Contents - 1st and 2nd Corinthians … Started 11/17/2023 last edit 2/13/2025

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Last step - I have finished putting my brief summary of paragraphs after the verse reference. 2/13/2025

Capitalized: he to He him to Him his Savior Lord Son 2/7/2025

…I did not edit this document to reword verses after reading the Amplified version in 2025. As I looked through the document I saw that I did refer to the Amplified version for explanatory notes in several verses.

(11/17/2023) This started as my attempt to create something like a Table of Contents for books (New Testament at least) of the Bible, but it expanded beyond a list of contents. This document has the book, chapter and verse reference, my summary on the content of those verses, and explanatory notes. This document should, in no way, replace your own reading of the Bible. You should read the Bible to get more of the original meaning and to get context. I plan to use this document as I make a shorter list of the topics or teaching for a set of verses.

I needed to decide whether to write in the past tense or write this document as a guide to what God wants us to know. A “report” of what Paul wrote makes it sound like it is Paul’s authority or thoughts all the way through. I don’t want that tone. So, on April 26, 2024 I deleted the text and copied in a backup copy I made on April 1st that is closer to a paraphrase and a guide to what God wants us to know, than it is to a “report.”

For the edits finished May 15, 2024 I wrote in the past tense for the historical comments made by Paul, and in the present tense for discussions that are somewhat separate from the historical viewpoint that present day, and future Christians, can learn from. …and, later I will insert (APPL…for applications I see) related to the text. This will be done in a separate Google Doc.

References that I may use in this document are listed below. In most cases I put content from these sources inside ().

NET (NET) Bible. THE NET BIBLE, NEW ENGLISH TRANSLATION, COPYRIGHT © 1996 BY BIBLICAL STUDIES PRESS, L.L.C. This Bible is a free download from [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org/). The First edition without notes is free from<https://netbible.com/download>. The second edition with notes is $4.95 download as of 2018. The NET 2nd edition can be read online for no cost at<https://netbible.org/bible/Romans+1> (starts at Romans Chapter 1).

(AMP) Amplified Bible (at biblegateway.com [1 Corinthians 1 AMP - Appeal to Unity - Paul, called as an - Bible Gateway](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%201&version=AMP) ) I wrote my “paraphrase” after reading the NET Bible verses. Then I read the Amplified Bible and edited my “paraphrase.”

(ESV) ESV Study Bible 2007 Crossway Bibles (I read the study notes for some verses as I wrote my paraphrase.)

(QUEST) The Quest Study Bible 1983 Zondervan (I read the study notes for some verses as I wrote my paraphrase.)

(glc) Thoughts from Greg Clements.

Some of the Bible studies I create are posted on [www.gpclements.com](http://www.gpclements.com/).

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1 Corinthians

(QUEST … author was Paul …Written about 3 years after Paul planted the church in Corinth…54 or 55 A.D.)

(ESV…author was Paul…Written while Paul was in Ephesus in the spring …see 16:8…of 53, or 54, or 55 A.D. There is a lost letter to the Corinthians see 5:9)

1 Cor 1:1 - 9 God has provided forgiveness and fellowship for Christians with Jesus

Paul was called to be an apostle by God’s will. Paul is writing (AMP…Sosthenes possibly served as Paul’s secretary as Paul dictated the letter …see 1 Cor 16:21) to the church in Corinth….to those who have accepted Jesus’ sacrifice and are thus sanctified… (QUEST …made holy from God’s perspective) and called by God to be saints (ESV … holy people) (glc… set apart for God … not “saints” by a later decision of a church). The letter is also for all in the world who believe in Jesus and call Him Lord. Paul wants them to have grace and inner peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul gives thanks to God for the Christians in Corinth because of the grace of God given to them through Christ Jesus. They were made rich in spiritual gifts in many ways, in their speech and knowledge - with the testimony about Christ being confirmed among them - so they don’t lack any spiritual gift as they wait for the return of Jesus. Jesus will strengthen them to the end, so they will be blameless in God’s eyes on the day the Lord Jesus Christ returns. God is faithful, and trustworthy, and has called them into fellowship with his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Cor 1:10 - 17 Christians should not have disputes or just follow certain people

Paul urges the Christian brothers and sisters to be in agreement in their speech, to end their divisions, and to be united with the same mind and purpose in their Christian faith. Members of Cloe’s household have let Paul know that there have been rivalries and disputes among them. Some are saying they are with Paul; some are saying they are with Apollos (ESV 1 Cor 16:12..Acts 18:24-19:1); some are saying they are with Cephas (ESV Peter Gal 2:7-14; 1 Cor 15:5…); some are correctly saying they are with Christ. Christ is not divided. Paul was not crucified for them. They were not baptized in the name of Paul. Paul only baptized a few people in Corinth. Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel, baptizing was not his main focus. Paul's preaching, about the good news of forgiveness of sins, is not rhetorically clever which might lead to the cross of Christ not being believed by people.

1 Cor 1:18 - 31 Jesus Christ is the power and wisdom of God

The message of the cross sounds foolish and absurd to those who reject Jesus, but it is the showing forth of the power of God to those who are being saved. It is written in Isaiah 29:14; “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will thwart the cleverness of the intelligent.” Look at the “wise” man, the expert in the Mosaic law, and the famous debaters. God has exposed the wisdom of the world as being foolish. The wisdom of the world does not know God, so God decided to save those who believe in Jesus by the foolishness Paul preached. Jews demand to see miracles and Greeks ask for wisdom, but Paul preached about Christ’s crucifixion. Jesus’ crucifixion leads to opposition from Jews and is completely not understood by the Greeks. But to those God calls, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power and wisdom of God. The foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of humans, and the weakness of God is stronger than the strength of humans. Think about the circumstances when you were called by God. The call was not especially given to those considered wise by society, nor to those in powerful or privileged positions. Rather, God chose those the world considers foolish, to shame the wise, and God chose those the world considers to be weak to shame the strong. God chose the low and despised people of the world, who are regarded as worthless, to put aside what the world considers as worth something, so no person can boast in God’s presence. God is the reason you have a relationship with Christ Jesus, who became for us the wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption (glc..he did so much for us), so Jeremiah 9:24 would be followed: “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

1 Cor 2:1 - 5 Faith should be based on what God has done

Paul came to Corinth and did not rely on eloquent speech or human wisdom when he preached the testimony about God. Paul had decided to focus on Jesus Christ and His crucifixion in His testimony and not discuss unimportant things. Paul was with them in human weakness and fear and even trembled. His conversation and preaching did not rely on persuasive words of human speaking skills, but on a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so their faith would not be built on human wisdom and rhetoric, but on the power of God.

1 Cor 2:6 - 16 The Holy Spirit gives Christians spiritual understanding

Paul and Christian messengers spoke true wisdom to those who believed. It was not earthly wisdom, as comes from those who are perishing. Paul and his companions spoke wisdom given by God that was hidden in a mystery according to God’s ancient plan but is now revealed to bring us into God’s glory at this time. None of the earthly rulers understood it. If they had understood they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. (glc…so that God’s kingdom would not be established through Jesus’ sacrifice) It was written in Isaiah 64:4 “Things that no eye has seen, or ear heard, or mind imagined, are the things God has prepared for those who love Him.” God has revealed these things to Christians by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit can probe all things, even the deep mysteries of God. This is similar to humans, who only truly know what is inside themselves, their inmost thoughts, by their spirit. Only the Holy Spirit knows the deep mysteries of God. God gave us His Spirit, not the spirit of the world, so we can know and understand what God has freely given us. Paul and his companions spoke using words given by the Spirit, not using words learned from human wisdom, and so explained spiritual things to spiritual people. The one who only uses human wisdom does not accept or believe the message given by the Spirit, for those things seem foolish and illogical to that person. That person cannot understand because those things are spiritually understood and comprehended. The spiritually mature person evaluates all things the Spirit reveals but is evaluated by no one who does not have the Spirit. The unbeliever cannot judge the believer’s spiritual life. It is written in Isaiah 40:13 “ For who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to advise Him? But we have the mind and understanding of Christ.

1 Cor 3:1 - 15 Seek to grow in spiritual understanding

My fellow Christians, I could not speak to you as people who are focused on spiritual things, because you are dominated by human nature, you are still infants in your Christian faith. I gave you simple Christian teaching, not deep Christian teaching, for you were not prepared for deeper truths. And you are still not ready for substantial teaching, because you are influenced by human principles. The evidence for this is your jealous behavior and dissensions in the church, which shows you are influenced by the world and acting like non-Christians. When someone in the church says “I am with Paul,” or “I am with Apollos,” doesn’t this show that you behave like an unspiritual person? Paul and Apollos are just doing the ministry God gave them and are servants of God, who each have their work, who led you into Christian beliefs. Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth. God is the important one, not the person who plants nor the person who waters, and each will receive a reward based on his work. Paul and Apollos work for, and with, God. You are God’s cultivated field and God’s building. God has given Paul grace and guidance to lay a good foundation (glc…the message of Jesus dying for the forgiveness of our sins) for the development of the church body. Others will build on this foundation and they must be careful how they help the church grow. If their motives and teachings are godly and valuable like precious stones, or if they use common, ungodly methods and teachings, the results will be easy to see on the Day of Judgment when Jesus evaluates each person’s works. Each person’s work will be tested and revealed by fire and the true judgment of Jesus. If the work survives the person will receive a heavenly reward. If the work is burned up, the person will not receive a reward for that work but will still receive salvation because of the person’s faith in Jesus’ sacrifice for their sins. But, this person will be saved as though they passed through fire.

1 Cor 3:16 - 23 Human wisdom is not spiritual wisdom

You should know and fully comprehend that you are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you (AMP …in the church body and in individual Christians). The person who destroys God’s temple (AMP…introducing false doctrine) will be destroyed by God because God’s temple is holy and sacred. Each person should beware of deceiving themselves. If a person thinks they are wise in this world, they should stop relying on worldly wisdom and consider themselves to be a fool, so they can start fresh, learn God’s wisdom, and be truly wise. The wisdom of this age has no worth or meaning compared to God’s wisdom. It is written in Job 5:13: “He catches the wise in their craftiness.”; and in Psalm 94:11: “The Lord knows that the thoughts of those who rely on human wisdom are futile and useless.” The conclusion is that there should be no boasting concerning the wisdom of mere mortal humans or a human leader. As a Christian, everything belongs to you. You benefit from Paul, Apollos, and Peter; you have the world, life, death, the present, and the future. These all belong to you and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. (glc..As a Christian, you are adopted into God’s family. God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit are one in essence and purpose.)

