

Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians

A New Rendition

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY



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About the Brigham Young University New Testament Commentary Series

Welcome to the BYU New Testament Commentary, a project by a group of Latter-day Saint specialists offering to readers a careful, new look at the biblical records that witness the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and the first generation of his church. The commentary series seeks to make the New Testament more accessible to Latter-day Saint general readers and scholars by employing much of current biblical scholarship while reflecting important LDS insights. At the same time, this effort may also be helpful to interested readers of other faiths who want to learn how a group of Latter-day Saint scholars understands the Bible. A fundamental article of faith for Latter-day Saints (Mormons) affirms the Bible “to be the word of God” while adding, understandably, that it needs to be “translated correctly” in order for it to be accurately comprehensible to modern language speakers.

These objectives have helped shape the purposes and parameters of this commentary series. Serious LDS readers of the Bible search the scriptures, looking for depth and breadth in passages whose meanings and mandates may ultimately be plain but not shallow. Such readers and interpreters are served by treatments that unite faith and research, reason and revelation, in prayerfully confronting profound and difficult issues that arise in the texts and affect one’s path of progression. The New Testament has served as an influential guide to western civilization for centuries. As such, its records have long been studied by lay people and scholars alike, resulting in a rich reservoir of information that illuminates the New Testament era culturally, historically, and linguistically. Selectively, the BYUNTC builds upon this vast body of knowledge, resting on the Greek texts of the New Testament and connecting helpful elements of linguistic, literary, historical, and cultural research and traditional scholarship together with LDS scriptures and doctrinal perspectives. The combination of all these features

distinguishes the BYUNTC from other commentaries, which are readily available elsewhere and which readers may also want to consult for more encyclopedic or specialized discussions.

The tone of the BYUNTC aims to be informative rather than hortatory, and suggestive rather than definitive in its interpretation. The opinions expressed in this series are the views of its contributors and should not necessarily be attributed to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Brigham Young University, where many of those involved here are headquartered; or anyone else, though these works have benefitted from input and guidance from a number of colleagues, advisors, editors, and peer reviewers.

Each volume in this series contains a new working translation of the New Testament. Calling this a new “rendition” clarifies that it does not seek to replace the authorized KJV adopted by the LDS Church as its official English text. Rather, it aims to enhance readers’ understanding conceptually and spiritually by rendering the Greek texts into modern English with LDS sensitivities in mind. Comparing and explaining the New Rendition in light of the KJV then serves as one important purpose for each volume’s notes, comments, analyses, and summaries. This effort responds in modest ways to the desire President J. Reuben Clark Jr. expressed in his diary in 1956 that someday “qualified scholars [would provide] . . . a translation of the New Testament that will give us an accurate translation that shall be pregnant with the great principles of the Restored Gospel.”

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Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians

Salutation (1:1–2)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Timothy to the church of God that is in Corinth, together with all the saints who are in the whole province of Achaia. 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving for Godly Comfort in Suffering (1:3–7)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercy and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction so that we can comfort those in any affliction of theirs with the same comfort by which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For just as Christ's sufferings abound to our advantage, so also does our comfort abound through Christ. 6 And if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation, and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces patient endurance in the same sufferings that we ourselves endure. 7 And our hope for you is firm, knowing that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

The Harrowing Experience in the Province of Asia (1:8–11)

8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of the affliction that we suffered in the province of Asia—that we were oppressed utterly beyond our strength so that we even despaired of life itself. 9 Indeed, we felt that we had received a verdict of death so that we would not trust in ourselves but rather in God, who raises the dead. 10 He who rescued us from so great a peril of death will continue to rescue us. We have set our hope on him that he will also rescue us again, 11 as you join in helping us by your prayers so that many might give thanks on our behalf for the gift of many people to us.

Paul Explains the Reason for His Confidence in the Correctness of His Dealing with the Corinthian Saints (1:12–14)

12 Now the reason for our pride is this: the testimony of our conscience, that with godly holiness and sincerity, not with human wisdom but with the grace of God, we have conducted ourselves in the world and especially in regard to you. 13 For we do not write anything to you except what you can read and also understand. And I hope you will completely understand, 14 as you have also partially understood us, that we are your source of pride, just as you will also be ours in the day of our Lord Jesus.

