

2 Corinthians 13:1-10, Test of Faith

¹ This will be my third visit to you. “Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” ² I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others, ³ since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. ⁴ For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God’s power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God’s power we will live with him in our dealing with you. ⁵ Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? ⁶ And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. ⁷ Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. ⁸ For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. ⁹ We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored. ¹⁰ This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

Notes:

- Verse 1 context makes it clear this about accusations against Paul must pass the test of credible witnesses.
- Verses 2-4, The basic sense is again related to the misconception Paul is a weak leader. So in essence he is saying if there is sin among them he will not be “weak.”
- Verses 5-10, he asks them to examine themselves and while a stern warning, it should be missed he hopes to be able to be “weak” among them and not have to be strong.

Questions

1. The letter has had much to say about weakness and strength. When has gentle correction worked for you and strong? When have they not worked?
2. How do you know when to be gentle or strong in correcting another person?
3. What do you think Paul mean’s here in v.4 about God’s power? God’s power to do what and for what purpose?
4. How do you test yourself to see if you are in the faith? What are reliable signs of genuine faith in Christ? How can this question be helpful vs. harmful?
5. How does an examination of the state of your faith be a process that builds you up and does not tear you down?