

## 2 Corinthians Notes

Studies completed with Joe Focht, Chuck Smith, Damian Kyle, Jon Courson, Warren Wiersbe, Matthew Henry, NIV Study Bible, David Guzik, Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, and Alan Redpath.

### Introduction:

Likely written by Paul in the fall of 56 AD while in Macedonia.

### Chapter 1:

- 1:1 – “apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God” – God has preserved and provided for His apostle through each trial he has faced.
- “by the will of God” – God will be sure to give us everything we need to do what He has called us to do. It is our job to remain in “the will of God.”
  - “Timothy” – Timothy has returned to Paul (1 Cor. 16:10-11) with a report of how the Corinthians responded to the previous letter. (2 Cor. 7:7)
  - “Achaia” – Part of Greek in southern Macedonia.
- 1:2 – “Grace” – (Greek “charis”) Interesting introduction in light of the severity of the previous letter.
- “peace” – For Paul, peace follows grace.
- 1:3-7 – “Comfort...consolation” – (Greek “paraklesis” and “parakaleo”) This word is used 10 times in 5 verses. The Greek root word means “one coming alongside to help,” and carries the connotation of “to strengthen.”
- The nature of God’s comfort for us (and our consolation for others) is not to get us out of the heavy circumstances, but to walk with us in them. This is not a promise of health and wealth, but a confidence in God’s care for us in every difficulty we face.
  - Godly comfort is not mere sympathy.
  - One of the names for the Holy Spirit is the Comforter; the “parakletos.” (John 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 1 John 2:1)
- 1:3 – “Blessed” – (Greek “eulogize”) Lit. “to speak well of.”
- We speak well of God even more for who He is than merely what He does.
  - “Father of mercies” – Lit. “the source of all mercies.” (James 1:17)
  - “God of all comfort” – You cannot experience the comfort of God without knowing the God of all comfort.
  - Beware of counsel or friendship that alleviates the heaviness without directing us to God. Don’t let people depend on you and don’t depend on any human.
- 1:4 – “tribulation” – (Greek “thilipsis”) Lit. “pressure.” The Greek word speaks of the part of a threshing sled used to separate the wheat from the chaff.
- “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)
  - “in all our tribulation” – Tribulation comes in many forms But then so does God’s comfort.
  - “that we may be able to comfort those” – We only do for others what Jesus has first done for us.
  - “We do not need to experience exactly the same trials in order to be able to share God’s encouragement. We only need to have experienced God’s comfort.” (Warren Wiersbe)

- 1:5 – “For as...so our” – Lit. “For as...so also our.” For each suffering, there is a corresponding consolation. It is not a one-and-done work of God.
- “Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.” (2 Cor. 4:16)
  - “Through the Lord’s mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning.” (Lament. 3:22-23)
  - “the sufferings of Christ” – Paul lists his sufferings in 2 Cor. 11:23-28.
- 1:6 – “for your consolation and salvation” – Paul sees his sufferings and his blessings as both benefitting the people he was called to minister to.
- “salvation” – The idea here is “deliverance.”
- 1:8 – “trouble which came to us in Asia” – Paul may be referring to the threat on his life at Ephesus. (Acts 19)
- Other scholars believe this tribulation was a physical ailment that threatened Paul’s life.
  - “burdened beyond measure” – The weight was heavier than he could count.
  - “above strength” – The weight of the burden is more than Paul could carry in his own strength.
  - “despaired even of life” – It hurt so much, they didn’t want to live.
    - There is no hint here of suicide. The last thing Paul would want to do is commit the sin of self-murder to alleviate the pain in his life.
- 1:9 – “that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God” – Pain and pressure of this magnitude convince us of our weakness and inability and of God’s power and care.
- Self-confidence is a sneaky trait that feels good and seems spiritual. Therefore, it may take a significant series of events to remove self-confidence and teach us to rely solely upon God.
  - We cannot know “the power of His resurrection” until we first experience “the fellowship of His sufferings.” (Phil. 3:10)
- 1:10 – “delivered us...does deliver us...will still deliver us” – Past, present, and future.
- The life without pain and tribulation comes in heaven, but not until then.
- 1:11 – “helping together in prayer” – Prayer is a true way of carrying one another’s burdens.
- 1:12 – “simplicity” – Lit. “pure, or not self-seeking.”
- “sincerity” – Lit. “unpretentious.” What you see is what you get.
    - Paul did not make himself out to be some Christian celebrity to be adored by the people. He was not complicated or beyond the reach of the common person.
    - It is an important lesson for every minister of God to live simply and sincerely.
- 1:13 – “not writing any other things to you” – Paul’s message is not changing because of the suffering.
- It is sad when your theology has to change with the different seasons of life.
- 1:14 – “in the day of the Lord Jesus” – This is always Paul’s focus. He wants to please God in the day of judgment. (2 Cor. 5:9)
- Paul’s service is an eternal work.
- 1:15 – “I intended to come to you” – Paul’s plans have changed and the people are accusing him of fickleness or deception.

- 1:16 – “by way of you to Macedonia” – Paul seems to have bypassed Corinth to go directly to Macedonia intending to stop at Corinth on the return trip for one longer stay rather than two shorter stays.
- Even the apostle Paul didn’t know his itinerary for the next few years. He made plans, but trusted God to change them when they needed to be changed.
- 1:17 – “lightly” – The idea is without care or deliberate thought.
- 1:18 – “our word to you was not Yes and No” – In ministry, Paul was faithful to his word.
- He told them that his plans to visit Corinth were “as the Lord permits.” (1 Cor. 16:7)
- 1:21 – “anointed” – This is the believer’s empowerment for service. (1 John 2:20,27)
- 1:22 – “sealed” – A mark of ownership to ensure the arrival at a destination. (Eph. 1:13)
- “guarantee” – In modern vernacular this is “earnest money” or “engagement ring.”
- 1:23 – “I call God as witness” – If the devil can identify you as a person who will run around and try to put out all the fires and settle all the accusations made against us, then he will light so many fires that we will never complete what God has called us to.
- “If you take care of your character, then God will take care of your reputation.”
  - “to spare you I came no more to Corinth” – Paul realizes his delay in visiting Corinth was to prevent him from having to come down hard on these believers. His delay gives them time to correct the errors he addressed in the previous letter. (2 Cor. 2:3-8)
- 1:24 – “Not that we have dominion” – This speaks against the shepherding practice. (Rev. 2:5,17)
- 1 Peter 5:2-3 – “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers...nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”
  - “fellow workers for your joy” – Paul just wants these believers to be blessed and joyful.

