

THE R.U.S.H. BIBLE STUDY

2ND CORINTHIANS



KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT FAST



WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY FIRST EDITION 2020 VER.26

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2 Corinthians

Paul writes a letter of reconciliation that clarifies some points he made in the previous letter to the church at Corinth, and clears up some concerns that they still have.

Author: Paul

In 2 Corinthians – Jesus is our Victory over the World

2 Corinthians 12:9 "My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness."

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TEACHER: 13 CHAPTERS

In chapter 1 Paul is happy that the church in Corinth responded so well to his previous letter (1 Corinthians), and tells them that their repentance has made his own suffering on their behalf worth it. Most scholars believe he wrote 2 Corinthians after he left Ephesus, to go to Macedonia. Philippi perhaps? I believe so because Timothy was fond of the church there and often tended to them as Pastor. As a treat we will use the Revised Geneva Translation (RGT) often here. The modern translation of the original, our Founding Fathers Bible.

CH. 1

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STUDENT:

³Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. ⁵For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. ⁶Now if we are afflicted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation. ⁷And our hope for you *is* steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also *you will partake* of the consolation. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

The Greeks that Paul is dealing with here place a very high premium on education. In both the previous letter and this, he makes a point of promoting grace, simplicity and sincerity over the status higher education affords.

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STUDENT:

¹²For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. ¹³For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end ¹⁴(as also you have understood us in part), that we are your boast as you also *are* ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

Remember in 1st Corinthians that a man was having an affair with his step-mother in chapter 5. Paul sternly admonished them for not throwing him out of the church. It would seem here that cutting the man off from fellowship has caused deep remorse and Paul now warns them to bring him back into the fold. Paul's purpose for the discipline was salvation, not condemnation. Let's read how Paul puts it in a 1st time R.B.S. appearance of a beautiful translation called "The New Testament for Everyone." (NTE)

CH. 2

STUDENT:

You see, I settled it in my mind that I wouldn't make you another sad visit. ² After all, if I make you sad, who is there to cheer *me* up except the one who is sad because of me? ³ And I wrote what I did so that I wouldn't come and find sadness where I should have found joy. I have this confidence about all of you, that my joy belongs to all of you. ⁴ No: I wrote to you in floods of tears, out of great trouble and anguish in my heart, not so that I could make you sad but so that you would know just how much overflowing love I have towards you.

⁵ But if anyone has caused sadness, it isn't me that he has saddened, but, in a measure (I don't want to emphasize this too much), all of you. (NTE)

STUDENT:

⁶ The punishment that the majority has imposed is quite enough; ⁷ what's needed now is rather that you should forgive and console him, in case someone like that might be swallowed up by such abundant sorrow. ⁸ Let me urge you, then, to reaffirm your love for him.

⁹ The reason I wrote to you, you see, was in order to know whether you would pass the test and be obedient in everything. ¹⁰ If you forgive anyone anything, so do I; and whatever I have forgiven – if indeed I have forgiven anyone anything! – it's all happened under the eyes of the Messiah, and for your own sake. ¹¹ The point is that we shouldn't be outsmarted by the Satan. We know what he's up to! (NTE)

TEACHER:

Discipline and forgiveness. Perfect.

"Everybody has a right to change." DH

STUDENT:

¹² However, when I came to Troas to announce the Messiah's gospel, and found an open door waiting for me in the Lord, ¹³ I couldn't get any quietness in my spirit because I didn't find my brother Titus there. So I left them and went off to Macedonia.

¹⁴ But thanks be to God – the God who always leads us in his triumphal procession in the Messiah, and through us reveals everywhere the sweet smell of knowing him. ¹⁵ We are the Messiah's fragrance before God, you see, to those who are being saved and to those who are being lost. ¹⁶ To the latter, it's a smell which comes from death and leads to death; but to the former it's the smell of life which leads to life.

Who can rise to this challenge? ¹⁷ We aren't mere peddlers of God's word, as so many people are. We speak with sincerity; we speak from God; we speak in God's presence; we speak in the Messiah.

New Testament for Everyone (NTE)

TEACHER:

Have you ever heard of the saying "you may be the only Bible the world ever reads?" This paragraph in chapter 3 is where that saying came from.

CH. 3

STUDENT:

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some *others*, epistles of commendation to you or *letters* of commendation from you? ² You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; ³ clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, *that is*, of the heart.

⁴ And we have such trust through Christ toward God. ⁵ Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but our sufficiency *is* from God, ⁶ who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (NKJV)

TEACHER:

Why does Paul say “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life?” Any thoughts? I think one good way to look at this passage is, once the law is written, it is final. But if the law is not yet written, then it is still open to definition. As if it is still uncertain if a law or regulation is required for the action yet. Once written, *it is law*.