Why He Defends His Actions (1:15–20)

15 And with this confidence, I intended to come to you first so that you would have a second proof of my goodwill. 16 I planned on visiting you on my way to Macedonia, and on my return from Macedonia to come to you and then be sent by you on my way to Judea. 17 Now because I intended to do this, was I being fickle? Or do I make my plans based on human standards, indecisively saying both “yes, yes!” and “no, no!”? 18 On the contrary, as God is faithful, our word to you is not both “yes” and “no.” 19 For God’s Son, Jesus Christ, who was preached to you by us, by me and Silas and Timothy, was not “yes” and “no” but it has always been “yes.” 20 For all God’s promises are “yes” in him. Therefore, also through him “Amen” is said by us to God’s glory.

The Saving Work of God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost (1:21–22)

21 Now it is God who strengthens us together with you in Christ and has anointed us. 22 He has also sealed us and placed the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts.

Why Paul Postponed His Visit (1:23–2:4)

23 Now I call upon God as a witness upon my soul that it was to spare you that I did not come again to Corinth. 24 Not that we would lord it over your faith, but rather we are workers with you for your joy, because you stand firm in the faith.

2:1 So I made up my mind to never again come to you with sorrow. 2 For if I cause you sorrow, who would make me happy except someone who has been made sorrowful by me? 3 And I wrote this very thing so that when I came, I would not feel sorrow for those who ought to

make me happy since I have confidence in all of you that my happiness would also be yours. 4 For I wrote to you out of great tribulation and anguish of heart with many tears, not that you would be made sorrowful but rather that you would recognize the exceedingly great love I have for you.

Forgiveness for the Sinner (2:5–11)

5 But if anyone has caused sorrow, he has caused not only me sorrow, but to some extent (not to exaggerate) he has also caused all of you sorrow. 6 This punishment imposed by the majority is sufficient for such a person, 7 and so instead you should forgive and encourage him so that this person will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 Therefore, I urge you to affirm your love for him. 9 For this purpose I wrote to ascertain if you would be obedient in all things. 10 Now whomever you forgive for anything, I also will forgive, for indeed what I have forgiven (if I have forgiven anything), I have done so for you in Christ's presence 11 so that we may not be outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs.

Paul's Anxiety in Troas (2:12–13)

12 Now when I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and a door was opened for me by the Lord, 13 I had no rest for my spirit because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said farewell to them and departed for Macedonia.

Paul's Reflections on the Effects of the Gospel (2:14–17)

14 But thanks be to God who always leads us in a triumphal procession with Christ and makes known the fragrance of the knowledge of him through us in every place. 15 For we are to God the pleasant odor of Christ among those who are saved and among those who are perishing. 16 To the latter an odor of death unto death but to the former of life unto life. And who is qualified for these things? 17 For we are not like so many others who peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, we speak in Christ before God as men of pure motive, as men of God.

Ministers of the New Covenant (3:1–3)

1 Are we starting again to commend ourselves? We certainly do not need, as some do, letters of commendation to or from you, do we?

2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, understood and read by everyone. 3 You clearly show that you are Christ's letter, delivered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the Living God, not on stone tablets but on tablets of human hearts.

God Made Us Capable (3:4–6)

4 Now we have such confidence through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we of ourselves are capable of thinking that anything came from ourselves. On the contrary, our competence comes from God, 6 who indeed made us capable ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit, because the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The Glory of the New Covenant (3:7–11)

7 Now if the ministry of death, which was carved in letters on stone tablets, produced such glory that the children of Israel could not look at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, a glory that was to be abolished, 8 will the ministry of the Spirit not be much more glorious? 9 For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, there is much greater glory in the ministry of righteousness. 10 Indeed, that which had been glorious does not now appear glorious because of the surpassingly greater glory. 11 For if that which was to be abolished seemed glorious, how much more glorious is that which remains.

