

## 2 Corinthians

- **Background**

- Most likely in the period covered by Acts 19:21 – 22, 20:1 – 2, perhaps late 57 AD.
- The original plan was to sail from Asia (SW Turkey) to Corinth, travel up to Macedonia, back to Corinth, then sail to Judea (1:15 – 16) for Pentecost (Acts 20:16).
- But, the plan was changed to go through Macedonia, down to Corinth, then sail to Judea. But, a plot to kill Paul caused him to go back through Macedonia (Acts 20:3).
- While on the land journey (Plan B), Titus had been sent ahead (probably by sea, directly from Ephesus to Corinth), with the plan to meet in Troas (NW Turkey, 2:12 – 13), so Paul hurried to Macedonia because of worry for Titus, where they were reunited (7:5 – 7).
- Titus reported good things about the congregation in Corinth (7:7 – 16).
- Having seen the generosity of the Christians in Philippi concerning famine relief for Judea, Titus volunteered to go back to Corinth to stir up their generosity (8:6, 16 – 24).
- Titus did not accept support from the Corinthians, as Paul had not (12:13 – 18).
- Titus (and his traveling companions, 8:18 – 22) likely carried this letter. Titus is mentioned several times in the letter, but is in neither the introduction nor the conclusion.

- **Always looking on the bright side (1:1 – 22)**

- (1) A letter to all the saints in the region of Achaia, not just one congregation. The number of individual groups is unknown.
- (2) As in most letters, the objective is for the recipients to develop the divine nature (grace) and to have peace. What follows in this letter should be understood as being pointed toward that objective.
- (3 – 11) The prize is to be comforted (don't focus on why you needed comforting).
  - (3) Father of mercies: Father who intensely desires to fix what ails you. Focus on His desire for you.
  - (5) The comfort is as sure as the suffering.
  - (6) Comforted knowing that, if I endure, others will learn to endure. If I am comforted, others will have hope of comfort. The focus is that of love: doing what is best for the other person regardless of the effect on me.
  - (7) Comforted knowing that others will endure and be comforted.
  - (8 – 10) Trouble is an opportunity to grow faith
  - (11) Trouble gives opportunity for effective prayer.
- (12 – 14) Boast in simplicity
  - We boast not in complexity or new insights, but in simplicity and sincerity.
  - We boast in being understandable by ordinary people.
  - We boast in each other (not in ourselves).
- (15 – 19) We have confidence in one another.
  - Human plans get derailed, but we are confident of the best of intentions, not suspicious.
  - We assume the best of each other.
- (20 – 22) Our optimistic outlook is based on:
  - The promises of God and His track record.
  - The parade of godly character traits passing through us.
  - We are anointed, sealed, and guaranteed.

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- Looking at the bright side of conflict (1:23 – 3:6)
  - (1:23 – 2:11) Correcting is exhorting, not rebuking
    - Note: “Rebuke” or similar negative words were not used in the exposition of problems in 1 Corinthians.
      - 1:10 I plead with you
      - 3:1 I could not speak to you as spiritual but as carnal, as to babes in Christ
      - 4:8 You are already full! (sarcasm)
      - 4:14 I do not write these things to shame you...but to warn you
      - 4:18 Some are puffed up
      - 5:2 You are puffed up and have not rather mourned
      - 5:6 Your glorying is not good
      - 6:5 I say this to your shame...it is an utter failure
      - 8:11 Because of your knowledge shall a weak brother perish?
      - 11:17 I do not praise you since you come together not for the better but for the worse...Do you shame those who have nothing?...For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.
      - 12:1 I do not want you to be ignorant
  - (1:23 – 2:11) The objective of pointing out problems is joy
    - (1:23) Even Paul, who had authority from God to teach and get paid (1 Corinthians 9:18, 2 Corinthians 10:8, 13:10), tempered his discussions of poor performance and limited their frequency.
    - (1:24) Remember liberty. Not even an apostle could dominate the faith of another. Rather, correction has the goal of joy based on the successes of faith.
    - (2:1 – 5) The attitude of the corrector
      - (2:2, 4) If the objective is to cause sorrow over poor choices, where is the joy for the corrector? Grief (guilt) is never the objective, rather love.
      - (2:3) Correction implies confidence in the other person and an expectation of joy on both sides due to the success of faith, that faith provides the ability to overcome.
      - (2:5) Paul, at a distance, was not grieved by their poor choices (no indignation, no personal harm). Rather, his concern was for the grief (and by implication, the lack of joy from their faith) caused to them by those making poor choices.
    - (2:6 – 11) Attitude toward the corrected
      - Note: Although not specifically referenced, this paragraph appears to address the case of the man “who had his father’s wife” in 1 Corinthians 5.
      - (2:6) “By the majority” – apparently, not everyone shunned this man. The expression of concern was “sufficient.”
      - (2:7 – 8) Love, comfort, and forgive those who have made bad choices. Remembering bad choices of the past results in being “swallowed up with too much sorrow.”
      - (2:9) Correction is a mark of maturity of faith. Paul tested the faith of the more mature in Corinth by giving them a difficult task.