## **Chapter 2:**

- 2:2 – “he who makes me glad” – Paul desired to have fellowship with the Corinthian Christians.
- “made sorrowful by me” – There is a big difference between hurting someone and harming them. Sometimes those who love us most hurt us in order to keep us from harming ourselves.
  - “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” (Prov. 27:6)
- 2:3 – “sorrow...joy” – Life is a combination of joy and sorrow.
- Public ministry increases the highs of joy and the lows of sorrow.
- 2:4 – “out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you” – It hurt Paul to write this letter.
- Paul reflects the heart of God that would make Himself vulnerable to pain because of His love for His children.
  - Leaders pay a great personal price when dealing with problems in the church.
- 2:5 – “he has not grieved me” – Paul is choosing to not take their criticism personally.
- 2:6 – “This punishment...is sufficient” – The discipline spelled out in 1 Cor. 5 worked to bring about a turning to God in that individual’s life.
- The church usually goes to extremes in being lenient or in being judgmental. But the true purpose of church discipline is to restore the person to God.

2:9 – “put you to the test” – God will allow difficult situations to come into our lives as opportunities to prove our love and devotion to Him through obedience.

2:11 – “his devices” – Satan’s lie is that there cannot be restoration from repentance.

- Satan wants to create division. 1 Corinthians was written largely to address the divisive practices of the church at Corinth.
- Satan’s condemnation drives us away from God. The Holy Spirit’s conviction drives us toward God.
- Satan is the “accuser of the brethren.” (Rev. 12:10; see also Eph. 6:11; 1 John 5:18)

2:12-13 – “a door was opened to me by the Lord...no rest in my spirit” – Paul has a great ministry opportunity at Troas...but he left because he didn’t have a peace. (Acts 20:1-6)

2:14 – “God who always leads us in triumph” – The only way to be guaranteed true success is to know that you are being led by God. Both tribulation and blessing can accomplish God’s purposes in the lives of the surrendered follower of Christ. (1 Cor. 1:6)

- Roman soldiers had a well-documented celebration called a triumphal procession when they killed at least 5,000 enemy soldiers and conquered enemy territory.

2:15 – “the fragrance of Christ” – “All Your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes and cassia.” (Ps. 45:8)

2:16 – “we are...the aroma of life” – We witness with our lifestyle more clearly than we witness with our words. This is what permeates our life.

- “aroma of death...aroma of life” – Not everyone is going to think well of us.
- “who is sufficient for these things” – The answer is given in 1 Cor. 3:5.

2:17 – “peddling the word of God” – Using the word for personal benefit.

- “in the sight of God” – God is watching all we do and say. (2 Cor. 5:9)
- We are living for an audience of One. His opinion is the only one that really matters.

### **Chapter 3:**

3:1 – “epistles of commendation” – Sending churches and previous areas of ministry would write letters of recommendation to send with ministers as they travelled to new areas. (1 Cor. 16:3)

- In the modern day it would be like degrees, accreditation, or ordination to verify someone’s ability to minister.

3:2 – “you are our epistle” – The best verifying evidence that someone is gifted to minister is their ministry. You know they are called when they are doing it effectively in the Lord.

- Jesus said we could tell a tree by its fruit. (Matt. 7:15-20)

3:3 – “not on tablets of stone” – Speaking of the 10 Commandments; the Law. Paul will draw a distinction between the Old-Law Covenant and the New-Spirit Covenant.

- “tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart” – “I will take away the stony heart, and I will give you a heart of flesh.” (Ezek. 36:26)

- 3:5 – “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves” – Paul did not become self-sufficient in ministry. He remained dependent on God. (2 Cor. 2:16)
- “sufficiency is from God” – He is the only One that makes us sufficient. It doesn’t come from you, me, or any other person.
    - Our ministry will never exceed (for long) our devotional life.
- 3:6 – “sufficient as ministers of the new covenant” – Because this sufficiency is from God, it is fostered in relationship and not just in education. Discipleship training schools, Bible colleges, seminaries, or whatever are not sufficient in itself.
- This is for all of us; not just for an educated few. There is no real difference between clergy and parishioner.
  - You are the best minister for the people God has placed you around. It is not the church’s job, but yours.
  - “the new covenant” – This was prophesied in OT passages such as Jer. 31:31.
  - “the letter kills” – The letter is the law in its outward sense, written on tablets of stone.
    - The letter of the law came by the old covenant. It was good in itself, but it gave us no power to serve God, and it did not change our heart; it simply told us what to do. Paul can say the letter kills because the law, exposing our guilt, “kills” us before God. The law thoroughly and completely establishes our guilt.
    - Our sufficiency is in Christ, not from following the rules.
  - “the spirit gives life” – The indwelling Spirit then becomes for us a law written on our hearts.
    - The Holy Spirit is in us to guide us and be our “law.” It isn’t that the Holy Spirit replaces the written law, but completes and fulfills the work of the written law in our hearts. The Spirit gives life, and with this spiritual life, we can live out the law of God. (Rom. 7:5-6)
- 3:7-18 – Here Paul details the greatness of the New Covenant, which was mentioned in 3:6.
- The NT far exceeds the OT, but even the Old Covenant came with glory.
- 3:7 – “ministry of death” – Also called the “ministry of condemnation” in v. 9. The Law was given to reveal sin (Rom. 7:7) and lead us to Jesus (Gal. 3:24).
- “ministry of death...was glorious” – Exod. 19:16-20:1.
- 3:12 – “boldness of speech” – Lit. “freedom of speech, all-spokenness.” (Heb. 4:16)
- 3:13 – “what was passing away” – Moses didn’t want the people to see the light on his face fading away. (Exod. 34:29-35)
- 3:15 – “a veil lies on their heart” – Blindness has come in part to the Jews until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. (Rom. 11:25)
- 3:17 – “the Lord is the Spirit” – Equating God the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- “liberty” – Freedom, yes, but freedom to do what? The context clearly reveals that the liberty is a freedom to live in fellowship with God apart from the requirements of the Law.
    - This is not talking about liberty to sin or freedom to be weird.