The Ministry of the New Covenant (3:12–18)

12 Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech, 13 unlike Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel would not stare at the end of that which was to be abolished. 14 On the contrary, their minds were closed, for even until this present day, the same veil remains unlifted during the reading of the old covenant, because that veil is abolished in Christ. 15 But until this very day, whenever Moses is read, a veil remains over their heart. 16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And all of us who with unveiled faces contemplate the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Spirit of the Lord.

Paul's Perseverance in the Ministry (4:1–6)

1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, because we have been given mercy, we do not become discouraged. 2 On the contrary, we have renounced the shameful hidden things, neither practicing deception nor distorting the word of God, but by the open proclamation of the truth we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. 3 But even if our gospel is hidden, it is only hidden to those who are perishing, 4 among whom the god of this world has blinded the minds of those who do not believe so that they do not discern the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not proclaim ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is God who said, "Out of darkness light will shine" [Gen. 1:3], who shined in our hearts to bring to light the knowledge of God's glory in Christ's face.

Treasures in Clay Jars (4:7–12)

7 But we have this treasure in clay jars to show that this extraordinary power comes from God and not from us. 8 We are oppressed on every side but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair, 9 persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed. 10 We are always carrying around in our bodies the putting to death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus might also be revealed in our body. 11 For we who are alive are always being handed over to death for Jesus' sake so that the life of Jesus might also be revealed in our mortal flesh. 12 Therefore death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

An Eternal Weight of Glory (4:13–15)

13 Now we have the same spirit of faith as written in the scriptures, "I believed, therefore I spoke" [Ps. 116:10]. We also believe, therefore we also speak 14 because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us together with Jesus and bring us together with you into his presence. 15 For all these things are for your sake so that the grace as it increases throughout more and more people may cause thanksgiving to abound to God's glory.

Renewal through Suffering (4:16–18)

16 Therefore, we do not lose heart, but even if our physical body is being destroyed, our soul is being renewed day by day. 17 For our present insignificant affliction is producing for us an eternal fullness of glory beyond all measure and proportion 18 because we do not focus on the things that are visible, but on the things that are not visible because the visible things are transient, but the things that are not visible are eternal.

On Our Heavenly Dwelling (5:1–5)

1 For we know that if the earthly house of our body is destroyed, we have a building from God—an eternal house in the heavens not made by hands. 2 For indeed, in this earthly body we groan because we want to put on our heavenly body, 3 provided that when we have put it on, we will not be found naked. 4 For indeed, we who are in this body groan because we are weary since we do not want to be unclothed, but to be further clothed so that the mortal might be swallowed up by life. 5 Now he who prepared us for this very thing is God, who gave us the pledge of the Spirit.

We Labor That We May Be Accepted of Him (5:6–10)

6 Therefore, we are always confident and recognize that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith not by sight. 8 And we are confident, I repeat, and prefer to depart from this body and be at home with the Lord. 9 Therefore, we also eagerly strive to please him, whether in this body or absent from it. 10 For we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each person may receive a recompense for the things that he or she has done by means of the body, whether good or bad.

Knowing the Fear of God (5:11–15)

11 Therefore, since we know the fear of the Lord, we keep trying to persuade people, but we are well-known to God, and I hope we are also well-known in your consciences. 12 We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again; on the contrary, we are giving you an opportunity to be proud of us so that you can have an answer for those who take pride in outward appearance rather than what is in the heart. 13 For if we were out of our minds, it would be for God to decide; if we

are of sound mind, it is for your benefit. 14 For Christ's love urges us on because we have come to this conclusion: that one man died for all humankind, thus, in a manner of speaking, all humankind have died. 15 And he died for the salvation of all humankind so that the living might no longer live for themselves but live for him who died and was raised up again for their salvation.

The New Creature in Christ (5:16–17)

16 And so from now on, we do not know anyone from a human point of view; even though we once came to know Christ from a human point of view, now we no longer know him in that way. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he or she becomes a new creature. Former things have passed away; now they have become new.

Message of Reconciliation (5:18–21)

18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting their transgressions against them and entrusting us with the message of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are representatives of Christ as if God himself were encouraging you through us. We plead with you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 God made Christ, who knew no sin, become sin for our sakes so that we might become the righteousness of God in Christ.