Think of it this way. We as Christians follow the spirit of the law, without being under the law. Take abortion for example. It doesn’t affect our actions if abortion is legal or not, we wouldn’t do such a thing. We follow Gods law without the command because we love Him, not because we have to. We want to. Let’s continue.

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STUDENT:

¹² Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech— ¹³ unlike Moses, *who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away. ¹⁴ But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. ¹⁵ But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶ Nevertheless when one 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* liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

In chapter 4 Paul starts to pour out his heart regarding the hardships of ministry looking to eternity for the reward.

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CH. 4

STUDENT:

Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. ² But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. ³ But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (NKJV)

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STUDENT:

⁷ But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

⁸ <i>We are</i> hard-pressed on every side,	yet not crushed;
<i>we are</i> perplexed,	but not in despair;
⁹ persecuted,	but not forsaken;
struck down,	but not destroyed—

¹⁰ always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. ¹¹ For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹² So then death is working in us, but life in you. (NKJV) *formatting edited DH*

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STUDENT:

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, ¹⁸while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.
(NKJV)

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TEACHER:

I feel a strong need to correct Paul on something. His phrase from above, "our light affliction". Really?

3 times beaten with rods
Stoned
3 times shipwrecked
24 hours floating in the water
100's of miles on foot
Perils of waters
Robbed several times
Trials from the Sanhedrin resulting in 40 stripes save 1, 5 times.
Trials by Roman officials
Perils in the inner city
Perils in the wilderness
Perils when he was floating shipwrecked
Even perils by fake Christians and false prophets
Weariness and pain and hunger and thirst.

We define "light affliction" as somewhat less than Paul today.

In chapter 5 Paul turns his attention to the resurrection of the dead. The judgement seat of Christ, and our calling to be ambassadors for Christ.

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CH. 5

STUDENT:

For we know that if our earthly house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ²For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, ³if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. ⁴For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. (NKJV)

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STUDENT:

⁵Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. ⁶So we *are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. ⁷For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

The next word we read will be "therefore", It is there for us to keep in mind that this suffering is only temporary, and then we go to our reward. Because we are going to Heaven, we are to keep this next mind-set.

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STUDENT:

⁹ Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. ¹¹ Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

And that is why we keep the mind-set. Because we are known by God, Paul says “well known”.

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STUDENT:

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸ Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (NKJV)

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TEACHER:

Switching over to the Good News Translation, we will move on to chapter 6, where we are instructed to be urgent in our ministries. That we need to work today. All of us have ministries, we are all called.

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CH. 6

STUDENT:

In our work together with God, then, we beg you who have received God's grace not to let it be wasted. ² Hear what God says:

“When the time came for me to show you favor,
I heard you;
when the day arrived for me to save you,
I helped you.”
Listen! This is the hour to receive God's favor;
today is the day to be saved!

³ We do not want anyone to find fault with our work, so we try not to put obstacles in anyone's way. ⁴ Instead, in everything we do we show that we are God's servants by patiently enduring troubles, hardships, and difficulties. ⁵ We have been beaten, jailed, and mobbed; we have been overworked and have gone without sleep or food. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

⁶ By our purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness we have shown ourselves to be God's servants—by the Holy Spirit, by our true love, ⁷ by our message of truth, and by the power of God. We have righteousness as our weapon, both to attack and to defend ourselves. ⁸ We are honored and disgraced; we are insulted and praised. We are treated as liars, yet we speak the truth; ⁹ as unknown, yet we are known by all; as though we were dead, but, as you see, we live on. Although punished, we are not killed; ¹⁰ although saddened, we are always glad; we seem poor, but we make many people rich; we seem to have nothing, yet we really possess everything. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Starting with verse 14 a stern word to separate ourselves from pagan influences.

STUDENT:

¹⁴ Do not try to work together as equals with unbelievers, for it cannot be done. How can right and wrong be partners? How can light and darkness live together? ¹⁵ How can Christ and the Devil agree? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ How can God's temple come to terms with pagan idols? For we are the temple of the living God! As God himself has said,

“I will make my home with my people
and live among them;
I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

¹⁷ And so the Lord says,
“You must leave them and separate yourselves from them.

Have nothing to do with what is unclean,
and I will accept you.

¹⁸ I will be your father,
and you shall be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty.” (GNT)

TEACHER:

How is this possible today, in a world so full of the ignorance of God? The King James puts it cleaner, “be not yolked together with unbelievers.” Do not be chained together with people who will draw you off the path you are on. In the Greek it clarifies “working to the same end.” We may have the same duties to government or employers as unbelievers, but we don’t have the same goals, dreams and visions as unbelievers. Nor will we lower our standards to the world’s standards. On to chapter 7.

CH. 7

STUDENT:

All these promises are made to us, my dear friends. So then, let us purify ourselves from everything that makes body or soul unclean, and let us be completely holy by living in awe of God.

² Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one; we have ruined no one, nor tried to take advantage of anyone. ³ I do not say this to condemn you; for, as I have said before, you are so dear to us that we are always together, whether we live or die. ⁴ I am so sure of you; I take such pride in you! In all our troubles I am still full of courage; I am running over with joy. (GNT)

TEACHER:

Paul next shows how the temporary sorrow is turned into joy. If you are in a season of sadness, keep at it, and when you receive your joy, help those who are sad and cheer up the broken-hearted.

STUDENT:

⁸ For even if that letter of mine made you sad, I am not sorry I wrote it. I could have been sorry when I saw that it made you sad for a while. ⁹ But now I am happy—not because I made you sad, but because your sadness made you change your ways. That sadness was used by God, and so we caused you no harm. (GNT)

STUDENT:

¹⁰ For the sadness that is used by God brings a change of heart that leads to salvation—and there is no regret in that! But sadness that is merely human causes death. ¹¹ See what God did with this sadness of yours: how earnest it has made you, how eager to prove your innocence! Such indignation, such alarm, such feelings, such devotion, such readiness to punish wrongdoing! You have shown yourselves to be without fault in the whole matter. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

In chapter 8 Paul talks about offerings and generosity.

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STUDENT:

Our friends, we want you to know what God's grace has accomplished in the churches in Macedonia. ² They have been severely tested by the troubles they went through; but their joy was so great that they were extremely generous in their giving, even though they are very poor. ³ I can assure you that they gave as much as they could, and even more than they could. Of their own free will ⁴ they begged us and pleaded for the privilege of having a part in helping God's people in Judea. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

⁵ It was more than we could have hoped for! First they gave themselves to the Lord; and then, by God's will they gave themselves to us as well. ⁶ So we urged Titus, who began this work, to continue it and help you complete this special service of love. ⁷ You are so rich in all you have: in faith, speech, and knowledge, in your eagerness to help and in your love for us. And so we want you to be generous also in this service of love. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul then goes on to make sure this is not a command, but a desire he has for them to love beyond what they typically might do, and follow the example of Jesus with gusto!

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STUDENT:

⁸ I am not laying down any rules. But by showing how eager others are to help, I am trying to find out how real your own love is. ⁹ You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; rich as he was, he made himself poor for your sake, in order to make you rich by means of his poverty.

¹⁰ My opinion is that it is better for you to finish now what you began last year. You were the first, not only to act, but also to be willing to act. ¹¹ On with it, then, and finish the job! Be as eager to finish it as you were to plan it, and do it with what you now have. ¹² If you are eager to give, God will accept your gift on the basis of what you have to give, not on what you don't have. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

¹³⁻¹⁴ I am not trying to relieve others by putting a burden on you; but since you have plenty at this time, it is only fair that you should help those who are in need. Then, when you are in need and they have plenty, they will help you. In this way both are treated equally. ¹⁵ As the scripture says, "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little." (GNT)

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TEACHER:

"As the scripture says" what scripture? Paul refers to the Manna. Paul then makes himself accountable with how they handle their gift so they have confidence it will be used for God's glory.

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CH. 8

STUDENT:

²⁰ We are being careful not to stir up any complaints about the way we handle this generous gift. ²¹ Our purpose is to do what is right, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of others.

²² So we are sending our brother with them; we have tested him many times and found him always very eager to help. And now that he has so much confidence in you, he is all the more eager to help. (GNT)

TEACHER:

In chapter 9 Paul continues, and explains why he has sent the letter with a group of believers so they will be prepared to give sacrificially.

STUDENT:

CH. 9

² I know that you are willing to help, and I have boasted of you to the people in Macedonia. "The believers in Achaia," I said, "have been ready to help since last year." Your eagerness has stirred up most of them. ³ Now I am sending these believers, so that our boasting about you in this matter may not turn out to be empty words. But, just as I said, you will be ready with your help. ⁴ However, if the people from Macedonia should come with me and find out that you are not ready, how ashamed we would be—not to speak of your shame—for feeling so sure of you! ⁵ So I thought it was necessary to urge these believers to go to you ahead of me and get ready in advance the gift you promised to make. Then it will be ready when I arrive, and it will show that you give because you want to, not because you have to. (GNT)

STUDENT:

⁶ Remember that the person who plants few seeds will have a small crop; the one who plants many seeds will have a large crop. ⁷ You should each give, then, as you have decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves the one who gives gladly. ⁸ And God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause. ⁹ As the scripture says,

"He gives generously to the needy;
his kindness lasts forever."