- 3:18 – “beholding” – Lit. “to stare, or to study.”
- David said, “I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness” (Ps. 17:15)
  - “the glory of the Lord” – That is, Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 4:6)
  - “being transformed” – The tense speaks of a process that happens over time. (Gal. 5:22-23)
    - The transformation is passive. It only happens as God transforms us as we look to Him.
  - “transformed” – (Greek “metamorphoo”) Lit. “transfigured, changed from the inside-out.”
    - We will become more like Him as we spend time with Him: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (1 John 3:2)
    - For Moses, it was a reflected glory. For us, with the Holy Spirit living inside, it is a radiated glory.
  - “from glory to glory” – “But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18)

#### **Chapter 4:**

- 4:1 – “this ministry” – The glory of the new covenant and the sufficiency of God.
- “we do not lose heart” – If you are looking at the wrong things, it is easy to lose heart working at a ministry in which you cannot measure success in any outward form.
  - “lose heart” – Lit. “to be discouraged to the point of quitting.”
- 4:2 – “the hidden things of shame” – The sins of an ungodly lifestyle.
- “craftiness” – Paul does not corrupt the gospel by mixing it with human wisdom.
  - “handling the word of God” – Deception comes when we handle the Word. We need to let Him have the handle and use it on us as He wishes.
  - “deceitfully” – Lit. “to ensnare, to corrupt.” (Latin translates this “adulterously.”)
    - That deceit comes in one of two ways: by adding to it or taking from it.
  - “in the sight of God” – For Paul, the people and his ministry were all before God. (2 Cor. 2:17)
- 4:3 – “if our gospel is veiled” – It is possible to hear of Christ, but not accurately perceive Him. (2 Cor. 3:14-15)
- “perishing” – Unbelievers are “in the process of perishing.”
- 4:4 – “minds the god of this age has blinded” – It keeps them from seeing the reality of God and of the spiritual life.
- Our prayer for unbelieving friends and family is for the veil to be removed.
  - “the god of this age” – Satan is a usurper that is willfully ruling that which rightly belongs to God and will be finally redeemed by Jesus Christ. (John 12:31; 14:30; Eph. 2:2; 6:12; 1 John 5:19)
- 4:6 – “God commanded light to shine out of darkness” – At the creation, God created light before He created the light-bearers.
- “the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” – We know God by looking at Jesus.
    - “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” (John 1:18)
    - From a baby in Bethlehem to the savior on the cross, Jesus reveals the character and nature of God all along the way.

- 4:7 – “treasure” – The glory of the life of Christ. (2 Cor. 3:18)
- “earthen vessels” – Jars of clay; pottery. Unassuming and fragile.
  - “of God and not of us” – God is looking to reveal Himself through our lives. For that to be possible, He makes it clear that whatever glory shines through us is from Him and not from us.
- 4:8 – “hard-pressed” – This phrase often carries the idea of “hunted.”
- 4:10 – “the dying of the Lord Jesus” – This is “the fellowship of His sufferings.” (Phil. 3:10)
- “the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body” – Paul is saying that if we take care of the treasure, God will take care of the vessel.
- 4:11 – “always delivered to death” – Paul died daily to Himself.
- “the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh” – We will only experience and display the resurrection life of Christ after we willingly die to ourselves in surrender to God.
- 4:13 – “spirit of faith” – The idea is the same “attitude.”
- 4:14 – “present us with you” – Paul was looking to stand before the throne of God.
- “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” (Jude 24)
- 4:15 – “the glory of God” – Paul’s weakness allowed others to glorify God and not him.
- 4:16 – “Therefore we do not lose heart” – Despite his suffering (v. 8-15), Paul comes back to his original point (v. 1).
- “renewed day by day” – Even Paul, who had experienced a most miraculous conversion, needed daily renewal with the Lord. It is not a one-and-done thing.
  - Our experience of the Lord is relational and therefore requires continual investment and experience.
- 4:17 – “our light affliction” – It is only light in comparison with the glory that will be revealed in us.
- Paul’s personal affliction: 2 Cor. 11:23-28.
  - “is working for us” – It seems that our affliction now will increase our glory then.
  - “exceeding” – This means it surpasses everything else we know.
- 4:18 – “look” – (Greek “scopeo”) Lit. “to focus, to examine, to contemplate to conclusion.”
- “seen” – (Greek “blepo”) Lit. “to physically see.” It speaks of a momentary glance.
  - This world flashes images at us all the time. It allures with a visual assault, but cannot stand up to examination. Heaven and eternal life are just the opposite. The things of God cannot be seen with a momentary glance, but must be savored through study.
  - It is the story of Christmas...the world could miss God in Christ because to the world He just looked like a baby. But to the eyes of faith, that baby was Emmanuel, and He has changed the world ever since.
  - “things which are not seen” – For Paul, heaven and sharing in the future glory of God was not simply a destination, but it was also his motivation.

## Chapter 5:

- 5:1 – “we know” – Paul is confident in his knowledge of life after death. (1 Cor. 2:9-10)
- “this tent” – A temporary residence. Speaking of our physical bodies.
    - The real you is the you inside of you.
  - “destroyed” – Lit. “to strike down the tent.”
    - Paul, in his ministry, faced affliction and the threat of death. (1 Cor. 4:17)
  - “a building from God, a house” – Speaking of our permanent, heavenly bodies. (John 14:2)
    - Our heavenly bodies will properly fit us for our experience in heaven and relationship with God Himself. (1 John 3:2)
- 5:3 – “not be found naked” – We will be clothed with “the fine linen [that] is the righteous acts of the saints.” (Rev. 19:8)
- 5:4 – “not because we want to be unclothed” – Most people talk about heaven when they are trying to avoid earth. But the real greatness is not in what we are leaving, but in what we are entering into.
- Heaven is about God!
  - “mortality may be swallowed up by life” – For the believer, life starts at death. (John 10:10)
- 5:5 – “guarantee” – This Greek word can also be translated “down payment, earnest money, or engagement ring.” (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13)
- 5:8 – “absent” – Lit. “away from home.”
- “present” – Lit. “at home.”
    - The Bible knows nothing about the soul sleep philosophy or purgatory. (Phil. 1:22-23)
- 5:9 – “to be well pleasing to Him” – The general theme of this letter and the focus of Paul’s life and ministry.
- 5:10 – “appear” – Lit. “be revealed.” The idea is “be exposed.”
- “the judgment seat of Christ” – (Greek “bema”) This is not the judgment of salvation or damnation, but a judgment for rewards.
    - Our heavenly rewards are based on our faithfulness, and not on the scope of our ministry. (1 Cor. 3:12-15)
    - The bema seat is different from the Great White Throne of Rev. 20.
- 5:11 – “the terror of the Lord” – It is an awesome thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Our God is a consuming fire. (Heb. 12:29)
- 5:12 – “boast in appearance and not in heart” – Hypocrites.
- 5:13 – “beside ourselves” – Lit. “two minds, schizophrenic.”
- The false teachers were calling Paul crazy because of the depth of his commitment to God and His calling on Paul’s life. (Acts 26:24)
  - Jesus was accused of being beside himself during his public ministry. (Mark 3:21)

