Titus, and sent our brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?

2 Corinthians 12:16-18 Paul emphasizes that he, Titus, and others on his ministry team did not take advantage of the Corinthian church in any way.

19. Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But we do all things, beloved, for your edification.

2 Corinthians 12:19 As a follow-up to verses 16 through 18 above, Paul states that God is judge and He knows Paul’s true intentions. The true intentions of Paul and his companions were to promote the spiritual growth of the Corinthian believers.

20. For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest there be contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;

2 Corinthians 12:20 Paul feared that he would find the Corinthian church in their typical sins. These sins included contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, and tumults. If this was still occurring, Paul would have to deal with the Corinthian's sinful behavior, which is very unpleasant. This tends to reduce Paul's popularity among the Corinthians.

21. lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

2 Corinthians 12:21 "When he visited them, Paul did not want to find the Corinthians in the same sorry spiritual condition as on his last visit (2 Corinthians 2:1). If he found that they were not what he wished, they would find him not as they wished – he would have had to discipline them. To find the Corinthians still living in unrepentant sin would both humiliate and sadden Paul."

2 Corinthians Chapter 13

1. This will be the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

2 Corinthians 13:1 This coming visit to Corinth would be Paul's third visit. Paul informed the Corinthians that he would deal scripturally with any sin he found in Corinth. ("By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." – Deuteronomy 19:15, Matthew 18:16, John 8:7, and Hebrews 10:28)

2. I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent I write to those who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again I will not spare --

2 Corinthians 13:2 Echoing 2 Corinthians 12:21, Paul states that he will deal severely with any sin which he encounters in the church.

3. since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

2 Corinthians 13:3 "Those Corinthians still seeking proof that Paul was a genuine apostle would have it when he arrived." Paul would confront all visible forms of sin with the power and authority of Christ.

4. For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.

2 Corinthians 13:4 The power of God that is in Paul is from the Lord Jesus Christ, who was crucified in weakness but resurrected by the power of God. Paul recognizes that while he is weak, the power of God that works through him is strong. “Paul was to come to Corinth armed with the irresistible power of the risen, glorified Christ.”

5. Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you are disqualified.

6. But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

2 Corinthians 13:5-6 “Paul turned the tables on his accusers; instead of presuming to evaluate his apostleship, they needed to test the genuineness of their faith (James 2:14-26). He pointed out the incongruity of the Corinthians believing (as they did) that their faith was genuine and his apostleship false. Paul was their spiritual father (1 Corinthians 4:15); if his apostleship was counterfeit, so was their faith. The genuineness of their salvation was proof of the genuineness of his apostleship.” The term disqualified in verse 5 literally means not approved. In this context it means the absence of genuine saving faith.

7. Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though we may seem disqualified.

2 Corinthians 13:7 “Paul’s deepest longing was for his spiritual children to lead godly lives even if they persisted in doubting him. Paul was even willing to appear ‘disqualified’, as long as the Corinthians turned from their sin.”

8. For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

9. For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete.

2 Corinthians 13:8-9 Paul states clearly that he has not violated the truth of the gospel.

For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong – Paul stated that he needed to take no action against the Corinthians if he found them living according to the truth of the gospel. If the Corinthians are living according to the truth of the gospel, Paul would not have to use his apostolic power to discipline them. If Paul does not have to discipline the Corinthians, he can be weak because the Corinthians are spiritually strong.

10. Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

2 Corinthians 13:10 Paul states that whether he writes to or speaks personally with the Corinthian church, it is his objective to edify not destroy those who hear him.

11. Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Paul's concluding exhortation included encouraging the Corinthians to pursue spiritual maturity (become complete). The fruit of spiritual maturity is being of good comfort, being of one mind in the faith, and living in peace with one another. When these things are a reality, the God of love and peace will be with you.

12. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

2 Corinthians 13:12 A sign of greeting in biblical times, much like the modern handshake.

13. All the saints greet you.

2 Corinthians 13:13 "While encouraging unity within the Corinthian church, Paul did not want the Corinthians to lose sight of their unity with other churches."

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

2 Corinthians 13:14 "The Trinitarian benediction reminded the Corinthians of the blessings they had received: 'grace' from the Lord Jesus Christ, 'love' from God the Father, and 'communion' with God and each other through the Holy Spirit."