“Now Is the Day of Salvation” (6:1–2)

1 Now since we are coworkers, we also urge you to not receive God's grace in vain. 2 For he says, “At a favorable time I heard you and in a day of salvation I helped you” [Isa. 49:8]. Look, now is “a very favorable time”; now is “a day of salvation”!

The Condition and Character of Paul's Mission (6:3–10)

3 We do not give any offense to anyone so that no fault may be found with our ministry. 4 But in everything we show ourselves to be God's ministers: with great endurance, in tribulations, in troubles, in difficulties, 5 with beatings, with imprisonments, with mobbings, with hardships, with lack of sleep, with hunger; 6 by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by genuine love, 7 by truthful

speech, by God's power; by means of weapons of righteousness in the right hand and the left; 8 through glory and dishonor, through slander and praise; viewed as deceivers yet honest; 9 as unknown yet well-known, as dying yet we are alive, as scourged yet not put to death, 10 as sorrowful yet ever rejoicing, as poor yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing everything.

Paul's Appeal to the Corinthian Saints (6:11–13)

11 O Corinthians, our mouth is open to you; our heart is open wide. 12 There is no restraint in our affection for you, but there is restraint in your affection for us. 13 As a fair exchange—I speak as to my own children—open wide your heart also.

A Warning against Too-Familiar Association with Unbelievers (6:14–7:1)

14 Do not be yoked in an unequal partnership with unbelievers. What do righteousness and lawlessness have in common, or what fellowship does light have with darkness? 15 And what agreement does Christ have with Beliar, or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement is there between God's temple and idols? For we are a temple of the living God, even as God said, "I will dwell among them and walk with them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people" [Lev. 26:11–12; Jer. 32:38; Ezek. 27:37]. 17 Therefore, "Come out from among them and be separate," says the Lord, "and do not touch any unclean thing" [Isa. 52:11], "and I will receive you" [Ezek. 20:41], 18 "and I will be a father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" [compare 2 Sam. 7:14, 8; Isa. 43:6]. 7:1 Now since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from every defilement of the flesh and spirit and thereby complete our sanctification through reverence for God.

"Receive Us": The Plea Resumed (7:2–4)

2 Make room for us in your hearts. We have treated no one unjustly; we have corrupted no one; we have taken advantage of no one. 3 I am not saying this to condemn you, for as I have already said, you have a place in our hearts such that we would live or die together with you. 4 I have great confidence in you; I have great pride in you. I am filled with comfort. I am overflowing with joy in all our tribulation.

Joy in the Report of Titus (7:5–7)

5 For even when we came to Macedonia, our body found no rest at all; rather, we were afflicted in every way—struggles on the outside, fears within. 6 But God, who encourages those who are discouraged, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus. 7 And not only by his arrival but also by the encouragement he received while among you when he reported to us your longing, your mourning, your earnest concern for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

The Positive Effects of Paul's Harsh Letter (7:8–12)

8 For even if I caused you sorrow with my letter, I do not regret it (even though I initially regretted it, for I see that the letter made you sorry, although only for a short time). 9 Now I am happy, not because you were made sorry but that your being made sorry led you to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner such that you suffered no loss through us. 10 For godly sorrow produces repentance that leads to salvation that is without regret. But worldly sorrow produces death. 11 For see what this very thing, this being made sorry in a godly manner, has produced in you—what earnestness, indeed what eagerness to defend yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what zeal, what desire to see justice done! In every particular you have shown that you were innocent in the matter. 12 And so, even though I wrote to you, it was not because of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the one who was wronged, rather it was in order to demonstrate to you your eagerness on our behalf before God.

"I Have Complete Confidence in You" (7:13–16)

13 Therefore, we have been encouraged.

And in addition to our own encouragement, we rejoiced even more greatly at Titus's joy because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. 14 For if I have boasted about anything to him concerning you, I have not been put to shame. Instead, just as everything we told you in truth so also our boasting about you to Titus proved true. 15 And his affection for you is even greater when he remembers the obedience of all of you—how you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice because I have complete confidence in you.