1 Cor 4:1 - 13 True spiritual leaders care about God’s view of them, not people’s view

Think of Paul and his companions as servants of God and caretakers of the mysteries of God. A caretaker must be faithful to the work. Paul is not concerned with being judged by people or human authorities. Paul was not condemned by himself. He had a clean conscience before men and God. But this did not give him forgiveness in God’s eyes. Paul knew his rightful judge is Jesus. Be careful not to judge before Jesus returns. Jesus will reveal the hidden things of darkness and reveal the true motives of people. Then, each person will receive recognition from God. Paul applied these discussions to himself and Apollos because of the Christians in Corinth, so that in thinking about them, they would learn not to go beyond what is written, and would not be conceited in their thinking of each other. No person assigns superiority to you. All you have that is important has been given to you. Why do you boast about what you have as though you were not given those good things?The Corinthians claimed to be satisfied and rich. They claimed to be rulers without Paul and his associates. Paul wanted them to be spiritual rulers so Paul and others could rule with them. God let the apostles be condemned to die and they became a spectacle to the world, to the angels, and to people. The apostles were fools for Christ in the view of people, but the Corinthians claimed to be wise in Christ. The apostles appeared to be weak, but the Corinthians claimed to be strong. The Corinthians claimed to be distinguished but the apostles were dishonored. The apostles were hungry, thirsty, poorly clothed, mistreated, and homeless. The apostles did hard work for a living. When they were verbally abused they responded with a blessing. They endured when they are persecuted. When people lied about them they replied with a friendly answer. They were considered to be the dirt and scum of the Earth.

1 Cor 4:14 - 21 The Corinthians should view Paul as their spiritual father

Paul is writing this to give them correction as his dear children. He is not writing to shame them. They may have had many advisors and guardians in Christ but Paul was their spiritual father through the gospel he brought to them. Paul encouraged them to imitate him. To help with this, Paul sent Timothy to them. Timothy was his dear and faithful son in the Lord. Timothy was sent to remind them of Paul’s ways in Christ, which Paul taught in churches everywhere. Some at Corinth had become arrogant and believed Paul would not come to Corinth. Paul planned to come to them soon if Jesus allowed this, and he planned to find out first-hand what they were saying and to see what spiritual power they had. The kingdom of God is shown not in just talk but with power. The Corinthians should have considered what they wanted for their future: should Paul come to discipline them or should he come with love and a gentle spirit?

1 Cor 5:1 - 5 Don’t accept sexual immorality among Christians

Paul had heard reports that sexual immorality was present in the church as one of them was having sexual relations with his father’s wife (step-mother). Paul noted that this was not even an allowed situation for non-Christians. Paul heard that the Christians were proud of their acceptance of this. Instead, they should have been sorrowful and removed this person from the church. Paul was not with them physically but he was with them in spirit. Paul judged the person who did this as if he was physically present with them. When the church gathered again in Jesus’ name and in His power, and Paul’s spirit was with them, they were to remove spiritual protection from the man and hand him over to Satan for the punishment of his flesh so that his spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord.

1 Cor 5:6-13 Don’t let sin linger in the church

Their boasting about the spirituality of their church and their acceptance of the man was not good. A little yeast affects the whole batch of dough and a little sin corrupts the whole person or whole church. Remove the old yeast so you can be a fresh batch of dough. Christ has been sacrificed as a Passover lamb. Celebrate this with bread without yeast in sincerity and truth, not with the bread that has yeast of the world’s ways and evil. Paul’s last letter exhorted them to not have close associations with sexually immoral people. This warning does not apply to everyday contact with the immoral or the greedy or the swindlers or the idolaters in the world since you can’t be in the world and avoid these contacts. Paul gives them guidance to not associate with one who claims to be a Christian but is sexually immoral, greedy, an idolater, insults or slanders others, a drunkard, or a swindler. Don’t socialize with them. Judge those inside the church to protect the church. Don’t judge those outside the church. God will judge those who are outside the church. Remove the evil person from your church.

1 Cor 6:1 - 8 Christians should settle disputes among themselves and not rely on courts

When you have a legal problem with another Christian do you presume to go to a worldly court rather than to the church body for resolution? Christians will judge the world in the future. So if you will judge the world can’t you resolve simple conflicts? Christians will judge angels in the future so why can’t you judge in simple earthly situations? Why do you appoint unbelievers to be judges for your civil disagreements? This is shameful. Is there no one in the church who is wise enough, and has integrity, to settle conflicts between fellow Christians? Instead, do Christians sue each other, and do this in plain view of unbelievers? Since you do have these unsettled conflicts it shows you are already defeated. It would be better to let yourself be wronged and cheated. But you, yourself, are doing wrong and cheating fellow Christians.

1 Cor 6:9 - 11 Unbelievers have ungodly actions and won’t inherit God’s kingdom

Unbelievers will not inherit or share in the kingdom of God. Think clearly! The sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate or who participate in homosexual activities, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, those who insult and slander, and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God. Some of you used to have these activities before you believed in Jesus. But as a believer, you were washed from your sins, sanctified and made holy, and justified (declared free of guilt) in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Spirit of our God.

1 Cor 6:12 - 20 Honor God by not sinning with your body

The Corinthians may have said, “All things are lawful for me.” But not everything benefits you. The Corinthians may have said, “All things are lawful for me.” But Paul chose not to be controlled by anything. The Corinthians may have said, “Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food.” But God will do away with both food and the stomach. Your body is not intended for sexual immorality but rather for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body, to save because of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. God raised the Lord from death to life and will raise us by His power. Think correctly. Your bodies are members of Christ. It is never right to take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute. The person who is joined with a prostitute is one body with her. Genesis 2:14 tells us, “The two will become one flesh.” The person who is joined with the Lord is one spirit with him. Run away from sexual immorality (in your thoughts or actions…Amplified)! People commit sins outside of their bodies, but the immoral person sins against his body. Think correctly. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own. You were bought with the price of Jesus’ sacrifice. Honor and glorify God with your body.

1 Cor 7:1 - 9 Sexual relations should take place only for married men and women

Paul responded to questions from the Corinthian Christians. It is good for a man to not have sexual relations with a woman outside of marriage. But due to the temptation for sexual immoralities, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. A husband should fulfill the sexual needs of his wife with good will and the wife should fulfill the sexual needs of her husband with good will. The husband has marital rights regarding his wife’s body and the wife has marital rights to her husband’s body. They do not have exclusive authority over their bodies. Do not deprive each other of marital rights, except by mutual agreement for a limited time, so you can spend time in prayer. Then resume your marital relationships so Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. Paul wrote this response as a concession to their question, not as a command. Paul wished that everyone was as he was regarding sexual needs. But he recognized each person has his own gift from God regarding sexual needs, and these needs are different. Paul’s advice is that it is best that the unmarried and widows remain single and devoted to the Lord. But if they don’t have enough self-control they should get married. It is better to be married than to have a burning, unfulfilled, sexual desire.

1 Cor 7:10 - 16 Don’t leave the marriage if your spouse is not a Christian

Paul wrote of the Lord’s command to the married. A wife should not separate from her husband, but if she does she should remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And, a husband should not leave his wife (See Matthew 19:4-9 ). Paul’s advice, not Jesus’ command, is that the Christian who is living happily with a spouse who is not a believer should not leave that spouse. The unbelieving husband or wife is sanctified (receives blessings through the Christian spouse..AMP) by the Christian partner. Having one Christian parent endues the children with favor from God. But if the partner who is not a Christian wants to leave the marriage let them leave. If this happens the Christian partner is not (spiritually or morally…AMP) bound to the marriage. God’s plan is for peace. The Christian in the marriage may lead the unbelieving spouse to have faith in Jesus.

1 Cor 7:17 - 24 Be more concerned about your relation to God than your earthly status

Each Christian must live and walk in life as the Lord has arranged as they were called by God. Paul gave this instruction to all the churches. If one was called after being circumcised he should not try to undo the circumcision. If one was called while uncircumcised he should not get circumcised. The state of being circumcised or not circumcised is not important. Keeping God’s commands is what is important. Each Christian should remain the life situation they were in when they were called. If the person was a slave they should not worry about it. But if they are able to gain freedom from slavery they should take that opportunity. The person who becomes a Christian while a slave is the Lord’s freedman. Likewise, the one who becomes a Christian while a free person is now Christ’s slave. You were bought with the price of Christ’s sacrifice. Don’t become slaves of men but rather become slaves of Christ. Christian men and women should remain in the life situation they were in when they were called to be a Christian. Remain in this situation with God.

1 Cor 7:25 - 31 Paul gives his opinion on marital status and earthly possessions

Paul now gives his opinion regarding young people who have never married. This instruction is not from a command from the Lord, but it is from Paul, who has been shown mercy by the Lord to be considered trustworthy. (glc...even though this is not a command from Jesus, Paul’s advice carries weight because he is aligned with God’s thinking on how to live) Because of the coming difficult times Paul advises Christians to remain as they are. The one who is married should not seek a divorce. The one who is not married should not seek to be married. But, if you marry you have not sinned. If a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Those who marry will face difficult times and Paul wants to spare them those challenges. Paul has a message to men and women Christians: There is not much time left. Those who have wives should be as those who don’t have a wife. (glc…so they focus on God) Those who have tears should be like those who don’t cry. Those who rejoice should be like those who don’t rejoice. Those who buy possessions should be like those who don’t have any possessions. Those who use the opportunities in the world should be as though they did not use the world to the full. The present (social and material …AMP) conditions of this world are passing away.

1 Cor 7:32 - 40 Be devoted to the Lord

Paul wanted the Christians at Corinth to be free from worldly concerns. He made comments regarding single and married men and women. He noted that a single man is concerned about matters related to the Lord, and how he might please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about worldly matters and how to please his wife, so his interests (AMP) are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about matters related to the Lord and how to be separated to God in body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the matters of the world and how to please her husband. Paul wrote this for the Corinthians’ benefit, not to limit their lives, but so that they could be devoted to the Lord without being distracted. Paul wrote that if a man thinks his actions toward his virgin daughter are not honorable and she is not young, and it seems necessary to marry, he should let her marry and it is not sin. But the man who is settled in his decision, and is not feeling necessity but has authority over his will, and has decided to keep his virgin daughter unmarried, does well. The one who lets his virgin duaghter marry does well, but the one who does not let her marry does better. A wife is bound to her husband by law as long as he is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes (provided he is a Christian). But Paul’s opinion was that she would be happier by staying single - and Paul believed he was guided by the Spirit of God!

1 Cor 8:1 - 13 Think about how others may be affected spiritually by your decisions

Paul responded to their question regarding food sacrificed to idols. The Corinthians had a slogan: “they all have knowledge.” Knowledge leads to pride and self-righteousness arrogance, but love builds up other people in their spiritual lives. Those who think they know something fully do not know the extent to which they need to know. But if someone loves (having awe-filled reverence, obedience, and gratitude…AMP) God, this person is known by God. Then, regarding eating the food sacrificed to idols, let’s start by agreeing to your slogan that “an idol in this world is nothing,” (it has no real existence…AMP) and to the fact that “there is no God but one.” If some identify so-called gods, in heaven or on Earth, (as there are many authorities), yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we should be living, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and for whom we should be living. This knowledge is not accepted by all (believers…AMP). And those who dealt with idols before they were believers have their inner, weak, conscience defiled (and are ashamed…AMP) when they eat food that was sacrificed to an idol. Food does not bring you closer to God. We have no benefit if we eat this food and don’t lose any benefit if we don’t eat. But be cautious and consider if this free choice of yours becomes a spiritual challenge and temptation to the weak. If someone who has a weak conscience sees those who are “knowledgeable” eat in an idol’s temple that person will be led to eat food that was offered to idols. Your “knowledge” destroys the weak Christian for whom Christ died. If you sin against Christians in this way and wound their weak will, you are sinning against Christ. For this reason, if certain food led Paul’s fellow Christians to sin, Paul would not eat this food again, so they would not be led into sin.