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- (2:10) Paul expressed his confidence that the problem had been resolved. He did not need a personal apology. If someone else says that the problem is resolved, that is good enough.
- (2:11) Correction can be destructive; proceed with caution, recognizing the potential pitfalls.
- (2:12 – 3:6) It's about people, not performance.
  - (2:12 – 13) On his way overland from Ephesus to Corinth, Paul stopped in Troas. Even though an opportunity for the gospel was apparent there, Paul pushed on because of his concern for Titus. This event was an example to the Corinthians that people are more important than theory. Titus was more important than the potential spread of the gospel in that place. And the Corinthians were more important than correctness.
  - (2:14 – 16) If we focus on people, God makes it work out.
    - (7:5 – 16) Titus and Paul had a joyful reunion in Philippi
    - (2:14) Paul's focus on Titus illustrated the true purpose of God to everyone around him. The illustration to the Corinthians was that Paul felt that way about them, also, as demonstrated by his long trip and by sending at least two (Timothy and Titus) people to check on them.
    - (2:15 – 16) Those who are looking for a strong, dependable family find it in the church. Those looking to themselves find it threatening. Paul expresses how overwhelmed he has been by the way the Word works.
  - (2:17 – 3:6) Our dedication to one another is a proof of the gospel
    - John 17:20 – 23 Perfected in unity. (*e.g.*, 1 Corinthians 12:13 Baptized into one body. 1 Corinthians 10:17 We are one bread and one body. Romans 15:5 May God grant you like-mindedness. Philippians 3:15 God will reveal even this to you.)
    - (2:17) Apparently, the Corinthian Christians had a cultural weakness with the importance of money, whereas the Philippians did not. Paul made a point of not accepting personal support from Corinth (*e.g.*, 1 Corinthians 9:18), but rather from Philippi (Philippians 4:15 – 16). Paul's point was that his love for them was motivation enough. He accomplished his task, trusting God to make it work out, although sometimes he lacked funds even for food (*e.g.*, 1 Corinthians 4:11, 2 Corinthians 11:27).
    - (3:1) Regulation (and the concomitant paperwork) diverts attention from love of people.
    - (3:2 – 3) The people we love are our paperwork, clearly seen by all.
    - (3:4) Do we trust God that our love for one another is sufficient to validate the message?
    - (3:5 – 6) Our sufficiency is a work of the Spirit. (*e.g.*, Romans 5:5 The love of God is poured out in our hearts by the Spirit. 2 Peter 1:4 Partakers of the divine nature., 1 Thessalonians 3:12 Increasing love for others.)
    - (3:6) Bottom line, the letter kills, the Spirit gives life.