The Macedonian Church's Abundance of Generosity (8:1–7)

1 Now brothers and sisters, we are making you aware of God's grace that has been given to the Macedonian churches, 2 that in the midst of a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have produced an abundance of their generosity. 3 For I testify that they voluntarily gave according to their means and even beyond their means, 4 urgently pleading with us for the privilege of participating in this ministry to the saints. 5 And not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and also to us through God's will. 6 So we encouraged Titus to finish up the collection of this charitable offering with you just as he had already begun. 7 But just as you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete devotion, and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this charitable offering.

Encouragement to Be Generous (8:8–15)

8 I am not saying this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love through the eagerness of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—that although he was rich, he impoverished himself for your sakes so that you might be enriched by his poverty. 10 And I am giving you my opinion on this matter because this is to your advantage. Last year you began not only to act but also to desire to act. 11 But now also finish what you started so that your eager desire to do it is matched by your completion of it according to what you have. 12 For if the willingness is present, the act is acceptable according to whatever one might or might not have. 13 For it is not that others should have relief and you be burdened, but it is a matter of fairness. 14 At the present time, your abundance can meet their need so that someday their abundance might meet your need so that there will be fairness. 15 As it is written, “The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little” [Ex. 16:18].

The Mission of Titus (8:16–24)

16 But thanks be to God, who put the same devotion I have for you into the heart of Titus. 17 Because he not only accepted my appeal, but also, being even more eager, he is coming to you on his own initiative. 18 And we sent with him the brother whose fame in connection with

the gospel has spread through all the churches. 19 And not only that, but he was also chosen by the churches to be our traveling companion in connection with this charitable offering that is administered by us for the glory of the Lord himself as well to show our willingness to help. 20 We did this to prevent anyone from finding fault with us in this liberal gift that we are administering. 21 For we are concerned about doing what is right not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of men [Prov. 3:4]. 22 And with them we sent our brother whose diligence we have often tested and proved in many ways but now is even more diligent because of his confidence in you. 23 As for Titus, he is *my* partner and also a fellow worker for you. As for our brothers, they are envoys of the churches, a glory of Christ, 24 so show them proof of your love and of our boasting about you before the churches.

Further Instructions Concerning the Collection (9:1–5)

1 For now indeed it is unnecessary for me to write to you concerning this ministering to the saints 2 since I know your willingness concerning which I boast about you to the Macedonians—that Achaia has been ready since last year—and your zeal has roused most of them to action. 3 Nevertheless, I am sending these brothers so that our boasting about you would not prove empty in this matter so that you would be ready, just as I kept telling them, 4 so that even if some Macedonians should come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you) would not be humiliated in this undertaking. 5 Consequently, I considered it necessary to urge the brothers to go on ahead to you and prepare in advance the generous gift that you had previously promised so that this would be ready as a generous gift and not as one given grudgingly.

On Sowing Generously (9:6–15)

6 Now the point is this: one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and one who sows bounteously will also reap bounteously. 7 Each person should give as much as he has decided in his heart, neither reluctantly nor out of compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 God can provide you with every grace in abundance so that you will always have enough of everything and ample means for every good work. 9 As it is written, “He distributed; he gave to the poor; his righteousness

endures forever” [Ps. 112:9; LXX Ps. 111:9]. 10 Now he who provides seed to the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your seed and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You are enriched in every way, resulting in generosity of every kind that through us produces gratitude to God 12 because the performance of this service is not only fully providing for the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many expressions of gratitude to God. 13 Because of having experienced this service, they will glorify God for your obedience to the covenant you made in accepting the gospel of Christ and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. 14 And by their prayers for you they yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God that rests upon you. 15 Thank God for his indescribable gift!

Paul’s Intent to Use His Apostolic Authority If Necessary (10:1–2)

1 Now I Paul myself appeal to you by the humility and gentleness of Christ—I who am “humble” when face to face with you but “bold” toward you when I am absent. 2 But I plead with you that when I am present, I will not have to act boldly with the confidence that I consider to be bold enough to use against those who are of the opinion that we conduct our lives according to worldly standards.