- 5:14 – “the love of Christ” – This is speaking of Christ’s love for us. (1 John 4:9-10)
- The love of Christ is the only fuel capable of sustaining us as we live for and serve the Lord.
  - “the love of Christ compels us” – His love compels/constrains us because once we have tasted His love, we will be satisfied with nothing else.
    - “keep yourself in the love of God...” (Jude 21)
  - “One died for all” – Paul always connects the love of God with Jesus on the cross.
    - This is not compatible with the doctrine of limited atonement. (1 Tim. 4:10; 1 John 2:2)
- 5:15 – “live no longer for themselves, but for Him” – This is a life worthy of the Lord. (Col. 1:10)
- 5:16 – “we regard no one according to the flesh” – We cannot esteem or evaluate people based on their humanness, but based on what God has worked in and through.
- Jesus Himself said, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (John 7:24)
  - “we have known Christ according to the flesh” – Paul was likely a member of the Sanhedrin that heard and tried Jesus.
    - “He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” (Isa. 53:2)
- 5:17 – “new creation” – Born again. Now as sons and daughters of God Himself.
- The saved are not just forgiven, they are a new creation in Christ.
  - “all things have become new” – We only work out our salvation because of what He has worked in to us already. (Phil. 2:12-13)
- 5:18 – “the ministry of reconciliation” – The primary reconciliation is between us and God.
- “The greatest thing any counselor can do for you is to lead you into a dependence on Jesus Christ” – Chuck Smith.
- 5:19 – “not imputing their trespasses to them” – Because Jesus bore that sin. (v. 21)
- “imputing” – A banking term that speaks of moving funds from one account to another.
- 5:20 – “ambassadors for Christ” – We are here for Him and His purposes.
- Ambassadors go into foreign lands to represent their leaders.
  - “as though God were pleading through us” – God doesn’t just present the offer of salvation, He pleads with us to accept it.
- 5:21 – “we might become the righteousness of God” – The righteousness of Christ is imputed onto us.
- When God looks at a believer, He sees Christ Himself in that person.
  - “in Him” – Not in religion, but in relationship to Jesus.

## **Chapter 6:**

- 6:1 – “workers together with Him” – Not “talking about Him” or “working for Him.” Doing ministry “with Him” is the only way to keep us from burning out.
- “not to receive the grace of God in vain” – To make the grace of God seem worthless, meaningless, or empty. It is to claim to be a believer, and yet live like the rest of the world.

- 6:3 – “no offense in anything” – The distance between what we preach and how we live ought to be continually narrowing.
- 6:4 – “ministers” – (Greek “diakonos”) Lit. “servants.”
- “patience” – (Greek “hypomone”) Lit. “endurance, long-suffering.”
  - “tribulations” – (Greek “thlipsis”) Lit. “the pressure of life’s circumstances.”
  - “needs” – (Greek “anagke”) Lit. “the everyday hardships of life.”
  - “distresses” – (Greek “stenochoria”) Lit. “a narrow place.” These are the experiences of life that cause us to feel there is no way out.
    - These are the trials that are common to all people.
- 6:5 – “stripes” – means “a wound caused by a whip or beating.”
- “imprisonments” – As happened to Paul at Philippi. (Acts 16:16-40)
  - “tumults” – means “riots, or commotions.” As happened to Paul at Ephesus. (Acts 19:21-41)
  - “sleeplessness” – Lit. “keeping a watch.”
  - “fastings” – These fastings are either voluntary or due to lack of food.
    - These are the physical trials of ministry.
- 6:6 – “purity” – (Greek “hagnotes”)
- “knowledge” – (Greek “gnosis”)
  - “longsuffering” – (Greek “makrothumia”) Lit. “endurance.”
  - “kindness” – (Greek “chrestotes”)
  - “the Holy Spirit” –
  - “sincere love” – (Greek “agape anupokritos”) Lit. “self-sacrificial love without hypocrisy.”
    - These are the mental trials of ministry.
- 6:7 – “by the word of truth” – The sword of the Spirit. (Eph. 6:17)
- “the power of God” – (Greek “dunamis”) This is the power Jesus spoke of in Acts 1:8.
  - “the armor of righteousness” –
    - These are the weapons of our warfare. (2 Cor. 10:4)
  - “on the right hand and on the left” – The shield would be in the left hand and the sword was held in the right hand.
    - These are the spiritual trials of ministry.
- 6:8 – “honor and dishonor” –
- “evil report and good report” –
  - “as deceivers, and yet true” –
- 6:9-10 – “as...yet...” – “As” others saw treated Paul; “yet” what God said of and did in Paul.
- 6:9 – “as unknown, and yet well known” –
- “as dying, and yet behold we live” –
  - “as chastened, and yet not killed” –
- 6:10 – “as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” –
- “as poor, yet making many rich” –
  - “as having nothing, and yet possessing all things” –
  - “all things” – All that is needed and all that endures.

- 6:11 – “our heart is wide open to you” – Paul has shared his heart with these people.
- 6:12 – “restricted” – The word carries the idea of “anguish.”
- “affections” – The heart drives decisions. You will do what you most want to do.
    - As Paul has poured out his heart to these people, they have removed themselves from him personally. This often happens when discipline and authority must be exercised by God’s ministers.
- 6:13 – “you also be open” – Paul is asking them to be as open with him as he has been with them.
- God, too, desires open and vulnerable relationship with us.
- 6:14 – “yoked” – A yoke is something that brings two separate things together. Paul is talking about a commitment or contract of sorts that brings believers and unbelievers together. He is not talking about common relationship. (Deut. 22:9-11; 1 Cor. 5:9-13)
- So many think they are the exception to the rule.
  - “fellowship” – (Greek “metoche”) Lit. “sharing.” The idea is partnership.
  - “righteousness with lawlessness” – Righteousness is right being and doing. Lawlessness is transgression. Both have to do with authority.
  - “communion” – (Greek “koinonia”) Lit. “all things common.”
  - “light with darkness” – Light exposes and reveals. Darkness conceals and hides. Both have to do with sincerity.
- 6:15 – “accord” – (Greek “symphonesis”) Lit. “symphony, harmony.”
- “Christ with Belial” – Jesus opposed to Satan...two different natures altogether.
  - “part” – Lit. “an assigned portion, inheritance.” It speaks of future reward.
  - “believer with an unbeliever” – The believer trusts in Jesus. The unbeliever trusts in themselves or something else.
- 6:16 – “agreement” – Lit. “joint deposit.” Voting the same way or a joint bank account.
- “temple of God with idols” – The temple holds the presence of God. Idols pose as gods but contain no god at all.
- 6:17-18 – This passage is quoted from Isa. 52:11. The context is when Israel is coming out of captivity in Babylon. (Rev. 18:4-5)
- 6:17 – “be separate” – The key to separation is not what you are separated from, but who you are separated to. (Luke 7:34; Heb. 7:26)
- “what is unclean” – That which brings defilement.
- 6:18 – “Father...sons and daughters” – This is the relationship God makes available to us in Christ.

## Chapter 7:

7:1 – “these promises” – The promises regarding relationship and fellowship with God found in 2 Cor. 6:16-18.