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- Looking at the bright side of change (3:7 – 4:14)
  - (3:7) The Law had many positive aspects. Two specific facts are noted:
    - Given by God. God carved the first set which was broken by Moses at the Golden Calf scene (Exodus 31:18 – 32:19); Moses carved the second set (Exodus 34:1 – 28).
    - Moses face shone after each talk with God (Exodus 34:29 – 35).
    - Leaving 1500 years of history would be difficult. The temptation would be to try to work within the system (*e.g.*, Jewish Christians trying to merge the Law and the Spirit).
    - The church has had the same problem since its beginning, clinging to authority, rules, and tradition. Most try to work within the system.
  - Admittedly, the Law had potential and historical misapplications:
    - (3:9) The Law was viewed as a compilation of condemnations despite its great promises.
    - (3:11) The Law was designed to last until the Messiah, not forever.
    - (3:13) The Law was given in spurts; the connection to God was sporadic.
    - (3:14 – 15) The applications of the symbolisms of the Law were poorly understood.
    - (4:2) Rabbis had a history of manufacturing creative excuses for bad behavior.
    - (4:4) The “god of this age” is likely Satan, who had the ability to deceive unbelievers (*e.g.*, Matthew 13:19) but had no power over believers (Ephesians 6:11, James 4:7, 1 John 3:8, 4:4)
    - Note the parallels to the history of the church.
  - We can break free (have liberty) if we focus on glory (the parade of godly character traits promised to be in us).
    - (3:7 – 8) The service of the Spirit
      - Under the Law, the display of God’s character traits was limited to the things God did; they were not within the Israelites.
        - The stone tablets revealed God’s character; it did nothing to impart those character traits to the Israelites.
        - The glow on Moses face was a reminder of God’s character, not Moses’ character.
      - The Spirit imparts those godly character traits to believers.
      - The church has a history of focusing on behavior modification rather than spirit modification.
    - (3:9 – 10) The Law had a significant number of threats (promises) concerning the results of bad behavior because the Law governed unbelieving Israel. The gospel focuses on the gifts which impart righteousness (godly character) to believers. The church has a history of focusing on threats rather than on imparting godly character by the work of the indwelling Spirit.
    - (3:11) The works of the Law only make sense on earth. They cannot extend into eternity, after the universe is destroyed. The focus on the gospel is on continuity from now through eternity, seamlessly. The church has a history of focusing on that which must pass away and minimizing the connection of intellect with spirit and between spirits.

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- (3:13 – 16) Understanding is a promised gift from the indwelling Spirit (*e.g.*, 1 Corinthians 2:9 – 16, Ephesians 1:17 – 19, 3:17 – 19, Philippians 1:9 – 11, Colossians 1:9 – 11, 2:2). The church has a history of reserving understanding for the theologically talented, who then tell the ignorant what to do.
- (4:1) Receive help to fix what ails us (mercy). The church has a history of condemning the weak rather than supplying what they need.
- (4:2) Without help from the indwelling Spirit, we will not understand this service (ministry). Historically, those who have not relied on that Spirit were compelled to fill in the gaps in their understanding with the best their human minds could do, which turned out to be better characterized as “hidden things of shame,” “walking in craftiness,” and “handling the Word of God deceitfully.”
- (4:3) We must accept that some will never understand (*e.g.*, Romans 1:24, Ephesians 4:17 – 19, 1 John 2:9 – 11).
- The nature of this “ministry” should cause in us:
  - (3:12) Hope, specifically of being “partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4)
  - (3:12, 4:13, Psalm 116:10) Great boldness of speech (note: not by being an example of good behavior)
  - (3:17) Liberty: no one has authority over us but God. There are no more intermediaries (*e.g.*, the priesthood, the Most Holy Place into which only one could go). We have helpers and examples, but no human rulers.
  - (3:18) Transformation into the character of God
  - (4:1) We do not lose heart because of our confidence in the indwelling Spirit.
  - (4:2, 7) Manifest the work of the Spirit (clearly beyond human ability), not our work.
  - (4:5 – 6) We serve the faithful and announce the leadership position of Jesus. If I am essential to the message, something went wrong. God’s message passes through us; we do not enhance it. Rather, we display the character of Jesus.
- Change usually brings adversity; we know how to manage it (4:8 – 14).
  - (8 – 9) Each description is a reminder of the work of the indwelling Spirit.
    - Not crushed: we can’t lose.
    - Not in despair: confident that confusion will be resolved.
    - Not forsaken: it’s a promise.
    - Not destroyed: what’s the “worst” that can happen – an early out.
  - (10 – 12) Living sacrifices (Romans 12:1 – 2).
    - We are sacrifices (celebrations of forgiveness with family and friends in the presence of God) for the lost.
    - In this way, the rationale for Jesus’ life choices is illustrated.
    - The result of accepting adversity is the rescue of others.
  - (13 – 14) We have the same faith that Jesus had
    - Therefore, we speak.
    - Resurrection Day is a sure thing.
    - All the faithful are united now and forever.
- Looking at the bright side of the unseen (4:15 – 5:16)
  - The unseen is difficult to keep in focus
    - The physical world easily gains priority
    - The unseen can be frightening, or at least disconcerting