Paul Discloses His Battle Plan (10:3–6)

3 For although we live in the world, we do not wage war according to worldly standards. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but weapons made powerful by God for the purpose of destroying fortresses. 5 We demolish sophistries and every arrogant obstacle that rises up in opposition to the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 6 And we are ready to punish all disobedience whenever your obedience is complete.

Paul’s Threat to His Detractors (10:7–11)

7 Look at what is before your eyes! If anyone is convinced in his own mind that he belongs to Christ, he should ponder again concerning himself that just as he belongs to Christ, so do we also. 8 For if I do boast a little too much concerning our authority that the Lord gave us for building you up, not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it 9 so that I will not appear to be frightening you with my letters.

10 Because some say, “His letters are weighty and forceful, but when he is here in person, he appears weak and his speech is of no account”—
11 such a person should consider that just as we are in word through our letters when we are not present, so we will also be in our actions when we are present.

Paul's Mission (10:12–18)

12 For we do not presume to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and commend themselves with one another, they lack understanding. 13 However, we will not boast beyond proper limits but according to the limits of the assigned area that God has given us to reach even to you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves as if we did not reach to you, for we were the first to come to you with the gospel of Christ. 15 We do not boast beyond proper limits in the labors of others, but we have the hope that as your faith continues to grow that, with your help, our assigned area will be greatly enlarged 16 to preach the gospel in lands that lie beyond you without boasting about work already done in someone else's assigned area. 17 Rather, let one who boasts, boast in the Lord, 18 for it is not the one who commends himself that is approved but the one whom the Lord commends.

Paul's Foolishness (11:1–6)

1 I hope you will bear with me in a little bit of foolishness; indeed, do bear with me! 2 For I am jealous of you with a divine jealousy, for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. 3 But I am afraid that just as the snake deceived Eve with his cunning, your minds may be led astray from sincerity and purity to Christ. 4 For if someone comes and preaches another Jesus that we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit that you did not receive from us or a different gospel that you did not receive from us, you bear it readily enough. 5 For I consider that I am in no way inferior to the super-apostles. 6 But even if I am unskilled in speaking, nevertheless I am not unskilled in knowledge. On the contrary, in every way we have made this clear to you in all things.

Paul's Defense Continued (11:7–15)

7 Or have I sinned by humbling myself so that you might be lifted up because I preached the gospel of God to you without payment? 8 I robbed other churches by taking their support to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I was not a burden to anyone because the brethren who came from Macedonia took care of my needs, and in every way, I kept myself from being a burden to you and will continue to do so. 10 As Christ's truth is in me, as far as I am concerned, this boast of mine will not be quashed in the regions of Achaia. 11 Why? Because I do not love you? God knows that I do. 12 And what I am doing, I will continue to do so that I may undercut any opportunity for those who want an opportunity to appear to be our equals in the things they boast about. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. 15 Thus it is not surprising that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.

Paul's Suffering as an Apostle (11:16–27)

16 Again I say, let no one consider me a fool, but if you indeed think otherwise, at least put up with me as a fool so that I that can boast a little. 17 What I say, I say not according to the Lord but as a fool in undertaking this boasting. 18 Since many are boasting according to human standards, I too will boast. 19 For you gladly endure fools since you yourselves are wise. 20 For you endure if someone enslaves you, if someone exploits you, if someone takes you captive, if someone is arrogant with you, if someone slaps you on the face. 21 To my shame, I say we were too weak for that. But whatever anyone dares (I am speaking foolishly), I also dare. 22 Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I am speaking irrationally.) I am even more. With much greater labors, with far more imprisonments, with severe beatings, often in danger of death. 24 Five times I received forty lashes minus one from the Jews, 25 three times I was beaten with a rod, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I spent adrift in the sea. 26 On frequent journeys, I have been in dangers from rivers, in dangers from thieves, in dangers from my own countrymen,

in dangers from foreigners, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers at sea, in dangers from false brethren, 27 with hard work and toil, frequently with lack of sleep, with hunger and thirst, frequently with fasting, with cold and lack of clothing.