1 Cor 9:1 - 18 The Corinthians should consider Paul’s credentials and lifestyle

Paul asked the Corinthians to think about his credentials as he gave them advice. He was free from human supervision. He was an apostle (special messenger of the gospel). He had encountered the risen Jesus the Lord personally. If others didn’t consider him to be an apostle, the Corinthians should have thought about the fact that they were the result and confirming proof of his work in the Lord. Those who criticized Paul and questioned his authority should have thought of those things. Paul had the right to be financially supported by the church. Paul and his group had the right to have a believing wife with them on their travels (glc…but Paul was not married) as did other apostles, Jesus’ brothers, and Peter. Paul asked them if only he and Barnabas have the right to not do manual labor as they traveled on their missionary journeys. In the world, soldiers in the army don’t pay for their expenses. The person who plants a vineyard eats its fruit. A shepherd drinks milk from the flock. Beyond being common sense, Paul’s position is supported by the writings of Moses in Deuteronomy 5:4 : “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain (to prevent it from eating some of the grain).” God has more in mind than oxen in this passage. This is written for the benefit of Paul and Barnabas (glc…and others who have ministry for God). This principle applied to Paul and Barnabas, just as the one plowing and harvesting should work with the hope of enjoying the harvest. They had planted spiritual blessings among the Corinthians so it was not too bold to receive worldly, material, things from the Corinthians. Others had benefited from the Corinthians and Paul and Barnabas were more deserving of the Corinthian’s support. But Paul and Barnabas did not demand this benefit. Instead, they endured lack of support so they would not hinder the gospel of Christ. Those who perform religious services in the temple eat food from the temple and those who serve at the altar eat part of the offering. On the same principle, the Lord commanded those who spread the gospel to receive their needs for living from their ministries. Paul did not use these rights. And he was not asking in this letter that something now be done for him. In fact Paul would rather die - than have someone take away his boast in this matter of financial support! As Paul preached the gospel he had no reason for boasting because he was under compulsion and was obligated to do this. It would have been bad for Paul if he had not preached the gospel of salvation. If he preached voluntarily he had a reward (glc…from God). But if he preached because of God’s decision, not his, he had been entrusted with a responsibility. What then was his reward? It is that when he preached the gospel he would offer the gospel free of charge so he did not take advantage of his rights (as an apostle) as he preached.

1 Cor 9:19 - 27 Paul related to people on their level so he could spread the gospel

0Since Paul is not under obligation to men, he could choose to be a slave to all men, in order to spread the gospel to more people. To the Jews, he followed Jewish customs, in order to reach more Jews. To those who followed the law, he followed the law (even though he was not bound by the law) to reach more people for Jesus who were under the law. To those not under the law he acted like a person free from the law (but he kept true to the principle that he was not free from God’s law, but was following the law of Christ) to reach more people for Jesus who were not under the law. To the weak he behaved in a weak manner in order to reach those who were weak. Paul became all things to all people, so that his actions in different ways, and preaching, would lead to some people to have faith in Jesus. Paul did all this because of the gospel, so he could participate in spreading the good news and share in its blessings. The Corinthians should have recalled that there are many runners in an athletic event, but only one runner receives the prize. They should have run to win the spiritual race. Each athlete must train and exercise self-control in all things. They do this to receive a temporary, earthly, crown, but Christians do this to receive an imperishable, heavenly, crown. Paul did not run randomly without a goal, or box like one who is striking the air. Paul had subdued his body to make it benefit him so that after he preached the gospel he would not be spiritually disqualified and unfit for service to God.

1 Cor 10:1 - 13 Don’t give in to temptation like the Israelites did in the desert

Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians that the Jewish people were led by God, miraculously crossed through the Red Sea, were baptized into Moses (AMP…as their leader) in the cloud and the sea, and participated in the same spiritual food and drink. They were benefiting from the spiritual Rock of Christ that followed them on their journey. But God was displeased with the decisions and actions of most of them and they died in the wilderness. This took place and we can learn from their experiences, so that we will not desire the evil things as they did. Don’t be idolaters, as some of them were. It is written in Exodus 32:6: “The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.” (glc…at the time they worshipped the golden calf) Don’t be immoral (or tolerate immorality…AMP), as some of them were and 23,000 died on a single day (Numbers 25:1-9). Do not test the patience of Christ or take advantage of His goodness, as some of them did which resulted in them being killed by snakes (Numbers 21:5-9). Do not complain against God, as some of them did, and were killed by the destroying angel (Numbers 16:41-50). These things are examples and warnings for us and were recorded to instruct us in this time of God completing things on Earth. Let the person who thinks they are standing secure and beyond temptation be careful not to fall (glc…away from God). No trial or temptation has come on you that is not also encountered by other people. God is faithful to His word and purpose. He will not let you be tested or tempted beyond what you can bear. (glc…But you need to do your part and resist the temptation.) With each trial or temptation God will provide a way out so you are able to move through it without yielding to it.

1 Cor 10:14 - 22 Don’t join in with un-Christian ceremonies

Paul exhorted those he cared about to flee far from anything that takes the priority away from God in your life. He knew he was writing to people who would think it through. He asked them to seriously consider his instruction. The cup of blessing that we bless at the ceremony of communion is a sharing in the blood of Christ. The bread that we break is a sharing in the body of Christ. There is one bread (glc…Jesus) and we many Christians all share the one bread. Think about the people of Israel. Those who eat the sacrifices are worshipping the same God at the altar. Paul was not saying that idols or food sacrificed to idols had any importance. Paul’s meaning was that the sacrifices made by pagans are to demons and not to God. Do not be partners with demons by participating at pagan temples. You cannot drink of the cup of the Lord at communion and also participate in blood sacrifices to demons. You cannot participate in the table of the Lord at communion and also participate in the table at demon ceremonies. Do you want to provoke God to jealousy by participating at a pagan temple? Are you spiritually stronger than God?

1 Cor 10:23 - 33 Think about what is good for others - set a good example

The Corinthians had a slogan, “Everything is lawful (AMP… permissible).” But Paul pointed out that not everything builds up the character and spiritual life of Christians or others. Don’t focus only on your own good, but think about what would be good for others. Eat what you buy at the market without letting it affect your conscience, for the Earth and what it provides are the Lord’s (from Psalm 24:1, 50:12, 89:11). If an unbeliever invites you to dinner at his home and you want to go, eat what is served without asking questions about the source of the food. But if you are told that the food was sacrificed to an idol do not eat it, for the good of the one who told you and for the conscience of the other person. Paul’s freedom should not have been judged by another’s conscience and personal convictions about right and wrong. (glc…but God has set standards of behavior). Paul could eat food for which he had given thanks to God. So, in eating or drinking, and in whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God. Don’t offend Jews or Greeks or the church of God. Paul tried to please everyone in all things as much as possible. He did not seek his own benefit, but rather the benefit of others so that they would listen to his message and perhaps be saved.

1 Cor 11:1 - Follow godly examples - Think about local customs and don’t give offense

Paul asked the Christians at Corinth to follow his example, as he followed Jesus’ example. Paul recognized and applauded them because they brought him to mind and kept the traditions that he gave to them. He reminded them that Christ is the head, in authority, of every man, and that man is the head of his wife, and that God is the head of Christ. (glc…Paul is now giving instruction merged with cultural practices that the Corinthians were familiar with.) A man who prays or prophesies with his head covered disgraces his head (AMP…and dishonors Christ). A woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered disgraces her head because it is showing the same thing as having her head shaved (AMP..to show disgrace). If a woman will not cover her head, she should cut off her hair. But if you consider it disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, she should cover her head. A man should not have his head covered in church, because he is the image and reflection of the glory of God. But a woman is the expression of man’s glory. Man was not created from woman, but woman was created from man. Man was not created for the sake of woman, but woman was created for the sake of man. Because it would otherwise offend angels, a woman should show the symbol of authority on her head (glc…that shows her inward attitude). In the Lord, woman is not independent of man, and, man is not independent of woman. Woman came from man, and now man comes through woman in birth. All things (glc…including men and women) come from God. Think about your society, is it proper for a woman to pray to god with her head uncovered? The Corinthian customs taught that if a man had long hair, it was a disgrace for him, but if a woman had long hair, it was her ornament and glory. Her long hair is given as a covering. If the Corinthians wanted to argue about this, Paul and his companions had no other behavior or attitude, and neither did the churches of God (glc...in Paul’s time).

1 Cor 11:17 - 22 Be considerate and think about the needs of others

Paul had commended the Corinthians earlier, but now he comes to a matter that is not commended. When they gathered it was for the worse, not the better. He heard that when they were gathered together as a church there were divisions among them and he believed some of this report. (glc…reminds me of 1 Cor 1:11-13 …being devoted to human leaders) Paul commented that perhaps there were divisions so that some may show they were more approved in their faith. When they come together they were not truly celebrating the Lord’s Supper. At the gathering, each was eating on their own schedule without regard for others. Some remained hungry and others got drunk. This behavior might have been done in their own home but it was not right in the gathering of the church. The Corinthians were showing contempt for the church of God by shaming and humiliating those who lacked material things. Paul was frustrated about how to comment on this. He certainly did not commend this behavior.

1 Cor 11:23 - 34 Instructions for communion

Paul received guidance from the Lord and spoke this to the Corinthians about Jesus’ Last Supper with the disciples. On the night Jesus was betrayed He took bread, gave thanks, and as He broke it he said “This represents my body, which is for you. Do this in loving remembrance of me.” Likewise He took the cup after supper and said, “This cup is the new covenant established with my blood. Do this, everytime you drink it, in remembrance of me.” Every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you remember and symbolically proclaim the Lord’s death until He returns to Earth. Because this ceremony is special, anyone who eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord while not honoring or submitting to Jesus will be guilty of disrespecting the body and blood of the Lord. Before you take the bread and drink from the cup you should solemnly examine yourself (glc…and ask for any needed forgiveness) . Those who eat and drink without honoring the Lord eat and drink judgment against themselves if they don’t accept and honor the body of Christ. This careless participation is actually why many of the Corinthians were weak and sick, and many were dead. If we examined ourselves and repented, we would not be judged (glc…by God). But when we don’t repent we are judged by the Lord and disciplined to keep us from being eternally condemned with the unsaved world. Be careful, my fellow Christians, that when you come together to eat you wait for each other so no one is left out. If anyone is too hungry, that person should eat at home, so that in the gathering it does not lead to judgment. Paul promised to give directions about other issues when he came to Corinth.

1 Cor 12:1 - 11 The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts that produce spiritual results

Paul gave the Corinthian men and women instruction about spiritual gifts (AMP…gifts given by the Holy Spirit) to help them understand the gifts. He reminded them that before they became Christians they were misled by worshipping speechless idols. He taught them that no one who speaks by the influence of the Holy Spirit will say “Jesus is cursed,” and no says “Jesus is my Lord,” unless they are empowered and influenced by the Holy Spirit. There are different types of spiritual gifts from the Holy Spirit, but there is only one Spirit giving the gifts. There are different ministries for God, but there is only one Lord who is served. There are different results but the same God produces all of those results in everyone. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the benefit of all. One person is given a message of wisdom by the Spirit, another person is given a message of knowledge by the same Spirit, another is given extraordinary faith by the same Spirit, another is given gifts of healing by the one Spirit, another is able to perform miracles, another speaks prophecies of the future and God’s message, another can discern types of spirits and know which are doctrines of God and which are man-made, another can speak different kinds of unknown tongues, and another can interpret different kinds of tongues. There is one Holy Spirit giving spiritual gifts to each person and producing spiritual results.