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- The connection between the seen and the unseen is not easy to understand
- Unseen things essential to faith (4:15 – 5:8):
  - (4:15) “All things are for your sakes” The vast majority of people have an agenda, the goal of which is their own success. We must accept that fellow believers are “other centered.”
  - (4:15) “Grace, having spread through the many” The gracious character of God is part of the transformation (3:18). We must accept that fellow believers are being transformed into that character.
  - (4:15) “Cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God” This transformation will result in thanksgiving for the character traits of God being spread among believers.
  - (4:16) People lose hope as their see their dreams pass the point of no return. Conversely, as we age, we value our continuing transformation, so hope never dies.
  - (4:17) Life includes difficulties. Paul’s comparison is in 4:8 – 10. We overcome hard times because we view them as light and temporary by comparison to the value of our eternal parade of godly character traits.
  - (5:1 - 8) “Well pleased to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.”
    - (5:1 – 2) Faith must include a confident expectation of a far superior dwelling.
    - (5:3 – 4) Many see death as weakness (naked). Faith requires the outlook that we are presently clothed by God (given real life while physically alive), and will be clothed further, not stripped bare, by physical death.
    - (5:5) To understand the indwelling Spirit as a down-payment
      - We must know what the indwelling Spirit does (short list).
        - Gives life to our mortal bodies (Romans 8:11)
        - Aids in putting to death the deeds of the body (Romans 8:13)
        - Leads us (Romans 8:14)
        - Testifies of our adoption (Romans 8:16)
        - Strengthens the inner man (Ephesians 3:16)
        - Perfects (Galatians 3:2-5)
      - We must understand the work of the Spirit as a small percentage of the total package we will inherit.
- “Therefore” (5:9 – 16)
  - (5:9) Comprehending the unseen results in endeavoring to be well pleasing to Him as an outgrowth of our “other centered” viewpoint and the other characteristics of our faith listed above.
  - (5:10 – 11) Knowing that Judgment is inevitable, we persuade others, again based on the characteristics of our faith listed above.
  - (5:12 – 13) One could interpret Paul’s examples as boasting. But, seen properly, Paul is giving the Christians of Corinth something to boast about to unbelievers in Corinth; the important thing is heart, not appearance.
  - (5:14 – 15) “That those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them” “The love of Christ compels us.”
    - Jesus died for all, not just for the elect.