- “cleanse ourselves” – Removing the things that shouldn’t be there.
  - It is the natural state of humans to serve themselves and judge others. Here we are instructed to serve others by cleansing ourselves.
- “filthiness of the flesh” – These are outward sins of action and behavior.
- “filthiness of the...spirit” – These are internal sins of motivation and desire.
- “perfecting holiness” – In addition to removing things that should not be there, we also need to add in those things that should be there.
  - This is our responsibility. God is not going to do this for us although He will give us the strength to see it changed, like the man with the withered hand.
- “perfecting” – The present continual tense indicates that this is a process.
- “the fear of God” – The true fear of God is not that He might hurt us, but that we might hurt Him.

7:2 – “wronged no one” – Paul has not sinned against those he is serving.

- “corrupted no one” – Paul has not caused any of those he is serving to sin.
- “cheated no one” – Paul was not seeking monetary gain.

7:4 – “exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation” – Despite the struggles of ministry, Paul knew God was using him to bless and build up the Corinthian believers.

7:5 – “Outside were conflicts, inside were fears” – Even Paul had these struggles.

- As we mature in Christ, we learn to walk by faith and be less dependent on circumstances.

7:6 – “God, who comforts the downcast” – We were told earlier that He is “the God of all comfort.” (2 Cor. 1:3)

- “the coming of Titus” – Paul had hoped to meet up with Titus at Troas, but hurried onto Macedonia when Titus wasn’t at Troas. (2 Cor. 2:13)
  - Without the modern technology we have, this connection was much tougher. Paul saw the arrival of Titus as a major blessing from God.

7:7 – “the consolation with which he was comforted in you” – Titus was encouraged by the response of the Corinthian believers to Paul’s letter.

7:8 – “I made you sorry” – “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.” (Prov. 27:6)

- Seek out accountability from people who are mature in Christ and people who will tell you the truth.
- “I did regret it” – There are times in ministry when one is led to address difficult topics and say things that may be hurtful. It is easy to question whether or not you said the right thing when the response is negative.

- 7:10 – “godly sorrow...the sorrow of the world” – Conviction as opposed to condemnation. Conviction is the recognition of sin that leads one to fall on the mercy of God. Condemnation is the recognition of sin that leads one into hopelessness and despair. Conviction is of the Holy Spirit; condemnation is of the devil.
- “godly sorrow produces repentance” – Sorrow and repentance are not the same things. Sorrow is the emotion and feeling of sadness connected with being and doing wrong, but repentance is the confession of that wrong that leads to a change of heart and life.
  - “repent” – Repentance isn’t only for unbelievers. (Luke 17:3-4; 2 Cor. 12:21; Rev. 2-3)
- 7:11 – “What diligence it produced in you” – The Corinthians were serious about righting their wrongs and properly walking with God.
- “what fear” – Paul is here referring to the fear of falling back into the previous sins.
- 7:12 – “him who had done the wrong” – Likely speaking of the man from 1 Cor. 5.
- 7:14 – I have boasted to him about you” – Paul could speak good things even of the church at Corinth.
- Learn to like your appointed field of ministry.
  - “our boasting to Titus was found true” – The Corinthians lived up to Paul’s boasting of them.
- 7:16 – “I have confidence in you in everything” – Their humility has really changed Paul’s tone.

### **Chapter 8:**

- 8:1 – “grace” – (Greek “charis”) Used in v. 1, 6, 7, & 9.
- “the grace of God” – This is the collection that Paul is receiving to redistribute to the suffering church in Jerusalem. (Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:1-4)
    - Their financial giving is a gift of God’s grace. Ask anyone who has a desire to give but doesn’t have anything to give.
    - The NT teaches not just tithing, but giving. (Luke 11:42)
  - “Macedonia” – The region of northern Greece included the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea.
    - The Romans were especially demanding from the region of Macedonia because it the home of Alexander the Great.
- 8:2 – “their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality” – Statistically, poor people often give more than wealthy people. (Luke 21:1-4)
- Paul is using the churches of Macedonia as an example to the Corinthians believers.
- 8:3 – “beyond their ability, they were freely willing” – They wanted to give more than they were physically able to give.
- The great danger in the church of the last days is not over-zealousness, but lukewarm-ness.
- 8:5 – “they first gave themselves to the Lord” – They surrendered themselves to the Lord before simply giving Him some of their resources. (Matt. 6:1-4)
- God wants you more than He wants your money.
  - Time is harder to give than money.
- 8:6 – “complete this grace in you as well” – Paul’s primary concern with this gift was not the money itself, but the unity of the Church as the Gentile churches helped to support the Jewish church.

- 8:8 – “not by commandment” – God does not use pressure, obligation, compulsion, or necessity to motivate us to give. (2 Cor. 9:7)
- “testing the sincerity of your love” – “But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” (1 Cor. 3:17)
- 8:9 – “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” – Paul is comparing the grace of Jesus with the Corinthians’ grace of giving.
- “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus...” (Phil. 2:5-11)
  - “No one is Christ-like who does not give” – Damian Kyle.
- 8:10 – “desiring to do a year ago” – This is not a reference to pledge cards. They had simply expressed to Paul a desire to give a year earlier.
- 8:11 – “complete the doing of it” – We will be rewarded according to what we give and not just according to what we intended to give.
- 8:12 – “first a willing mind” – We will be rewarded according to our heart when giving and not just according to the size of the number on the bill or check.
- Jesus pointed this out when watching the poor widow give all she had. (Mark 12:41-44)
- 8:14 – “there may be equality” – Equality requires both giving and receiving.
- Good givers must also be good receivers.
  - This is not socialism, but sharing.
- 8:15 – “had no lack” – Quoted from Exod. 16:18 where it spoke of the gathering of manna.
- God has provided enough for all as long as some don’t hoard the majority at the expense of the others.
- 8:18 – “the brother whose praise is in the gospel” – We are not told who he is.
- 8:21 – “honorable things...in the sight of God...in the sight of men” – or “honest account in the sight of God and man.” They are sending multiple representatives to stay above reproach before God and man.
- 8:23 – “they are messengers of the churches” – Paul is encouraging them to trust these men.
- “messengers” – or “apostles.” (Greek “apostolos”) Lit. “one sent out with a special commission.”

### **Chapter 9:**

Paul is communicating with the Corinthian church regarding their desire to send a financial gift to the Christian church at Jerusalem. The churches of Macedonia have already sent their gift along with Paul. Now Paul is organizing a couple of guys to collect the money from Corinth as well and then take both gifts to the church at Jerusalem.