1 Co 12:12 - 31 The church body needs people with different spiritual gifts

Your human body is a unit that has many separate parts. The many parts make up one body. There is something similar in Christ. With one Spirit we were all baptized and united into one body of believers. Many different backgrounds of people - Jews, Greeks, slaves, free people - all have the same Holy Spirit in them. The human body is not made of one part but is made of many different parts (AMP…limbs and organs). If your foot should say that because it is not a hand it is not a part of the body, that would not make it separate from the body. If the ear should say that because it is not an eye it is not a part of the body, that would not make it separate from the body. If your entire body was just an eye how would you hear? If your entire body was just an ear how would you smell things? The reality is that God has put each part of the body according to His plan. If they were all the same type of member where would the human body be? We see that there are many members but there is only one body. The eye cannot tell the hand that the hand is not needed, nor can the head tell the foot that it is not needed. Actually, the members of our body that seem to be weaker are essential. And those parts of the body we consider less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and the members we don’t present in public are clothed with greater modesty. The parts we can present in public don’t need extra clothing. God has put together the body and has given more honor to the lesser members, so that there will be no division in the body, but rather that the parts have mutual concern and need for each other. If one part suffers all the parts take part in the suffering. If one part is honored, all the parts rejoice with them. Now, you all together are Christ’s body and each of you is a part of Christ’s body with your own function. God has organized the church for His use with first: apostles selected by Christ, second: prophets to tell the future and speak God’s message, third: teachers, then those with spiritual gifts to work miracles, those with gifts of healings, the helpers, those in leadership, and those who speak with different kinds of tongues. You can see that not everyone is an apostle, not everyone is a prophet, not everyone is a teacher, not everyone performs miracles, not everyone has gifts of healing, not everyone speaks in tongues, not everyone interprets tongues. But you should desire, and seek, for the greater gifts. And now Paul presented an attitude and conduct that is beyond comparison.

1 Cor 13:1 - 13 Think and act with love guiding you

But, if you have the spiritual gift to speak spiritual truths using human language or spiritual language, but you don’t show love for others as God has loved you, you are not having a lasting, valuable, effect, and you annoy others. If you have the spiritual gift of prophecy, and have the spiritual gifts to know mysteries and knowledge, and your faith can remove mountains, but you do not have love, you are doing nothing important. If you give away all your possessions and give up your body as a sacrifice in order to have a big reputation, but you don’t have love, you don’t get any benefit. Love is patient and peaceful, kind and thoughtful of others, and is not envious. Love doesn’t promote itself and is not filled with pride. Love is not rude or self-serving. Love is not easily upset or resentful of others. Love does not celebrate injustice, but rather celebrates the truth. Love bears up in all circumstances, looks for the truth, has steadfast hope in all things, and endures all things. Love doesn’t fade or stop. But there will be a time when prophecies end; spiritual tongues will stop; special knowledge will pass away. Right now we don’t know everything and our prophecies are incomplete, but when the completion of things comes the things that are partial will be put aside. When you were a child you used the language of a child, had childish thoughts, and came to conclusions like a child. When you became an adult you stopped thinking and behaving like a child. At this time we see as if we were viewing a poor mirror, but when completion comes we will see reality face to face. Now, your knowledge is incomplete, but then you will know fully, just as Paul was fully known by God. Now, these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But love is the greatest.

1 Cor 14:1 -5 Develop your spiritual gift; A prophecy is more useful than a message in tongues

Go fully after love and fully desire and develop spiritual gifts, especially prophesy to speak a message from God to the church. The person who speaks in an unknown tongue speaks to God, not to people, because no person understands what is spoken in a tongue; it is a mystery spoken with the Spirit. But the person who prophesies speaks a message to people to help their spiritual growth, to encourage, and to comfort them. The person who speaks in an unknown tongue improves their mind and character, but the person who prophesies helps the spiritual growth of the church. Paul wanted all of the Corinthian Christians to speak in unknown tongues, but he wanted even more that they would prophesy. The person who prophesies is of more benefit to the church than the person who speaks in unknown tongues, unless the speaker translates or explains the message so that the church is instructed and strengthened.

1 Cor 14:6 - 12 Use your spiritual gift to strengthen the church

Paul explained to his fellow Christians that if he was with them and spoke in an unknown tongue there would be limited benefit to them, unless he spoke to be understood with a revelation or a message with knowledge, or a prophecy, or a teaching. You can see this principle in lifeless things that make sounds, like a flute or harp. If they don’t make distinct notes how can what is played be understood and enjoyed? If the trumpet in an army makes an unclear sound, who will prepare for battle? It is the same principle for this discussion. If you speak in a language that cannot be understood directly by others how will anyone understand what is being said? Your words will just go out into the air. There are many languages in the world, and they all are used to communicate with people. But if I don’t know the meaning of a language, I will be like a foreigner to the person speaking and that person will be like a foreigner to me. It is the same for you. Paul knew they were excited concerning the manifestations of the Holy Spirit and he encouraged them to grow in them with the goal of spiritually strengthening the church.

1 Cor 14: 13 - 19 A message in tongues should be interpreted

So, the person who speaks in an unknown tongue should pray that God will give the ability to translate or explain what has been spoken. When a person prays in an unknown tongue, their spirit prays, but their mind does not know what the message is. What should you do in this matter? Pray with your spirit, by the Holy Spirit in you, in an unknown tongue, but also pray with your mind in words of your earthly language. Sing praises with your spirit, by the Holy Spirit in you, in an unknown tongue, but also sing praises with your mind in words of your common language. Unless you do this when you are with others when you are praising God with your spirit only, how can someone near you who does not have the gift of interpretation say “Amen” and agree with your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? You are giving thanks with your spirit and glorifying God, but the other person is not getting a spiritual benefit. Paul was thankful to God that he spoke in unknown tongues more than all of the Corinthian Christians. But in a church setting Paul desired to speak even just five words in their language to instruct others, rather than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue that they don’t understand.

1 Cor 14:20 - 25 Prophecies can convict unbelievers of their sins

Paul directed the Corinthian Christians to not be childlike and immature in their thinking. Instead, they should be innocent and not experienced in regards to evil, but they should be adults in their thinking. God’s message was written in Isaiah 28:11,12: “***By people with strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, yet not even in this way will they listen to me***.” Unknown tongues act as a supernatural sign for unbelievers, not for believers in Christ. Prophecy, the speaking of a message from God, on the other hand, is for believers, not for unbelievers. If the whole church is gathered and everyone speaks in an unknown tongue, the unbelievers who are present will say that the people in the church have lost their minds. But, if everyone in the church prophesies and there are unbelievers present, they will be convicted of their sins by what they hear. The secrets of the unbelievers’ hearts will be disclosed, and the unbelievers will fall down with their faces to the ground and will worship God and declare that God is really among the church.

1 Cor 14:26 - 40 Church gatherings should have order

Paul wrote some instruction for the time when the church gathers. People can sing a spiritual song or psalm, teach a lesson, speak a revelation of special knowledge, speak in an unknown tongue, and interpret what is spoken. This should all be done to spiritually strengthen the church. If someone does speak in an unknown tongue, only two or perhaps three, should speak in turn, and then someone must give an interpretation of what was spoken. If no one present can give an interpretation then the person with the gift of tongues should be silent in the church and speak to themselves and to God. Likewise, two or perhaps three should speak prophecy and the church should listen carefully and evaluate what has been said. If someone who is not currently speaking receives a spiritual revelation, the person who is currently speaking should stop. All can prophesy one after another, so everyone can learn and be encouraged. The spirits of the prophets are under the control of the prophet. God wants order and peace in the church, not disorder or confusion. Paul had expectations for all churches of his day. He expected women to be silent in the church gathering when the church is evaluating prophecies (women did speak in church meetings 1 Cor 11:2-16). The women should be in submission, as is written in the Old Testament (e.g. Genesis 2:18). If a woman has a question, Paul directed that she should ask her husband at home, because it was improper for a woman to speak in church. (glc…I take this context to be in NT times, when the culture did not accept women’s ideas. Women who accept Jesus are as fully Christian as men who accept Jesus, Galatians 3:28. Today, women can be spiritually aware and can contribute to church activities. Neither men nor women should seek to claim spiritual superiority. Jesus is superior to all.) Paul asked the Corinthian Christians to consider if they generated the word of God or if they are the only people who received God’s word so they know best what should take place in church. Paul cautioned the Corinthian Christians who claimed to be a prophet or a spiritual person, that they should acknowledge and value Paul’s writings to them as the Lord’s command. If one of them doesn’t acknowledge this they are not recognized by God. In conclusion, be eager to prophesy God’s message and don’t forbid anyone from speaking in an unknown tongue. Do everything appropriately and in an orderly manner.

1 Cor 15:1 - 11 Jesus died for our sins, was raised, and appeared to many people

Paul wanted to review the gospel message that he preached to the Corinthian Christians. He was confident they had received and accepted the gospel message. Their faith in this message brought them salvation if they firmly held to the message Paul preached and did not just have a surface belief without commitment. Paul preached the most important message - which he personally received - that Christ died for our sins as foretold in the Old Testament, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day - as the Old Testament scriptures foretold. Christ appeared to Peter, then to the twelve disciples. Then He appeared to more than 500 men and women at one time - who are now Christians - most of them were still alive when Paul wrote this letter, though some had died. Then He appeared to James (glc…Jesus half-brother), then to all the apostles. Last of all, unexpectedly, He appeared to Paul. Paul proclaimed that he was the least worthy of all the apostles, and unworthy to be called an apostle, because he had persecuted the church of God (glc…see Acts 8 and 9). But by God’s grace Paul was at a new place in his life, and God’s grace was effective in Paul’s life. Paul’s past life motivated him to do more work for God than the other apostles - but actually it was God’s grace (AMP - unmerited favor and blessing) working in him. So then, whether it was Paul or another apostle, this is the message that was preached and the way the Corinthians came to believe and trust in.