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- Jesus died for all, therefore all needed it.
- The logical response is to serve Him.
  - (5:16) We no longer see physical people but spirits.
- Looking at the bright side of ambassadorship (5:17 – 6:18)
  - (5:17 – 21) We plead with the world to accept reconciliation
    - (17 – 19) “Therefore”: Because we see the unseen (4:15 – 5:16), because we are new creations (transformed, 3:18), our message is...
      - (18) Reconciliation, not conquest. God is the one offended by sin. Yet, He brings an offer to the lost.
      - (19) That God was in Christ: God came to earth, not as the all-powerful and all-knowing, but as a regular person.
    - (20 – 21) Ambassadors
      - (20) Pleading, not ordering. Our message is a plea, not terms of surrender.
      - (21) “To be sin for us” The symbolism of the priest laying his hands on the head of a sacrifice was to symbolically transfer the sin of the offeror to the sacrifice (Leviticus 16:21). The symbolism was part of many sacrifices (Exodus 29:10, 15, 19, Leviticus 1:4, 3:2, 8, 13, 4:4, 11, 15, 24, 29, 33, 8:14, 18, 22).
      - (21) “That we might become the righteousness of God in Him” By taking away our sin, God made us able to “do it right,” as long as we are “in” Jesus (being transformed into the same image, 3:18).
  - (6:1 – 10) Ambassadors represent the message
    - (1 – 2) Be a reputable ambassador, having received all the help needed.
      - Having received the grace of God, having received the product of God’s gracious nature, and literally, being transformed into that gracious character.
      - “In vain” To receive something “in vain” was a terrible humiliation, the worst outcome in that society.
    - (3 – 10) A motivation to overcome the trials of life is to represent the message well.
      - If we do not handle adversity well, outsiders will not believe that the message carries any hope for them.
      - If we do not act as those who believe that the unseen is far more important than the seen, outsiders will have no reason to believe it.
      - Poor behavior is often blamed on the trials of life. Having the ability to escape that common problem is appealing.
  - (6:11 – 18) Serving yet separate
    - (11 – 13) Liberty: I am responsible for myself. The opinion of another does not limit me. Therefore, speak openly and listen openly.
    - (14 – 16) Independent: No entangling alliances. Be cautious with connections (fellowship)
    - (17 – 18) Family: Represent the family as sons and daughters, not as slaves. Unseen connections are much more powerful than worldly ones.
- The bright side of personal relationships (7:1 – 16)
  - Personal relationships often cause pain, so people often shy away from them.

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- Superficial relationships
- Authoritarian relationships
- Isolation
- (1) Having these promises (6:16 – 18)
  - Because God dwells among us
  - Because we are the people of God
  - I will receive you
  - I will be a Father to you
- (1) Because of these promises, be clean (for the purpose of evangelism)
  - (4:2) Renounce the hidden things of shame
  - (4:6) To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God
  - (4:11) That the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh
  - (5:11) Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men
  - (5:15) Those who live should live no longer for themselves
  - (5:20) We are ambassadors for Christ, pleading
- (2 – 4) This admonition to be clean (for the purpose of evangelism) comes from a close personal relationship, not from moralizing or condemning.
  - To address behavior that disrupts evangelism requires an open heart and a track record of honesty.
  - Admonitions must start from a position of connection, unity.
  - Poor choices do not define a person; address confidence in others and the comfort received from them.
- (5 – 8) An example of how a personal relationship works
  - We were worried about you, to the point of inner conflict and fear
  - God comforts us
  - Second-hand comfort works, too
  - The confrontation was difficult
  - Connected people feel each other's pain
- (9 – 11) Positive results (certainly, Paul had negative results sometimes, but this time, the confrontation – by letter – worked)
  - Godly sorrow – the right kind – that leads to a radical re-orientation.
  - Repentance:
    - Note that this repentance led to salvation, so before the repentance, they were not there yet. Paul did not ask the faithful to repent (those who were already saved by their faith) but the church-attenders who had not comprehended the point yet.
    - From 1 Corinthians (assuming this applies to the man who had his father's wife in chapter 5, although it would work for any of the problems in that letter), there were those making excuses for immorality – calling bad behavior good – who would not think that way if they were faithful.
    - The same could be said of those who wanted to be important by prophesying and babbling in tongues (1 Corinthians 14), or those who turned the Lord's Supper into a feast (1 Corinthians 11), or those who were judgmental (1 Corinthians 8).
- (12) Such confrontations are not for the sake of the “truth” or in support of one group or another, but to show concern for someone who matters.