- 9:3 – “the brethren” – Titus and at least 2 other men. (2 Cor. 8:16,18,22)

- 9:5 – “ministering” – (Greek “diakonia”) Translated “relief” in Acts 11:29. (2 Cor. 3:8-9)
- “that it may be ready” – Paul wanted the money and business stuff taken care of before he got there. Paul didn’t want the focus to be on money when he was there.
    - The church that does a “Family Meeting” on Sunday morning should take care of the business at another time in another way.
    - You can look to people to provide or you can look to God; you cannot look to both.
- 9:6 – “sparingly” – Lit. “to spare or abstain.” The idea is “to withhold, or to hold back.” (Gal. 6:7)
- “bountifully” – (Greek “epi eulogia”) Lit. “upon blessing, or overflow of praise.” (Phil. 4:15-19; Matt. 19:29)
    - God will be a debtor to no man.
    - “Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” (Luke 6:38)
    - The Three Laws of Sowing and Reaping:
      1. reap in the same nature of what is sown,
      2. reap the harvest later, and
      3. always reap more than you sow.
- 9:7 – “each one” – Everyone can and should give something.
- “purposes in his heart” – This speaks of a premeditated decision.
    - “I consider manipulation to be a sin; and I am not going to reinforce that in the life of another person” – Damian Kyle.
    - “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt. 6:21)
  - “grudgingly” – Lit. “with sorrow.” (NIV translates this “reluctantly.”)
    - This speaks of the internal motivation. We would say “give with no strings attached.”
  - “necessity” – Lit. “obligation, pressure, or stress.” (NIV – “compulsion.”)
    - This speaks of external circumstances. There are some circumstances that make giving impossible for some people.
  - “cheerful” – (Greek “hilaros”) Lit. “glad.”
    - It is not that we “have to,” it is that we “get to.”
  - “giver” – Giving applies, not just to money, but to life.
- 9:8 – “sufficiency” – This word is translated “contentment” in 1 Tim. 6:6 and it speaks of “adequate resources within.”
- Bountiful and cheerful giving may not change our circumstances as much as it changes our character.
  - “an abundance for every good work” – That is why God has given it to us in the first place...so we can give it to others. Those who hoard what God gives will not be given more; God will not waste His resources in that manner.
- 9:9 – “endures forever” – This investment program yields eternal rewards.
- 9:12 – “supplies the needs...thanksgivings to God” – These gifts meet needs and bring praise to God.
- If a gift leads us to remember and praise a man, then we have missed the point.
- 9:13 – “sharing” – (Greek “koinonia”) Lit. “all things in common..”
- 9:14 – “their prayer for you” – Givers will be on many people’s prayer lists. (Dorcas - Acts 9:36-43)

- 9:15 – “Thanks be to God” – Gratitude marks the lives of those who have received God’s grace.
- “His indescribable gift” – Salvation in Jesus Christ!
  - Our giving is response to His gift. God is the greatest Giver.

## **Chapter 10:**

In chapters 10-13, Paul gives a defense of his ministry.

- 10:1 – “in presence am lowly among you, but being absent am bold” – This is a claim some in Corinth are making against Paul. (v. 10)
- “lowly...bold” – Jesus could be both humble (“lowly”) and bold as the situation required.
- 10:2 – “I intend to be bold against some” – Paul knew who he needed to be bold with.
- “as if we walked according to the flesh” – The false teachers at Corinth are evaluating Paul’s ministry based merely on external evidences of fruit.
  - Some could look at Paul’s ministry and call it a failure because it didn’t measure up to some human standard of success.
- 10:3 – “we walk in the flesh” – We have physical bodies limited to time and space.
- “we do not war according to the flesh” – “Paul’s concern for the church at Corinth is simply that...the understanding of things which a man adopted in his unconverted days, becomes projected into the fellowship of the church, and then church begins to fail in its spiritual battle because it adopts the carnal procedures.” (Alan Redpath)
- 10:4 – “warfare” – This is not a game. This is a spiritual war; “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (Eph. 6:12)
- Spiritual warfare is so that God’s will can be accomplished on earth. It is not so much that we win, but that God wins through our obedience in the face of opposition.
  - “not carnal” – You cannot win a spiritual war with physical weapons.
  - Spiritual victory is not won with money, buildings, or a lot of people.
- 10:4-5 – In spiritual warfare, we stand against these three things:
1. “strongholds” – Lit. “castle.” One definition is “anything on which one relies.”
    - Luke 11:17-23 – “his armor in which he trusted.” A Satanic stronghold in our lives is anything we are trusting other than the Lord Jesus Christ.
  2. “arguments” – (Greek “logismos” – KJV “imagination”) Lit. “logic, reason.”
    - The logic of our western (Greek) culture wants to say there is no such thing as spiritual warfare.
    - “The form of carnality in the church which stems from corruption of mind...which insists in submitting the Word of God to its own criticism and only accepting that which human intellect can understand and believe.” (Alan Redpath)
  3. “every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” – That is anything that keeps us from knowing God better and from abiding in Him.
    - Joshua was told numerous (7) times to “be strong and of good courage.” But the reason is so “that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you.” (Josh. 1:7)
    - The vast majority of the warfare is won by just settling in His presence and then doing what He says.

10:5-6 – In spiritual warfare, we do these two things:

1. “bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” – This deals with our thinking...not letting ungodly thoughts roam free in our minds. (Rom. 12:2)
  - Once the walls in the mind have been torn down, the door to the heart can be opened.
2. “punish all disobedience” – This deals with our living...being ruthless with sin in your own life. (John 17:17)

10:7 – “according to outward appearance” – Paul is wondering if the Corinthian believers have accepted the lies of “those who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh.” (v. 2)

- “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” (John 7:24; see also 1 Sam. 16:7)

10:8 – “boast somewhat more about our authority” – Paul now goes on to defend his spiritual authority in the church at Corinth.

- “for edification” – God grants authority in the church to build others up, not tear others down.

10:10 – “his speech contemptible” – Paul’s adversaries used a professional type of oratory as their stock in trade, designed to extract money from gullible audiences.

10:11 – “we will also be in deed when we are present” – Paul is warning those who are speaking badly of him when he is away.

10:12 – “measuring” – I suppose more problems have been caused by people “measuring the ministry” than by any other activity in the church. If the work of the church is the work of God, and if the work of God is a miracle, how do we go about measuring a miracle?

- “comparing themselves among themselves” – No other human is our standard. Jesus is the standard we must measure ourselves against.
  - It is ok if others don’t look like me or talk like me or even think like me. I would prefer they grow to love and imitate Jesus Christ instead.
- “now wise” – Comparison ourselves with others leads to pride or hopeless depression.

10:13 – “will not boast beyond measure” – Paul will not take credit for someone else’s work or try to horn in on someone else’s ministry.