1 Cor 15:12 - 34 There is a resurrection from the dead

Christ was being preached as having been raised from the dead, so Paul asked the Corinthian Christians to consider how some of them were saying that there is no resurrection of the dead. If resurrection does not happen, then Christ was not raised from the dead. If Christ was not raised then Paul’s and others’ preaching was worthless and their faith was unfounded and worthless. Also, Paul and his companions would have been false witnesses about God, because they testified that God raised Christ from the dead, when, if the dead are not raised, in reality, God did not raise Him (glc...keep reading). Because, if the dead are not raised, then Christ was not raised. And if Christ was not raised, then your faith is worthless and your sins have not been forgiven. Also, those who have died as Christians have truly perished. If only in this life we have hope in Christ, we should be pitied more than others in this world. BUT, Christ has actually been raised from the dead. He was the firstfruits (AMP…first to be resurrected with an incorruptible, immortal body) of those who have died. Death came into this world through a man, Adam. The resurrection of the dead also came through a man, Jesus Christ. For, as humans, following the pattern of Adam, we all die, so also, those who are spiritually in Christ will be made alive. This will happen in order. Christ is the firstfruits, then when Christ comes back to Earth , those who believe in Him. Then comes the end, when Christ hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when Christ hands over the kingdom to God the Father, when Christ ends all rule and authority and power. For Christ will reign until He has put all of His enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be done away with is death. As is written in Psalm 8:6 “***He (AMP…God the Father) has put everything in subjection under His (AMP…Christ’s) feet***.” But, when it says “everything” is in subjection (AMP…under Christ), it is clear this does not include God the Father, who put everything in subjection to Christ. When all things are subjected to Christ, then Jesus Christ the Son will be subjected to the one who subjected everything to Christ, so that God may be all in all (AMP…not face opposition). If this was not so, what will those do who are baptized for the dead. (NET…it is likely this refers to those who believed Christ died for their sins, but they had not been baptized before they died.) If the dead are not resurrected, then why are they baptized for them? Also, why did Paul and his companions put themselves in danger every hour? Every day Paul was in danger of death! This was a certainty in Paul’s life. Paul had confidence that the Corinthians had faith in Christ Jesus their Lord. From a human point of view, what benefit did Paul gain from fighting with wild beasts in Ephesus? If the dead are not raised perhaps we should eat and drink as we look ahead to death (related to Isaiah 11:13; 56:12). Don’t be misled, as is written by the poet Menander, (glc...this is not a book of the Bible) Thais 218: “Bad company corrupts good morals.” Think correctly and stop sinning! Some among you have no knowledge and are disgracefully ignorant of God - Paul wrote this to their shame!

1 Cor 15:35 - 58 Our resurrected body will be a spiritual, heavenly, body

Some may ask, “How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have after they are raised?” Those people are not thinking. Even in this world, when you plant a seed it does not produce new life unless the seed dies. The seed that is planted does not look like the plant that grows from the seed, it is just a bare, plain, seed of wheat or some other plant. But God gives the seed a body in the way that he planned. Each type of seed has a body of its own. On Earth, there are different kinds of flesh: people, animals, birds, fish, etc. We see bodies in the sky (glc…sun, moon, stars, planets) and bodies on the Earth (people, animals, birds, fish, plants, etc.). The characteristics of heavenly bodies are of one sort and the characteristics of earthly bodies are of another sort. The sun has its brightness and the moon has its brightness. The stars have different brightness than the sun and moon, and the stars differ from each other in their brightness. (glc...do a Google search for the “magnitude” system of labeling the brightness of stars) There is a similar truth for the resurrection of the dead. The earthly body is perishable and mortal but what is raised is imperishable and immortal. The dead body is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural, earthly, body, it is raised a spiritual body fit for heaven. Each natural body will also have a spiritual body. As it was written in Genesis 2:7 “***The first man, Adam, became a living person.***” The last Adam (glc…Jesus Christ) became a life-giving spirit who restores the dead to life. However, the spiritual life did not come first, but the physical life, and then the spiritual life. The first man (glc…Adam) is from the earth, made of the elements from the earth; the second man (glc…Jesus Christ) is from heaven. Like the one made from the earth, so are people, and like the one from heaven, so are those in heaven. We now have the form of the man from the earth (glc…Adam), so now let us take on the form of the man of heaven (glc…Jesus Christ). Paul put this message another way to the Corinthian Christians. Flesh and blood, the human body, cannot take part in the kingdom of God in heaven, nor does what perishes, and is mortal, inherit what is imperishable, and is immortal. Behold, there is a mystery that is now revealed. We will not all sleep in death, but we will all be suddenly changed and transformed at the last trumpet call. When the trumpet of the last day sounds, the dead will be raised as imperishable, and we will be changed. Our perishable bodies must become imperishable, and our mortal bodies must take on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal body puts on immortality, then the sayings written in Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14 will take place: “***Death has been swallowed up in victory***.” “***Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?***” The sting of death is sin and sin gets power from the law. But we thank God, who makes victory available through our Lord Jesus Christ! So then, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, be firm in your faith. Don’t be moved. Always be active and successful in the work of the Lord since you know your work in the Lord has a purpose and is not useless.

1 Cor 16: 1 - 12 Christians should help other Christians; Paul plans to visit them

Paul gave the Corinthians directions concerning a financial offering to help Christians in the area of Jerusalem. He gave the same directions to the churches in Galatia (glc… Lystra, Derbe, etc. highlands of Turkey). On the first day of the week, each person was to set apart some of their income and store it in proportion to how God had blessed them with income. This was to be done before Paul came to them so a special collection would not need to be made when he was there. Paul planned to send representatives from Corinth to Jerusalem with the financial gift and letters of explanation and authorization. Paul was willing to have the group go with him to Jerusalem if doing so would help. Paul intended to visit Corinth after quickly passing through Macedonia (glc…north of Corinth and Athens). He considered spending some time with the Corinthians and perhaps staying there through the winter so the Corinthians could help him continue his journeys. Paul did not want to see them for a brief time, but wanted to be with them for a longer time if God allowed this. He planned to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost (50 days after Easter/Passover), because there were many possible opportunities for his ministry, but he had many opponents to the ministry. Paul instructed the Corinthians that if Timothy came to them, they should be welcoming and not give Timothy any cause for fear, for Timothy was doing the Lord’s work, just as Paul was. They were not to treat Timothy as not important (glc…Timothy was younger than Paul…and wasn’t Paul). They were instructed to befriend Timothy and send him on his journey in peace so he could come to Paul. Paul expected to see Timothy along with other Christian brothers. Paul had strongly encouraged Apollos and other Christians to visit the Corinthians. Paul noted that Apollos did not have that plan at this time but that Apollos would visit Corinth when he had the opportunity. (glc…travel was not especially easy in NT times, no cars, railroad, planes, etc.)

1 Cor 16:13 - 24 Keep your faith; Paul names some who have helped him

Paul exhorted the Corinthians to keep alert and committed in their faith and doctrine, to show courage and to be strong (glc…in their witness and interactions with others). They were to do all things in love inspired by God’s love for them. Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians about the household of Stephanus, who were among the first in Achaia to believe in Jesus, that they committed themselves to ministry for God’s people. He urged them to submit to people who had this example, and to others who worked hard together in spreading the gospel. Paul was glad that Stephanus, Fortunatus, and Achaicus had arrived to be with him and provided fellowship to him that he had been missing from the Corinthians. This group had refreshed Paul’s spirit and the spirit of the Corinthians (glc…when they brought back a good report from Paul). Such people are to be recognized and appreciated. Paul passed on greetings to the Corinthians from the churches in the Roman province of Asia ( NET…west of Galatia, western Turkey). Aquila and Prisca (NET…Priscilla) and the church that met in their house sent warm Christian greetings to the Corinthians. The Christians Paul was currently with sent greetings. Paul asked the Christians to greet each other with a holy kiss (glc…reverently, warmly). Paul wrote a short greeting in his own hand (glc…Paul didn’t see well and used a scribe for writing). Paul warned those who did not respect and believe the Lord that they are under judgment. Paul yearned for the Lord Jesus to come to Earth. Paul asked that the grace (AMP…unmerited favor, spiritual blessing, mercy) of the Lord Jesus would be with them. Paul sent his love in Christ Jesus to them.

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2 Corinthians

(Quest … written by Paul around 55 A.D.)

(ESV… written by Paul around 55 or 56 A.D. It is likely that Paul wrote 4 letters to the Corinthians 1) the letter mentioned in 1 Cor 5:9; 2) 1 Corinthians; 3) the severe letter mentioned in 2 Cor 2:3,4; 4) 2nd Corinthians … Corinth was the capital of the province of Achaia. glc…lower Greece)

2 Cor 1:1 - 11 God gives comfort, comfort others, pray for missionaries

Paul was set apart by God to be an apostle (AMP…special messenger) of Jesus Christ. Paul, with Timothy with him, sent this letter to the church in Corinth and to Christians throughout Achaia (AMP…southern Greece). He greeted them with grace and peace (AMP…inner calm and spiritual well-being) from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! God is to be honored and praised as God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as He is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts and encouraged Paul and his companions as they had troubles, so they were able to comfort others who were experiencing troubles by passing on the comfort with which they had been comforted by God. Just as Christ’s sufferings were with Paul and his companions in abundance, so also their comfort through Christ were with the Corinthians in abundance. Paul let them know that if he and his companions experienced troubles, it was for the Corinthians comfort and salvation. When Paul and his companions were comforted, it was for the Corinthians comfort that they received in their patient endurance of the sufferings similar to those Paul experienced. Paul’s hope was steadfast because he knew that as the Corinthians shared in the sufferings, they would also share in the comfort. Paul did not want the Corinthian Christians to be unaware regarding the afflictions that Paul and his companions experienced in the province of Asia (glc…western Turkey). They had a great burden, beyond what a human could bear, and even despaired of living. They felt a sentence of death had been assigned to them, so that they would not trust in their human strength, but in God who raises the dead. God delivered them from a great danger of death, and Paul expected deliverance in the future. Paul and his companions set their hope on God that He would deliver them in the future, as the Corinthians joined in helping them through their prayers, so that many people would give thanks to God on Paul and his companion’s behalf for the gracious gift given to Paul and his companions through the help (AMP…prayers) of many.

2 Cor 1:12 - 22 Paul states his motives regarding the Corinthians

Paul states his reason for the confidence in what he has written: his conscience informs him that he had pure motives and sincerity from God, which did not come from human wisdom but from the grace of God, as Paul and his companions conducted themselves in the world and especially towards the Corinthian Christians. Paul only wrote (AMP…in this letter … glc…and in other letters? AMP…Paul does not write with double meaning) what they could read and understand. Paul hoped that they would now understand (AMP..divine things) completely since they had only partly understood (AMP…Paul and his companions), and now understand that they can be proud (glc…rejoice because of) of Paul and his companions, just as Paul and his companions will be proud (glc…rejoice because of) of the Corinthians in the day of the Lord Jesus (glc…when Jesus returns). Paul had this confidence and planned to visit the Corinthians first so they could visit personally with Paul and his companions, and that they could help them go on to Macedonia (glc…northern Greece), after which they would return to Corinth and they could help them travel to Judea. When Paul was planning this he gave it some thought. Paul did not make selfish plans just based on human wisdom so he would appear to be saying “Yes” and “No” at the same time. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, who Paul and his companions Silvanus and Timothy proclaimed among the Corinthians, is not “Yes” and “No” but is always “Yes.” (AMP…true and faithful) All of God’s promises are answered with a “Yes” in Jesus. Therefore, also through Jesus is the “Amen” spoken, and gives glory to God. But it is God who strengthens Paul and his companions along with the Corinthians in Christ and who anoints Christians (AMP…with gifts of the Spirit), and who also sealed us and gave us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a down payment (NET…a guarantee or pledge for the completion of a transaction…future blessings). Paul appealed to God as a witness to confirm his intentions, that he did not come to Corinth right away so that he would spare the Corinthians (AMP…from pain and discouragement … glc…from Paul’s harsh judgment, and to give them time to think about their actions). Paul did not intend to rule (AMP…as a dictator) over their faith, but rather to consider them all workers with them for their joy, because by faith (AMP…that Jesus is the Son of God and has provided eternal salvation) they stood firm.