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- (13 – 16) Joy is the result
  - Big rewards require big risks. Passivity may result in a lack of conflict, but not joy.
  - Condemning, or being a “defender of the faith,” brings conflict but no joy, especially to the one who made the bad choices. The defender risks becoming arrogant.
  - Conflict in the setting of a close, personal connection results in joy for both. The one corrected has joy that the others still care just as much. The one initiating the conflict has not only the joy of success, but also, and more importantly, the shared joy resulting from a close connection.
  - Joy over the success of another is better than joy for my own success.
- The bright side of sharing with the faithful (8:1 – 9:15)
  - Sharing raises fears
    - Sharing is often confused with giving
    - Providing for our own generates conflict
    - The relative value of the unseen is hard to see (4:15 – 5:16)
  - History
    - Acts 11:27 – 30 Agabus and other prophets predicted a famine. Sharing with the faithful in Judea began immediately, about 49 AD.
    - 1 Corinthians 16:1 – 3 Paul included this prediction with the gospel as he and Barnabas and later Silas taught in Turkey and Greece (51 – 56 AD).
    - Romans 15:26 The collection of funds was mentioned also to the faithful in Rome.
    - Acts 24:17 The collected funds were delivered, about 58 AD.
  - (8:1 – 5) The motives that result in sharing
    - (1) The faithful gain a gracious nature in their transformation which re-orient thinking from inward to outward.
    - (2) Affliction and poverty tend to turn people inward. Seeing the unseen (4:15 – 5:16) reverses that trend because the unseen relationships promote joy.
    - (3) “Beyond their ability” will be shown to be more than a metaphor later in this section: promises concerning sharing.
    - (4) Sharing funds is part of fellowship (connectedness). See Acts 2:44 – 45, 4:32 – 35. But some in the early church did not understand the concept (Acts 5:1 – 11). See also 1 Corinthians 13:3.
    - (5) The desire of God is to have a big family that lasts. Those who become a part of that family will automatically develop this sharing attitude. (Note: forced sharing does not does not promote this understanding.)
  - (8:6 – 17) How to teach sharing.
    - (8:6, 16 – 17) Titus taught sharing as a part of having a gracious character, not as a duty. Further, Titus demonstrated sharing by volunteering to teach them despite great distance and danger.
    - (8:7 – 8) The attributes of a gracious character (faith, speech, knowledge, diligence, love) should include sharing. The goal was completeness, not fundraising.
    - (8:9) Jesus was poor financially, but not by necessity. Several wealthy followers funded His earthly ministry. Judas kept the funds (and pilfered from

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them). He was able to leave the Last Supper scene unsuspected because the disciples assumed that he was going out to give money to the poor (John 13:29). The concept of being spiritually rich is repeated in Revelation 3:17 and 2 Corinthians 6:10.

- (8:10 – 11, 9:1 – 5) If you promised it, you must follow through.
  - (9:2) Because we assume that the faithful will follow through, a promise is as motivating as its completion.
  - (9:5) Take extra precautions to ensure that the promise becomes reality and is not disrupted by unforeseen circumstances. This (9:5) was put in motion by Paul by his instruction (1 Corinthians 16:1 – 3) to accumulate the funds in advance.
  - Not everyone is a good planner, especially with money, so we need to take precautions concerning our own lack of skill.
- (8:12 – 15) Equality
  - Intention, not quantity, defines godly sharing.
  - Those with whom we share should be brought to our level, not made wealthy (a concept overlooked by many church leaders throughout history).
  - Giving goes in one direction only, so is not equality but mercy (not discussed in this passage). Sharing implies an equilibrium.
  - (Exodus 16:18) The illustration is from the manna in the wilderness. The bread made from manna spoiled by the next day (except Friday manna which lasted two days). Therefore, the Israelites were taught to share because it was going to spoil anyway.
- (8:18 – 24) Sharing must be done honorably
  - The handling of funds must be transparent.
  - Because of the history of humans, suspicion in money matters is normal.
  - Take extra precautions to avoid suspicion.
- (9:6 – 15) Promises that motivate us to share
  - (6) If we are not reaping bountifully
    - Giving or sharing?
    - What we can do or what God can do? (See promises below.)
    - Wisely or tempting God?
  - (7) If we feel pressured
    - Are we using God's standard of adequacy? (Unseen riches)
    - Are we teaching fellowship?
    - Did I promise or did someone "promise" for me?
    - If cheerfulness is lacking back up and review grace and faith.
  - (8 – 11) An abundance for every good work:
    - How far does this go? What qualifies as good?
    - What if the money does not appear?
    - Psalm 112:9 (actually, the whole psalm)
    - The same promise is repeated three times, probably because we have such a hard time believing it.
  - (12 – 15) Results of sharing