- The false teachers were constantly following Paul in his ministry to try to draw people away from him and what he was trying to teach them of Jesus.
- “the limits of the sphere” – The idea is of the lanes on a track. Paul says that he is simply running in his lane, trying to win his own race.
  - All Godly authority has limits.

10:14 – “not overextending ourselves” – This ministry is genuine. Paul didn’t need to try to take more ministry unto himself.

10:15 – “not boasting of things beyond measure” – The church of Corinth was there because of Paul’s spiritual labor. They are doubting what they are evidence of.

10:16 – “boast in another man’s sphere” – Taking credit for another’s work and accomplishments.

10:17 – “glory in the Lord” – Not in wisdom, might, or riches. (Jer. 9:23-24)

10:18 – “approved” – Lit. “to approve by testing.” Metals are heated to test their quality.

- There is a future testing at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:10), but there is also a present testing of the work that we do. God will permit difficulties to come to local churches in order that the work of God might be tested and approved. (Rom. 8:37-39; Eph. 1:6)

### **Chapter 11:**

11:1 – “little folly” – Paul is defending his ministry to those at Corinth to guard them from the false prophets who are discounting Paul and destroying the message. (v. 3-5)

11:2 – “I am jealous for you” – As God is for His people. (Exod. 20:5)

- God is not jealous of us; He is jealous for us.
- “that I may present you as a chaste virgin” – The heart of a father.
  - In Bedouin tribes, still to this day, they will execute children (especially girls) for losing their virginity before marriage.
  - In God’s eyes, a chaste virgin is one who has clung to Jesus above all else. It does not mean someone has lived perfectly, but rather been faithful to Jesus.
  - The false prophets didn’t mind using the people for their own pleasure. Paul’s heart was to do whatever it took for these people walk faithfully with Jesus.

11:3 – “craftiness” – Satan has subtle techniques. (2 Cor. 2:8-11; 4:4; 11:3; 12:7)

- “simplicity” – (Greek “haplotes”) Lit. “singleness.” The idea is “of one thing.”

11:4 – “another Jesus” – Distinct from the Jesus of the Scriptures by adding something to Him (like Mormonism) or taking something from Him (like His deity or sacrifice). (Gal. 1:8-9)

- “different spirit” – The Bible says that the Holy Spirit will testify of Jesus. The Holy Spirit causes us to understand the reality of Jesus.
- “different gospel” – The false gospel of Galatians was “Jesus and...” (Gal. 1:6-10)
- “you may well put up with it” – The Corinthians are quick to disregard Paul and follow these false teachers.

11:7 – “Did I commit sin in humbling myself” – Paul’s sarcasm: “Are you offended that we didn’t hit you up for money?”

- The Corinthians are falling for the lie that something is only as valuable as what you paid for it. But grace, though it costs us nothing, is of great value and cost Jesus immensely.

11:9 – “burden” – Lit. “to grow numb.”

- “the brethren who came from Macedonia” – We know the church of Philippi supported Paul at this time. (Phil. 4:14-18)
  - The false prophets, who served in Corinth for financial gain, made it impossible for Paul to receive offerings from the Corinthians and not be seen like a false prophet.

11:11 – “I do not love you?” – They were questioning Paul’s love for them because he wouldn’t take any money from them. It’s backwards.

- 11:13 – “false apostles” – They are carrying more authority than God has given to them. (2 Cor. 1:24)
- Beware of those who require titles in the Church.
  - “apostles” – Lit. “sent out ones.”
  - “deceitful workers” – They know all the Christian lingo.
- 11:14 – “an angel of light” – Satan came to Eve in the garden of Eden as a “shining one.” (Gen. 3:1-6)
- “Satan is never more Satanic than when he carries a Bible.” (Damian Kyle)
- 11:15 – “whose end will be according to their works” – Who they are will prove out in time by what they do and not just by what they say.
- People who turn from the Lord because of the supposed hypocrisy in the church must realize that not all of it is hypocrisy, some of it is deception. There have been tares sown in among the wheat. (Matt. 13:24-30; 36-43)
  - The greatest harm that a lack of discernment causes is between us and Jesus. I see women doubting Jesus because of a failed relationship. I see men doubting Jesus because a good friend has turned his back on the faith. I see many people doubting Jesus because a beloved minister strayed from fidelity or from the truth of the Scriptures. We live in an era of great deception...Jesus predicted it. Keep your nose in the book so you are not carried away from Jesus.
  - “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.” (1 John 2:19)
  - “...make captives of gullible (or “young, immature”) women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Tim. 3:6-7)
  - “And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matt. 15:9)
  - “But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim. 3:14-15)
- 11:18 – “many boast according to the flesh” – The Corinthians have allowed their views of the false prophets to be inflated by their worldly boasts.
- 11:19 – “you yourselves are wise” – Paul is being sarcastic.
- 11:20 – “you put up with it” – Why do Christians put up with this stuff? Why do we seem more gullible than the world in some things? It ought not to be so.
- “bondage” – A heavy, legalistic trip of laws and regulations.
  - “devours you” – Manipulating people out of their money.
  - “exalts himself” – Using the people and the platform for self-promotion.
  - “strikes you on the face” – They are allowing themselves to be abused by these teachers.
    - Jewish rabbis would often strike their students as a part of their instruction.
    - “Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen...He will not quarrel nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends for justice to victory.” (Matt. 12:18-21)
- 11:21 – “I speak foolishly” – Paul would rather speak only of Christ. (2 Cor. 4:5)

- 11:23 – “ministers” – (Greek “diakonos”) Lit. “servants.” The “most eminent apostles” (v. 5) have turned the term “minister” into an exalted title rather than a description of one called by God to serve and equip others in the Body of Christ.
- “I am more” – The mark of Paul’s apostleship was his willingness to sacrifice the temporary for the eternal; the earthly for the heavenly.
    - “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Rom. 8:18)
    - “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (2 Cor. 4:17)
  - “in prisons” – Like in Philippi. (Acts 16:20-24)
  - “in deaths” – Like in Lystra. (Acts 14:19)
- 11:24 – “forty stripes minus one” – Deut. 25:3 says that Jewish scourgings were limited to 40 lashes.
- 11:25 – “shipwrecked” – And this is written before the end of Acts 20. So the shipwreck of Acts isn’t even included in this tally.
- 11:28 – “what comes upon me daily” – The idea is, “that which bears me down, that which is upon me as an intolerable load, that which is a burden, that which is something that I can never shake off day or night.” (Redpath)
- “concern” – (Greek “merimna”) Lit. “pressure, stress.”
- 11:29 – “Who is weak, and I am not weak?” – Paul was emotionally and spiritually connected to the church.
- Like a father of this church, their success and failure directly impact Paul.
- 11:33 – “let down in a basket” – This is how Paul’s first attempt at public ministry ended. (Acts 9:20-25)