2 Cor 2:1 - 13 Paul wants restoration for those who sin

Paul decided not to come to Corinth for what would have been a painful visit (glc…for all of them) until the Corinthians had corrected issues he addressed in 1 Corinthians (Chp 3 divisions in the church; Chp 5 sexual immorality; Chp 6 lawsuits between believers and sexual immorality; and other issues). Paul wanted a good relationship with the Corinthians (AMP…but they deserved a rebuke) so they could encourage and give joy to each other. Paul wrote in his letter (glc…1st Corinthians, or missing 2nd letter? see 2 Cor 7:5-12) so that there would not be sadness when he came to them when he was confident that he could share his joy with them. Paul had inner turmoil and anguish, and cried when he wrote the letter to them. He wrote not to make them sad, but to let them know of the special love he had for the Corinthians. The one who caused sadness did not just make Paul sad, but brought sadness to all of the Corinthians. The punishment on him (glc…1 Corinthians 5) from the majority of the church was enough, so now Paul directed that they should forgive and comfort that person. This restoration would keep him from being overwhelmed with too much grief such that he despaired and gave up. Paul urged the church to reinstate him and reaffirm their love for him. Paul had written to them, also, to test them to see if they would obey his instructions. Paul let them know that if they forgave anyone anything, Paul also forgives the person, for Paul forgives in the presence of Christ for their benefit, so that Satan would not take advantage of them by his schemes, which they are familiar with. When Paul arrived in Troas (glc…NW Turkey, north of Ephesus) to preach the gospel of Christ, the Lord opened a door of opportunity for Paul, but Paul was disturbed in his spirit because he did find Titus in the city. So Paul said goodbye to the Christians in the city and traveled to Macedonia.

2 Cor 2:14 - 17 Be distinctive to other people; speak with pure motives

Paul thanks God for leading us in victory through Christ, and who shows the good knowledge of Him in every location. Christians are the good aroma of Christ to God among believers and among those who don’t believe in Jesus - but the aroma is an odor of death to those who are not on the path to eternal life with God, but to those who have faith in Jesus it is a living fragrance of life. Who is equipped and qualified for the things that are happening in Christian ministry? Paul and his companions were different than those who deviously spoke the word of God for profit. Paul and his companions spoke in Christ in the presence of God with pure and sincere motives, as they were sent by God.

2 Cor 3:1 - 6 God made Paul and his companions competent ministers

Paul asked the Corinthians if they thought he was promoting himself. He pointed out that Paul and his companions did not need letters of recommendation to the Corinthians (AMP…as did the false teachers) from the Corinthians or from others (glc…from leaders in Jerusalem?). The Corinthians were personally a letter of recommendation, written on their hearts, and seen by everyone. They were a letter of Christ, delivered to others, a letter written not with ink on paper, but written by the Holy Spirit of the living God, not written on tablets of stone, but written on the tablets of human hearts. Paul had this confidence and complete trust in God through Christ. Paul did not assume he and his companions were qualified or competent in their own strength or that they were claiming to accomplish things by themselves. Paul considered his, and his companions, qualification, and competency, to be from God, who made Paul and his companions competent to be ministers of the new covenant (AMP…salvation through Christ) (NET…see Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:40) that is founded on the spirit and not on the letter of a written law, for the letter kills (AMP…reveals sin and demands obedience), but the Spirit gives life.

2 Cor 3:7 - 18 The gospel brings righteous, freedom, and spiritual understanding

The ministry and revelation carved on stone tablets brought recognition of sin and brought death. This revelation came with glory and splendor such that the Israelites could not look steadily at Moses’ face because of the glory that remained for a while on his face after his encounter with God. The ministry and revelation that comes as a result of encountering God’s Holy Spirit is much more glorious. There was glory from the ministry that produced judgment, but much, much, more glory from the ministry that now brings righteousness and freedom from guilt as we confess our sins. That which used to be considered glorious faded and now is surpassed and is not glorious because of the tremendously superior glory and splendor of the ministry that replaced it. The ministry that became ineffective started with glory, but now the permanent ministry has glory. This permanent hope is another reason that Paul and his companions acted with great boldness in their actions and speech. They were not like Moses who put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from viewing the fading glory on his face that became ineffective. The minds of the Israelites were closed and hardened. During Paul’s time, a type of veil is in place over the minds of the Israelites when they listen to the Old Testament writings. But, praise God, the veil is taken away when a person hears the gospel and accepts the Lord Jesus’ sacrifice for their sins. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and this Spirit brings freedom for those who have it. Those who accept the Lord Jesus now reflect the glory of the Lord and don’t use a veil. They are undergoing a transformation into the same image of God and are growing in glory from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Cor 4:1 - 6 Proclaim the truth of Jesus

Because Paul and his companions had their ministry of preaching the good news and God had shown them mercy with salvation, they did not get discouraged and give up. They rejected and denounced unethical behavior and did not use deception or the watering-down or twisting of God’s word. Rather, they spoke the truth openly and presented themselves to everyone’s conscience before God. Even though their gospel was hidden as if behind a veil, it was only hidden to those who have spiritual unbelief and are perishing. The god of this age (glc…Satan) has blinded the minds of those who hold to unbelief in Jesus so they will not see and understand the light of the message of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. Paul and his companions did not proclaim themselves, but rather proclaimed Jesus Christ as Lord, and themselves as merely servants for Jesus’ sake. God said in (Genesis 1:3 and Isaiah 9:2) “Let light shine out of darkness.” He shone in their hearts to give them the light of knowledge of the glory and majesty of God in the face of Christ.

2 Cor 4:7 - 18 Don’t be defeated by persecution; value the spiritual victories to come

Paul declared that he had this valuable treasure (glc…knowledge of the glory and majesty of God, and knowledge of salvation through Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross) in a weak, fragile, and ordinary human body so that the great, extraordinary, power is seen to be from God and not from Paul or his companions. They had many troubles come to them from all around them but they were not crushed; they were at a loss to comprehend all the troubles and how they might escape but they did not despair; they were persecuted, but not left alone or forsaken by God; they were badly hurt, but not destroyed. They continually had the threat of being given a violent death like Jesus had, so that the resurrected life and power of Jesus would be seen by all. The Christians on Earth are continually put in a situation of death for Jesus’ sake, so that the living Jesus can be revealed in their mortal bodies that can die. Physical death was at work in Paul and his companions, but spiritual life was at work in the Corinthian Christians. Paul knew they had the same faith as the person who wrote Psalm 116:10 “I believed; therefore I spoke.” Paul and his companions also believed and therefore also spoke. They did this because they had full confidence and knowledge that the one who resurrected Jesus would also raise them up with Jesus and bring them and the Corinthian Christians into his presence. All that happened was for the benefit of the Corinthian Christians so that the remarkable grace that was overflowing to more and more people would increase in thanksgiving to the glory of our great God. Therefore, they did not despair or become afraid of the outcome, for even as their physical bodies wore down every day, their inner being was progressively renewed every day. Their brief, small suffering produced for them an eternal blessing of glory that was far beyond comparing to their troubles. They did not put value on what was seen in this world, but on what cannot be seen in this world (glc…treasures in heaven, God’s glory). For what is seen in this world does not last, but what cannot be seen in this world is eternal and imperishable.

2 Cor 5:1 - 10 A heavenly body is coming; seek to please God

Paul reminded the Corinthian Christians that if the physical body dies we all have a spiritual body that is eternal in the heavens made by and from God. Our bodies on Earth groan because we want to have our immortal, heavenly, bodies so that after we have put on our heavenly bodies we will not be found to be naked. We groan while we are in our earthly bodies because we are oppressed and have troubles in this world. We don’t want to die and be separated from our bodies, but we want to be clothed by God, so that our mortal selves may be taken over by life after our resurrection. God made us and prepared us for this purpose and gave us the Holy Spirit as a pledge and guarantee. So, we are full of courage and confident hope and we understand that while we are alive on Earth we are absent from the Lord in heaven - for we live in this world by faith, not by what we see. - We are full of courage and want to be absent from our bodies on Earth and at home with the Lord. So, whether we are alive on Earth or away from Earth and with God in heaven, we have the goal of pleasing the Lord. We must all present ourselves before the judgment seat of Christ, so each person may be repaid for the good or evil purposes and actions they have done while in the body on Earth.

2 Cor 5:11 - 21 Be reconciled to God; Christians are new creations

Paul and his companions had a reverent fear of the Lord (AMP…leading to obedience and worship) so they tried to convince people to believe in Jesus. They were well known to God (glc…they had a good relationship to God) and Paul hoped they were well known to the consciences of the Corinthians also. Paul was not promoting himself and his companions but wanted the Corinthians to be rightly proud of them so that they would be able to respond to those who boast in outward appearances rather than what is in their hearts. If Paul and his companions seemed to be out of their minds, it was for God; if they had sound minds it was for the Corinthians' benefit. Paul and his companions were guided and controlled by the love of Christ, since they believed that Christ died for all and thus all have died. Christ died for all so that those who live (glc…believe in Christ) should not live for themselves but for Christ who died for them and was raised from the dead. Paul and his companions did not just view others from an outward, human, point of view. They viewed Christ from a human point of view (AMP…using worldly standards) at first, but they no longer viewed and understood Christ in that way. If any person believes in Christ as their Savior they are a new creation; the old in them (AMP…previous spiritual condition) has passed away and they are new in their being! All these things are from God who accepted them to Himself through Jesus’ sacrifice and who gave them (glc…Paul and his companions, but also all who believe in Jesus) the ministry work of helping others to be accepted by God. In other words, through Christ, God was making peace and restoring relationship with the world, not holding people permanently guilty of their sin. God gave them this message of reconciliation to God. Paul and his companions were ambassadors, and spokespeople, for Christ, as if God were making his fervent request through them. Paul fervently asked them, as prompted by Christ, to be reconciled to God. God made Jesus, who was not guilty of sin, to carry the sins of others, so that those who believe in Jesus would become righteous and acceptable in God’s sight.

2 Cor 6:1 - 13 Be spiritually awake; Paul was sincere and gave himself in love

Because Paul and his companions were fellow workers with God, they urged the Corinthians not to turn away after receiving God’s salvation gift. As it was written in Isaiah 49:8 “***I heard you at the acceptable time, and in the day of salvation I helped you***.” Paul tells them to wake up and realize that now is the acceptable time and the day of salvation for them. Paul and his companions did not give anyone a reason for discrediting the ministry or for being offended, or cause them to stumble, and he was confident that there was no fault in their ministry. As ministers of God they presented themselves worthy in all situations, by enduring persecutions, by carrying on through difficulties, distresses, beatings, imprisionments, riots, labors, going without sleep, and hunger. They had pure and sincere actions, knowledge and spiritual insight, patience, showing benevolence and kindness, in the Holy Spirit, with sincere love, truthful teaching and preaching, using the power of God, with righteous tools for attack and defense, enduring slanderous words and then vindicated as truthful. They were called and treated as deceivers but they were true in actions and words. They were not famous to the world but were well-known by God and God’s people. They came close to dying but continued to live. They were scourged by the authorities but not executed. They had sorrow but continued to rejoice. They were poor but their message made people rich in their relationship with God. They had no earthly possessions but they possessed everything of true value. They spoke openly and held nothing back from the Corinthians and opened their hearts completely to them. They did not restrict or limit their good intentions and love for the Corinthians, but they experienced the Corinthians limiting their good intentions and love for Paul and his companions. Paul wanted reciprocal relations with them and spoke to them as his children in the faith. Paul asked them to open their hearts completely to him and his companions.