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- Thanksgiving to God
- Proof to the outside world
- Parading the character traits of God
- Closer fellowship (their prayers for you)
- The bright side of humility (chapters 10 – 13)
  - The last part of the letter is heavy with sarcasm
    - (10:1) ...in presence am lowly ... but being absent am bold toward you.
    - (10:6) Being ready to punish all disobedience then your obedience is fulfilled
    - (10:9) lest I seem to terrify you by letters.
    - (11:1) Bear with me in a little folly – and indeed you do bear with me
    - (11:4) You may well put up with [a different gospel]!
    - (11:19) For you put up with fools gladly, since you yourselves are wise.
    - (11:21) To our shame, I say that we are too weak for that [to control you]
    - (12:13) ...I myself was not burdensome to you. Forgive me this wrong!
    - (12:15) The more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved
    - (12:16) Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning!
    - (13:9) We are glad when we are weak and you are strong.
  - (10:1 – 18) Humility and gentleness pull down strongholds
    - (3) We do not war according to the flesh
      - Position and control often are gained by being forceful. Paul was not.
      - Throughout the rest of the letter, Paul asserts his deep concern for them
      - (5) Paul refuted clever arguments by revealing their contradictions
      - (6) Paul did not use the “stick” to gain control
    - (7) By what standard do some reject others?
      - From 1 Corinthians, many Christians in Corinth had some serious problems. Yet, Paul did not say they were rejected.
      - (8) Paul’s point was building up, not tearing down
      - (10) Charismatic leadership and eloquent, motivational lessons do not signal quality
    - (12) To what do we compare ourselves?
      - Comparing ourselves with those who agree with us does not validate our message or disqualify others. It is simple self-deception.
      - Paul was specifically told by God to spread the gospel in this place. Lacking such direct instruction, what is our “sphere”?
        - Not in other men’s labors (15)
        - We hope for those whom we have taught
      - (18) How does the Lord “commend”?
        - (3:2) You are our epistle written in our hearts
        - (4:7) That the power may be of God and not of us.
        - (9:12) Abounding through many thanksgivings to God
  - (11:1 – 15) Humility and gentleness display fellowship (13:14)
    - (2) We are jealous for those whom we have taught. We demonstrate fellowship when we speak up when they are being deceived.
    - (3) The gospel is simple; theology is complex. We speak up when people we love are being deceived by complexity.

## 2 Corinthians

- (4) We are compelled to speak up when the nature of Jesus, the work of the Spirit, or the “good” part of the good news are distorted because people about whom we care are being deceived and diverted from peace.
- (6) We rely on the simplicity of the Scriptures rather than cleverness, displaying that our message works equally well for all people, not just the elite.
- (8 – 9) Financial compensation clouds the relationship
- (12 – 15) We cut off opportunities from those who would harm those we love.
  - Messengers of the twisted gospel try to displace previous teachers.
  - History is littered with examples of deceit in religion.
- (11:16 – 33) Humility and gentleness sometimes hide effort. At times, those efforts must be revealed.
  - Those who seek to capture control often boast of their labors and hardships
  - (20) Check if the boast is being used to gain control or to show that such things are unimportant.
  - (28) The most difficult “hardship” is daily concern for those with whom we are connected.
  - (29) The failings of others prompt a counterattack against those who deceive.
  - (30) As 4:7, that the power may be of God and not of us.
- (12:1 – 13) Humility and gentleness sometimes hide great accomplishments. Sometimes these accomplishments must be revealed – but in keeping with humility.
  - (5) Boast about the successes of faith of others.
  - (6 – 10) Publish overcoming personal infirmities by the power of God
- (12:14 – 13:14) Humility and gentleness prevent power and position but not speaking (gently) about what has gone wrong.
  - (12:14 – 18) Reminder: follow the money to reveal the motives.
  - (12:19 – 21) Bringing up unpleasant topics did not put Paul in control or promote his superiority, but rather humbled him and made him mourn for the bad choices of others.
    - (13:7) The good behavior of others is not for the promotion of the teacher (the teacher is irrelevant).
    - (13:9) Look for the other-centered attitude
  - (13:4) We shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.
    - Not that I want you to join my superior position.
    - Rather, I live when I see God’s power in you.
  - (13:5) Don’t you know that Jesus Christ is in you?