The Apostle's Major Burden (11:28–29)

28 In addition to those external things, I feel the daily pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I do not burn with indignation?

Boasting of Weakness (11:30–33)

30 If I must glory, I will glory in my weakness. 31 God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus, who is blessed forever, knows that I do not lie. 32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king was guarding the city of Damascenes in order to arrest me, 33 and I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall and escaped his hands.

Visions and Revelations (12:1–10)

1 It is necessary to boast. Although there is nothing to be gained by it, nevertheless I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. 2 I know a person in Christ, fourteen years ago—whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know, God knows—who was taken up to the third heaven. 3 And I know this person—whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body, I do not know, God knows— 4 that he was taken up into paradise, and he heard inexpressible words that are not proper for a person to speak. 5 I will boast about this person, but about myself I will not boast except in my weaknesses. 6 For even if I wanted to boast, I will not be a fool, for I will speak the truth. But I will refrain from boasting so that no one will consider me more than what he sees me to be or hears from me 7 because of the extraordinary nature of the revelations. Therefore, so that I would not become overly proud, I was given a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me so that I would not become overly proud. 8 Concerning this, I pleaded with the Lord three times that it would leave me. 9 And he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is brought to perfection in weakness.” Therefore, I will most gladly boast in my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may dwell within me. 10 Therefore, I delight

in weaknesses, in mistreatments, in calamities, in persecutions and troubles for Christ's sake. For whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Proof of Apostleship (12:11–13)

11 I have become foolish. You yourselves forced me to do it for I ought to have been commended by you; for I am in no way inferior to the super-apostles even though I am nothing. 12 Indeed, the signs of an apostle were performed among you in all patience with signs and wonders and deeds of power. 13 In what respect, then, were you made to feel less important than the other churches except that I myself was not a burden to you? Forgive me for this injustice!

Promise to Not Be a Burden (12:14–18)

14 Look, for the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you for I do not want your possessions but you yourselves. Children should not save up for their parents but parents for their children. 15 And I will be most happy to spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you so very much more, should I be loved even less? 16 But be that as it may, I have not been a burden to you; however, being the crafty fellow that I am, I caught you by deceit. 17 Have I taken advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus to go to you and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Didn't we conduct ourselves with the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same footsteps?

Fears about the Corinthians' State (12:19–21)

19 Have you been thinking all this time that we have been defending ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ, and everything, dear brothers and sisters, is for your edification. 20 For I am afraid that perhaps when I come, I may not find you to be the kind of people I want you to be, and I may not be found by you to be the kind of person you want me to be. I also fear that perhaps there will be contention, jealousy, anger, selfishness, speaking ill of each other, gossiping, pride, disorder. 21 So that when I come again, God may humble me before you, and that I shall grieve over many of those who have sinned previously and have not repented of the impurity and sexual immorality and licentiousness that they have indulged in.

Warning of Impending Discipline (13:1–4)

1 This is the third time I will come to you. “By the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter will be established” [Deut. 19:15]. 2 I have warned those who sinned before as well as all the others, like I did when I was present on my second visit and I am now warning them when I am not present, that if I come again, I will not spare anyone 3 since you demand proof of Christ speaking in me, who is not weak in dealing with you but is powerful among you. 4 For indeed, he was crucified because of weakness, and yet he lives because of the power of God. For indeed we are weak in him, but we shall live together with him because of the power of God toward you.

A Plea for Self-Examination (13:5–10)

5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith! Examine yourselves! Or don't you realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, of course, you fail the test. 6 Now I hope you will understand that we have not failed the test. 7 And we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong, not so that we will appear to have passed the test, but so that you will do what is right even if we seem to have failed the test. 8 For we cannot do anything against the truth but for the sake of truth. 9 For we rejoice when we are weak, but you are strong. Indeed, this is what we pray for: your inner strength. 10 Therefore, I write these things when I am absent so that when I am present, I may not have to deal with you severely according to the authority the Lord has given me for the purpose of building up and not for tearing down.

Conclusion (13:11–13)

11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice, mend your ways, be comforted, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet each other with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. 13 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the companionship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.