2 Cor 6:14 - 18 Do not become entangled with and misled by non-Christians

Paul warned the Corinthian Christians to not become partners or too closely entangled with people who are not Christians. There is no good partnership between righteousness and lawlessness and no true fellowship and agreement between light and darkness. Christ has no agreement with Satan. Keep in mind that a believer in Jesus has a different worldview and goals than a person who does not believe in Jesus. The worship and teachings found in places where God is worshipped have no agreement with places where an idol is worshipped. Christians are the temple of the living God and separated for Him, as God’s message is written in 1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:21-22; Leviticus 26:12; Jeremiah 32:38; Ezekiel 37:27; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 20:41; 2 Samuel 7:14; Isaiah 43:6: “***I will live in them*** ***and*** ***will walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people***.” **17** Therefore “***come out from their midst, and be separate***,” says the Lord, “***and*** ***touch no unclean thing****,* *and* *I will welcome* *you*, **18** *and* *I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters*.” This is the message from the all-powerful Lord.

2 Cor 7 :1 - 3 Do not become polluted by the world; be emotionally connected to Christians

Because God had given these wonderful promises, Paul encouraged the Corinthians (glc…whom he cared for deeply) to purify themselves from whatever could contaminate and pollute their bodies or their inner spirits and thus move into a life set apart for God because they honored and obeyed God with reverent fear. Paul asked them to be open and loving towards himself and his companions. Paul and his companions had not done wrong to any of them and had not taken financial or spiritual advantage of any of them. Paul did not write this to condemn them and he reminded them that he had let them know they were firmly in their hearts and minds such that they mourned when the Corinthians mourned and that they felt alive when the Corinthians felt alive.

2 Cor 7:4 - 16 Paul rejoiced in how the Corinthians responded to his guidance

Paul had full confidence in them and boasted about them. He was filled with comfort and encouragement. He was able to have abundant joy in the middle of the troubles and suffering he experienced. When Paul and his companions came into Macedonia (glc…the northern area of Greece), they had no rest in their bodies but had many troubles – affecting their bodies and affecting their inner spirits. But God, who comforts and encourages those who are depressed, encouraged them when Titus arrived. They were encouraged by the presence of Titus and also by the report of how he was encouraged by the Corinthians. Titus reported to them that the Corinthians longed to see Paul, and had deep sorrow over their sin, and had concern for Paul, which helped him rejoice abundantly. Paul did not regret writing the letter that made the Corinthians sad (even though Paul felt bad that the letter had made them sad for a short time). After Titus returned, Paul could rejoice because their sadness led them to effective repentance. The Corinthians were sad as God intended (glc…to lead them to repent) so the Corinthians were not permanently harmed by Paul and his companions. There is a sadness that God intends to produce a repentance that leads to salvation, and does not leave regret, while worldly, hopeless, sadness does bring about death (glc…of relationships with God and people?). Look at what happened. The sadness, as God intended, had produced in the Corinthians an eagerness for the Corinthians to vindicate themselves concerning the charge that they tolerated sin; to have indignation concerning the sin; to have an alarm that they had offended God; to have a longing (glc…to do the right thing) for righteousness; to have a deep concern to do the right thing; to deliver the correct punishment to those who sin and those who allow sin to continue. The Corinthians proved in everything that they were now innocent in this matter. So, when Paul wrote the letter to them, its purpose was not mainly about the one who did wrong or mainly about the one who was wronged, but it was to show the Corinthians that they had an eagerness before God regarding Paul’s message and his authority. Paul and his companions were encouraged. And for even more than their encouragement, they greatly rejoiced because Titus had joy when the Corinthians put his mind at ease. Paul had spoken well about the Corinthians to Titus and the Corinthians had fulfilled Paul’s confidence in them. Everything Paul had said to them was true and his boasting to Titus about them was shown to be true also. The affection Titus has for the Corinthians was much greater than before his visit with them as he remembered how they were obedient and how they showed him respect when they welcomed him. Paul rejoiced because he had full confidence in the Corinthians in everything.

2 Cor 8:1 - 15 Consider how others have given financially; Share your abundance

Paul reported to the Corinthians how God’s grace was given to the churches in Macedonia and prompted them, even during their hard struggle in suffering, such that their great joy and poverty together overflowed with a wealth of great generosity. Paul vouched that they gave financially according to what they had and even beyond what they had. They did this voluntarily and even earnestly begged Paul and his companions that they might participate and thus join in the blessing and fellowship in helping the Christians in Jerusalem. The Macedonians gave not just an amount that Paul and his companions had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to Paul and his companions, as God’s representatives, by the will of God in putting aside their personal interests. So, Paul and his companions strongly urged Titus to continue the work he started and complete this act of generosity among the Corinthians. Paul reminded the Corinthians how they excelled in faith, speech, knowledge, and being eager (glc…for spiritual matters), and in the love inside them for Paul and his companions, so they should also excel in this financial ministry. Paul did not write this as a command, but he wrote to test if their love was genuine by pointing out the eagerness for giving that others had shown. Paul reminded them of the generosity and gracious favor of the Lord Jesus Christ, in that even though He was rich (glc… in heaven), He became poor (glc…on Earth) for their sakes, so that from His poverty they could become rich (glc…in spiritual things). Paul gave them his opinion on how they should respond: it was to their benefit to finish what they had started regarding the giving, since they had started well in the previous year both in the financial gift for Christians in Jerusalem and in their eager desire to give. They were directed to complete the gift so their eagerness to give at the start would be matched by the completion of the gift, according to their ability to give. When the eagerness to give is present, the gift is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. Paul did not want to create a situation where there was relief from responsibility for some and then a burden for the Corinthians, but that there should be equality in sharing the burden. In the present situation the abundance of the Corinthians would meet the needs of Christians in Jerusalem, and someday their abundance would meet the needs the Corinthians might have, so there would be equality (glc…not one group always giving). This aligns with Exodus 16:18 “***The one who gathered*** ***much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little***.” (glc…when the Israelites gathered the manna from heaven)

2 Cor 8:16 - 24 Titus, Paul’s partner in ministry, cared for them

Paul thanked God that God put the same devotion and eagerness that Paul had for the Corinthians into the heart of Titus. Titus had accepted Paul’s and his companions’ request to travel to them, but Titus decided on his own to come to them since he was very interested. Paul and his companions sent a Christian brother (AMP…unknown person, perhaps Luke) who was praised by all the churches for his ministry in spreading the gospel. Also, this brother was chosen by the churches to be a traveling companion as Paul and his companions administer the generous gift to the glory of the Lord and to show the eagerness of Christians to help each other. Paul and his companions arranged this traveling party as a precaution so no one could discredit them in regard to the generous gift they were administering. Paul and his companions were concerned about behaving correctly and above suspicion in the sight of the Lord and in the sight of men (Proverbs 3:4). Paul and his companions also sent a Christian whom they had tested often and had found him to be diligent in many matters, and who now was very eager because of the great confidence he had in the Corinthians. In case anyone questioned Titus’ qualifications, Paul wrote that Titus was Paul’s partner and fellow spiritual worker among them. In case anyone questioned the traveling companions of Titus, Paul wrote that they were messengers of the churches and a glory and credit to Christ. Paul told the Corinthians to show, in the sight of churches in the area, the proof of their love and of Paul’s and his companions’ pride in the Corinthians.

2 Cor 9:1 - 15 Complete financial gifts for others as you have promised; God will supply

Paul wrote to the Corinthians that his instructions regarding the donation for Christians in Jerusalem didn’t need to be given again, because he knew they were eager to provide this help. Paul had continued to boast to the Macedonians about the eagerness of the Corinthians, that the Christians in Achaia had been ready to donate since last year. The enthusiasm of the Corinthians stirred up most of the Macedonians to respond. But Paul sent the group with Titus so his boasting would not be false, and so that the Corinthians would be ready with the donation in line with what Paul had told the Macedonians. Paul noted that if any Macedonians came to Corinth with Paul and discovered that the Corinthians were not ready to make a donation, Paul and his companions, and the Corinthians, would be humiliated by the confidence they had in the Corinthians. So, Paul thought it would be a good idea to urge Titus and that group to go to the Corinthians first and to arrange for the generous, previously promised, donation from the Corinthians. Then it would be a generous gift and not a donation that the Corinthians would have felt forced to do. Paul’s point was that a person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows bountifully will reap a bountiful harvest and be blessed. Each person should donate as they have thoughtfully decided in their mind, not from regret or not out of a sense of duty, because God loves a cheerful giver. God was able to have abundant favor and blessing come to the Corinthians so that due to having a sufficient supply of everything at all times they would be abundant in every good work. Remember what was written in Psalm 112:9 “***he*** ***has scattered widely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness remains forever***. (AMP….’He’... the righteous, benevolent, person, has scattered widely and given to the poor). God gives seed to the sower and bread to eat and God would give them a large amount of seed (AMP…their resources) and cause an abundant harvest from their righteousness. They would be made rich in every way so that they would be generous at all times, which would produce thanksgiving to God through Paul and his companions, because the ministry of this donation was not only meeting the needs of the Christians in Jerusalem but was also producing abundant thanks to God. The result of this ministry would be that the Christians in Jerusalem would glorify God because they obeyed and kept true to their confession in the gospel of Christ as well as for the generous sharing with other Christians. They would pray for you and feel a kinship with you because of the abundant grace God had given to the Corinthians. Thanks be to God for His great gift, which goes beyond words!

1 Cor 10:1 - 11 Respect and obey your spiritual leaders

Paul gave a personal appeal, from the gentleness of Christ, to the Corinthians. He knew that their opinion was that he lacked confidence when he was with them compared to the boldness he represented in his letters to them. He asked that when he was with them the next time that their attitude would be such that he would not have to be bold in actions that he expected to use against some of the Corinthians who had the opinion that Paul and his companions did not have the Spirit and were using earthly, human, standards. Paul reminded them that although they were human, they did not engage in spiritual battle with earthly, human, means. Their weapons for spiritual battle were not human weapons, but were weapons of power from God that tore down strongholds (NET…tore down the arguments of opponents to Paul’s message). Paul and his companions tore down sophisticated arguments and speculations and the arrogance of people that were brought against the true knowledge of God, and they took all thoughts captive to make them obey Christ. They were ready to punish all disobedience, whenever the Corinthians’ obedience as a church was complete (glc…after the Corinthians got back in line with Paul’s authority). The Corinthians were thinking about outward, human, appearances. Paul exhorted them to consider that if they were confident they belonged to Christ, they should think about how Paul and his companions also belonged to Christ. Paul could freely boast about the authority that the Lord gave him and his companions without shame, for the authority was for building up, telling the truth, and giving spiritual strength to the Corinthians, not for destroying them. Paul was not ashamed of the truth (glc…or of using his authority). Paul did not want to frighten them by the letters he wrote. He knew that some Corinthians said that his letters were forceful and impressive but that he was unimpressive and weak when among them and that he did not speak well. Paul warned these people that what was said in his letters would be present in actions when Paul and his companions were present.