## **Chapter 12:**

- 12:1 – “visions and revelations of the Lord” – This is what kept Paul going through all the sufferings he described in 2 Cor. 11:23-33.
- 12:2 – “I know a man” – This is Paul himself. (v. 7)
- Paul does everything he can do to relate this story to the Corinthians without bringing glory to himself.
  - “fourteen years ago” – Possibly when Paul was stoned to death at Lystra. (Acts 14)
    - Paul’s hesitation and 14-year delay in relating this experience make us question those who are quick to recount their experiences of heaven and seem to financially benefit from it.
  - “third heaven” – This is the heaven where God dwells.
    - The Jews thought there were 3 heavens: the first was the atmosphere of earth, the second was the celestial heavens, and the third was where God dwells.
- 12:4 – “Paradise” – Jesus told the thief on the cross, “today you will be with Me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43; see also Rev. 2:7)
- Paradise seems to be incomplete until the ascension of Christ, for it was then when human flesh was for the first time received back into open-faced fellowship with the Lord.
  - The only other man in the Bible to have experienced Paradise was Adam.

12:6 – “lest anyone should think of me above” – Paul doesn’t want the Corinthians to think of him, or anyone else for that matter, above what they actually are and do in ministry.

12:7 – “a thorn in the flesh...a messenger of Satan” – It may be two separate things.

1. “thorn” – Lit. “tent stake.” Typically about 18 inches long.

- This was an ongoing physical trial of some sort. (This is in addition to the persecutions and hardships that resulted in his ministry.)

2. “messenger of Satan” – A spiritual attack from the adversary.

- Satan loves to jump in and use physical trials to turn people from God.
- Every spiritual attack is measured by God...and can be used by God for His purposes.

- “to buffet me” – “Often the man who is being most blessed of God is being most buffeted by the devil.” (Alan Redpath)

- “lest I should be exalted” – God allowed this trial to humble Paul after this mountaintop experience.

- God knows Paul has a personal bent to pride. And He knows pride is so dangerous to Paul and his ministry, that He would afflict Paul like this.
- Often, great spiritual experiences and physical suffering goes together.

12:8 – “I pleaded with the Lord” – Paul prayed in a time of affliction. (Phil. 4:6)

- “three times” – It is not a sin to pray for something more than once. (Mark 14:39-41)

12:9 – “He said” – The tense is “He said and kept on saying.”

- “strength” – (Greek “dunamis”) Lit. “power, might.”

- “perfect” – This word comes from the same Greek word as “tetellestai” (which means “paid in full”). (John 19:30)

- “rather boast in my infirmities” – Paul would not take a life of ease if that meant that he would miss out on what God wanted to do through him and in him.

- “...the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings...” (Phil. 3:10)

12:10 – “in needs” – God will sometimes keep us in need to keep us dependent on Him.

- “for Christ’s sake” – Everything in Paul’s life was to gain Christ.

12:11 – “I ought to have been commended by you” – Those who have benefitted from Paul’s ministry are those who should have spoken well of Paul.

- We should honor those who serve us.

12:13 – “not burdensome to you” – Paul didn’t take money from them.

12:14 – “I do not seek yours, but you” – He didn’t want their stuff. He wanted them.

- “parents for the children” – Parenting is a rather one-sided affair. It is a lot of giving.

12:15 – “the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved” – This is the self-sacrificial love of Jesus Christ flowing through Paul.

- It must break Paul’s heart to not have this love returned in kind.

- 12:19 – “We speak before God” – Paul wanted his ministry and message to please God. (2 Cor. 5:9)
- Joe Focht relates the counsel he received from Chuck Smith that preserved and directed the work at Calvary Chapel Philadelphia in the early years: Chuck said, “Save your ministry; get out of counseling.” For ministry to be proactive and not reactive, one must hear from God and not simply respond to the needs of the people.
  - “we do all things, beloved, for your edification” – “One of the little secrets of Calvary Chapel... We are not here to be ministered to, but to minister. We are not here to receive, but to give.” (Chuck Smith)

- 12:20 – “such as you do not wish” – Paul is coming in all the authority necessary to clean out the church.
- This is like Jesus cleaning out the Temple.

- 12:21 – “my God will humble me” – As Paul mourns the sin of the church and deals with their disobedience.
- “mourn” – Lit. “wail.” It speaks of a cry at a funeral.
  - We live in an era that is very spiritual...but that wants spirituality without accountability.
  - We learn from teaching, but we also learn as we see things lived out in the administration of the corporate church and the life-decisions of the individual church members.

### **Chapter 13:**

13:1 – “By the mouth of two or three witnesses” – Quoted from Deut. 19:15.

- 13:2 – “I will not spare” – Paul is going to back up the words spoken and written.
- Paul’s heart through this entire letter was to be “well pleasing to Him” (2 Cor. 5:9). He will do whatever it takes to lift up Jesus and honor His word.
  - “spare” – Lit. “to spare in battle.” Paul is declaring war on anybody who opposed the authority of God’s word.

- 13:4 – “the power of God toward you” – The power of God that works in us is the same power that raised Christ from the dead.
- “...the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand.” (Eph. 1:19-20)
  - The power of God in us is not an outward, showy power. The world can look at the power of God in us and call it weakness...but His power changes our hearts, something the world could never do.

- 13:5 – “Examine yourselves” – Simply to verify if your life matches your profession.
- The Corinthians have been examining Paul and his ministry (v. 3). He is asking them rather to examine their own lives and ministry.
  - “disqualified” – Lit. “to fail the test.” This implies not playing according to the rules, or not living up to the truth.

13:7 – “not that we should appear approved” – Paul is not expecting them to side with him. He wants them to be on God’s side.

- 13:8 – “the truth” – Jesus is “the truth” (John 14:6) and God’s “word is truth” (John 17:17).
- Jesus said, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.” (Mark 13:31)
- 13:9 – “complete” – or “perfect.” This speaks of spiritual maturity. He wants them to come to “the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:13)
- “Godly perfection is not perfection of performance, but a perfection of relationship” – Oswald Chambers.
  - A changed heart will always yield a changed life!
- 13:11 – “Become complete” – Lit. “to mend.” This word is translated “restore” in Gal. 6:1.
- This speaks of the process and practice the church is supposed to do for one another to see every member come into the fullness of Christ.
  - If the church of Corinth had been doing this all along, it would have saved Paul this heaviness.
  - “comfort” – This comes from the “God of all comfort.” (2 Cor. 1:3)
- 13:12 – “a holy kiss” – Handshakes or hugs in this culture.
- 13:14 – “Jesus Christ...God...the Holy Spirit” – A beautiful picture of the trinity.