2 Cor 10:12 - 17 Don’t boast on how you excel compared to others; Let God approve you

Paul did not presume to compare himself and his companions, or put themselves in the same category, with those who proclaimed their spiritual greatness. But he noted that when those who proclaimed themselves evaluated themselves considering only themselves they didn’t have a clear understanding of their qualifications and behaved like fools. Paul and his companions did not boast excessively or beyond their ministry. They limited their reports to the area of ministry they had been appointed to by God, which included the Corinthians. Paul and his companions did not boast beyond their experience since they were the first to reach as far as Corinth with the gospel of Christ. Also, they did not boast beyond their proper limits to try to get credit for the ministry done by others, but they had the hope that as the faith of the Corinthians in Christ increased that would result in Paul’s and his companions’ work increasing among the Corinthians in the area of ministry given to them by God, so that they would preach the gospel even in places beyond Greece, and not boast about ministry already done in a region where God had placed someone else to do ministry. As written in Jeremiah 9:24 and 1 Corinthians 1:31: “***the one who boasts must boast in the Lord.”*** The person who commends and praises himself is not approved, but rather, the person the Lord commends and praises.

2 Cor 11:1 - 15 Don’t listen to false teaching; Paul did not burden people for his needs

Paul asked the Corinthians to be patient with him in his foolish style of writing as they read this letter. Since they read the last sentence, they were being patient. Paul had a godly jealousy for them because he played the role of bringing them in spiritual purity to Christ. Paul feared that just as Eve (glc…and Adam) was deceived by the treachery of Satan (Genesis 3) their thinking might have been led astray from faithful, and true, devotion to Christ. Paul warned them that they were allowing some to preach a different version of Jesus from what he preached, and received a different spirit than the Holy Spirit they received when Paul was there, and listened to a different gospel than the one they accepted from Paul’s preaching. They tolerated all this with a welcoming attitude. Paul did not accept that he had less standing and commission from God than the “apostles” they were listening to. Paul pointed out that even if he lacked polished speech, he did not lack in spiritual knowledge and knew what he was saying. Paul and his companions had showed this to the Corinthians in speech and in their actions. Paul spoke sarcastically that he might have sinned by being too humble among them by not charging them a fee, so the Corinthians could feel better about themselves. Paul accepted money from other churches to support himself while he lived with and served the Corinthians. Paul had needs when he was there but he didn’t burden the Corinthians. Instead, Christians (AMP…Silas and Timothy) who came to Corinth from Macedonia fully supplied what he needed. Paul did not burden the Corinthians and planned to continue to act this way towards them. Paul had the truth of Christ in him and planned to continue to offer the gospel without any charge in the region of Acaia. He did this because he loved them and wanted the best for them, as God knew. Paul planned to continue this practice and remain independent to prevent any opportunity for those who wanted to be viewed as equals to Paul and his companions in the things they boasted about. Those people were false apostles, dishonest workers, who masqueraded themselves as apostles of Christ. This could happen because even Satan masquerades himself as an angel of light. So, the Corinthians should not have been surprised that Satan’s servants masqueraded themselves as ministers of righteousness. Their end would be in line with their actions.

2 Cor 11:16 - 33 Listen and pay attention to those who are well qualified and servants of Jesus

Paul told the Corinthians that they should not think he was foolish. But, if they had that opinion they should let him boast as others had done. He wrote that his boastfulful manner was not written with the Lord’s authority (NET). Instead, it was foolishness (glc..perhaps to match the attitude of the Corinthians). Paul’s opponents boasted and bragged about human accomplishments, so Paul also used this method. Paul wrote sarcastically that the Corinthians were wise and tolerated fools well enough so they could tolerate his statements. The Corinthians tolerated being made slaves, being materially exploited, being taken advantage of, having people behave arrogantly towards them, even letting people strike them in the face. Paul wrote sarcastically that he and his companions were too weak to treat the Corinthians in the ways of the false apostles. Then Paul wrote (with his foolish attitude) that what others were boasting about, he could boast and exceed their boasts. Paul’s opponents were Hebrews and so was Paul. They were Israelites and so was Paul. They were descendants of Abraham and so was Paul. They claimed to be servants of Christ, (and now Paul wrote that he was writing like he was out of his mind to write like this) and Paul was more of a servant of Christ. He had many more labors, far more imprisonments, more severe beatings, and was close to death many times. Five times he was punished by Jews with forty lashes less one. Three times he was beaten with a rod. Once he was stoned. Three times he was shipwrecked and spent a night and a day adrift in the open sea. He had made many journeys and had been in dangerous situations in rivers, had experienced danger from robbers, had experienced from his own countrymen and Gentiles, had experienced in danger in cities and in the wilderness and on the sea, had experienced danger from those who pretended to be Christians, he had hard work and toil, he had many sleepless nights, he had experienced hunger and thirst and many times had no food, he experienced cold and did not have enough clothing. Beyond these physical sufferings he had daily pressure from his anxious concern for all the churches he knew. Those who were weak brought weakness to Paul. Those who stumbled into sin brought sorrow and concern (AMP) to Paul. Paul wrote that if boasting was necessary, he would boast about the things that showed his weaknesses (AMP…in the view of his opponents). The God and Father of the Lord Jesus (AMP>>>He who is blessed and to be praised forever) knew Paul was not lying. In Damascus, the governor under King Aretas guarded the city in order to catch Paul, but he was let down in a rope-basket through a window in the city wall and Paul escaped.

2 Cor 12:1 - 10 Paul had great spiritual revelations but boasted how Christ sustained him

Paul thought it was necessary to write more to the Corinthians about his Christian experiences, but he did not consider this to give him worthwhile spiritual benefits. He wrote about visions and revelations from the Lord. Paul knew a Christian (glc…probably this refers to himself) who, 14 years before this writing, (actually physically or in a vision, Paul did not know, but God knows) was made aware of the third heaven (NET…1st heaven is the atmosphere, 2nd heaven is the region of stars and planets, 3rd heaven is beyond this, where God dwells). Paul knew that this man (again, perhaps physically, perhaps as a vision, God knows) had paradise revealed to him (NET…Luke 23:43 the place of the righteous dead; Revelation 2:7 a paradise like Eden; Isaiah 51:3; Ezekiel 36:35) and he heard inexpressible words, that a person is not allowed to speak about (AMP…words too sacred to tell). Paul boasted about the experience of such a person, but he did not boast on his behalf, except for things related to his being weak. If Paul did boast he would not have been speaking like a fool, for he would have spoken the truth, but he held back from this boasting so no one would think of him beyond what they saw in Paul or what they heard from Paul. Because of the very special nature of the revelations (AMP…from God) and so that Paul would not start to think he was very important, Paul received a physical problem, which he considered to be a messenger from Satan, that harassed him and prevented him from becoming arrogant. Paul sincerely asked the Lord three times about this physical problem, that it would be gone. But the Lord told him, “My grace (AMP…lovingkindness and mercy) is sufficient (AMP…always available) for you, for my power is made perfect (AMP…is completed and shows itself most effectively) in weakness.” So, Paul gladly boasted about his weaknesses, so that the power of Christ would surround and dwell in him. Paul was content in his weaknesses, with insults he received, with troubles that he had, with persecutions and calamities for the sake of Christ, for whenever Paul was weak in his human strength, he was (glc…spiritually) strong (AMP…drawing from God’s strength).

2 Cor 12:11 - 21 Paul asked them to consider his spiritual authority

Paul commented that the Corinthians had led him to write in a foolish manner to them because they did not think highly of him or commend him. Paul lacked nothing in ministry compared to the “super-apostles” who were taking advantage of the Corinthians, even though, humanly, he had no hight standing. The evidences of a genuine apostle were performed among the Corinthians with great patience and endurance with signs and wonders and powerful miracles. Paul asked them how they were treated as being inferior to the other churches, and sarcastically noted that he had not been a burden (glc…financially) to them. Again sarcastically, Paul asked them to forgive him for that injustice! Paul asked them to think clearly, for he was coming to Corinth for the third time. He would not burden them because he didn’t want their material things, he wanted to have a close relationship with them. Paul wrote that children should not have to support their parents, but parents should support their children. (glc…also consider Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:1-4) . Paul was glad to spend his resources for their spiritual well-being. He asked that if he was loving them more, should they love him less? But Paul was not demanding material things of them even though that would have been his right. Sarcastically, Paul said he must have been a crafty person who took them in with deceit. Paul asked them to consider if he had taken advantage of anyone. Paul urged Titus to come to Corinth and Paul sent another Christian with him. Paul asked the Corinthians to consider if those two took advantage of them. Paul wrote that he and his companions acted the same way with the Corinthians. Paul asked the Corinthians if they thought Paul and his companions had been defending themselves to the Corinthians. Paul and his companions were speaking in Christ in the sight of God, and everything they did was for the benefit of the Corinthians, to strengthen them spiritually. Paul was afraid that when he came to Corinth he would be disappointed in how he found the Corinthians and that they would find Paul to have a different attitude than what they wanted. Paul was afraid that there would be quarreling, jealousy, angry tempers, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder among the Corinthians. Paul was afraid that when he came to Corinth, God might humiliate him before them, and he would grieve for many of them who had sinned and had not repented of their practices of impurity, sexual immorality, and decadence.

2 Cor 13:1 - 10 Christians should not be casual about their commitment to faith in Jesus

Paul reminded the Corinthians that it would be the third time he had visited them and that: (following principle is found in Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16; 1 Timothy 5:19) “***By*** ***the testimony*** ***of two or three witnesses every matter will be established***.” Paul had warned them during his second visit and repeated it now in this letter that he would not spare those who sinned previously or later when he was there, since the Corinthians had demanded proof that Christ was speaking through and in him. Christ was not weak or ineffective in dealing with the Corinthians but was powerful among them. Christ was crucified as a matter of weakness as he yielded himself, but he lives because of God’s power. They were weak (AMP…being humans) in him, but they were alive and in fellowship with him, because of God’s power directed toward them. Paul asked the Corinthians to test and examine themselves (AMP…and not Paul) to see if they were in the faith and living as committed believers. They should recognize (AMP…by ongoing experience) that Jesus Christ was in them - unless they failed the test and were found to be counterfeit! Paul hoped they would realize and acknowledge that Paul and his companions had not failed the test and were not rejected! Paul and his companions prayed to God that the Corinthians would not do anything wrong, not because Paul wanted to appear to have passed the test, but so that the Corinthians would do what was right even if Paul and his companions had appeared by comparison to have failed the test. Paul and his companions could not do anything against the truth (AMP…good news of salvation), but only for the sake of the truth. Paul and his companions were glad when they were weak, but Paul (glc…sarcastically?) said the Corinthians were strong. Paul and his companions prayed that the Corinthians would become fully equipped in spiritual thinking. Because of this, Paul wrote this letter so that when he arrived in Corinth he would not have to deal severely with them by using his authority, which was given to him by the Lord to build up the Corinthians, not to tear them down.

2 Cor 13: 11 - 13 Paul’s guidance for Christians

Paul concluded the letter to his “brothers and sisters” by telling them to rejoice, to be what they should be, to be encouraged, to be like-minded, to live in peace, and the God of love and peace would be with them. He asked them to greet each other with a holy kiss (AMP…traditional greeting in biblical times; similar to a handshake and hug today) and told them that Christians with him sent their greetings. He prayed that the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit would be with all of them.