STUDENT:

¹⁰ And God, who supplies seed for the sower and bread to eat, will also supply you with all the seed you need and will make it grow and produce a rich harvest from your generosity. ¹¹ He will always make you rich enough to be generous at all times, so that many will thank God for your gifts which they receive from us. ¹² For this service you perform not only meets the needs of God's people, but also produces an outpouring of gratitude to God. ¹³ And because of the proof which this service of yours brings, many will give glory to God for your loyalty to the gospel of Christ, which you profess, and for your generosity in sharing with them and everyone else. ¹⁴ And so with deep affection they will pray for you because of the extraordinary grace God has shown you. ¹⁵ Let us thank God for his priceless gift! (GNT)

TEACHER:

In chapter 10 Paul talks of our battle.

CH. 10

STUDENT:

I, Paul, make a personal appeal to you—I who am said to be meek and mild when I am with you, but harsh with you when I am away. By the gentleness and kindness of Christ ² I beg you not to force me to be harsh when I come; for I am sure I can deal harshly with those who say that we act from worldly motives. ³ It is true that we live in the world, but we do not fight from worldly motives. ⁴ The weapons we use in our fight are not the world's weapons but God's powerful weapons, which we use to destroy strongholds. We destroy false arguments; ⁵ we pull down every proud obstacle that is raised against the knowledge of God; we take every thought captive and make it obey Christ. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

We hope that your faith may grow and that we may be able to do a much greater work among you, always within the limits that God has set. ¹⁶ Then we can preach the Good News in other countries beyond you and shall not have to boast about work already done in someone else's field.

¹⁷ But as the scripture says, "Whoever wants to boast must boast about what the Lord has done." ¹⁸ For it is when the Lord thinks well of us that we are really approved, and not when we think well of ourselves. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul talks about false apostles that are influencing some in the church there. Have you ever seen any false prophets? False teachers or apostles?

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CH. 11

STUDENT:

I wish you would tolerate me, even when I am a bit foolish. Please do! ² I am jealous for you, just as God is; you are like a pure virgin whom I have promised in marriage to one man only, Christ himself. ³ I am afraid that your minds will be corrupted and that you will abandon your full and pure devotion to Christ—in the same way that Eve was deceived by the snake's clever lies. ⁴ For you gladly tolerate anyone who comes to you and preaches a different Jesus, not the one we preached; and you accept a spirit and a gospel completely different from the Spirit and the gospel you received from us! (GNT)

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STUDENT:

⁵ I do not think that I am the least bit inferior to those very special so-called "apostles" of yours! ⁶ Perhaps I am an amateur in speaking, but certainly not in knowledge; we have made this clear to you at all times and in all conditions. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

⁷ I did not charge you a thing when I preached the Good News of God to you; I humbled myself in order to make you important. Was that wrong of me? ⁸ While I was working among you, I was paid by other churches. I was robbing them, so to speak, in order to help you. ⁹ And during the time I was with you I did not bother you for help when I needed money; the believers who came from Macedonia brought me everything I needed. As in the past, so in the future: I will never be a burden to you! ¹⁰ By Christ's truth in me, I promise that this boast of mine will not be silenced anywhere in all of Achaia. ¹¹ Do I say this because I don't love you? God knows I love you! (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul then relates how his weakness, sacrifices and suffering should be taken as proof of his sincerity.

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STUDENT:

But if anyone dares to boast about something—I am talking like a fool—I will be just as daring. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. ²³ Are they Christ's servants? I sound like a madman—but I am a better servant than they are! I have worked much harder, I have been in prison more times, I have been whipped much more, and I have been near death more often. ²⁴ Five times I was given the thirty-nine lashes by the Jews; ²⁵ three times I was whipped by the Romans; and once I was stoned. I have been in three shipwrecks, and once I spent twenty-four hours in the water. (GNT)

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STUDENT:

²⁶ In my many travels I have been in danger from floods and from robbers, in danger from my own people and from Gentiles; there have been dangers in the cities, dangers in the wilds, dangers on the high seas, and dangers from false friends. ²⁷ There has been work and toil; often I have gone without sleep; I have been hungry and thirsty; I have often been without enough food, shelter, or clothing. ²⁸ And not to mention other things, every day I am under the pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ When someone is weak, then I feel weak too; when someone is led into sin, I am filled with distress. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul left 1 thing off his list of sufferings. This was around 55 AD. He was already aware he was going to Rome. He was going to die. Not soon, but he knew.

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STUDENT:

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast about things that show how weak I am. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus—blessed be his name forever!—knows that I am not lying. ³² When I was in Damascus, the governor under King Aretas placed guards at the city gates to arrest me. ³³ But I was let down in a basket through an opening in the wall and escaped from him. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Now in chapter 12, Paul talks about a vision or real life experience, he does not know for sure.

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STUDENT:

² I know a certain Christian man who fourteen years ago was snatched up to the highest heaven (I do not know whether this actually happened or whether he had a vision—only God knows). ³⁻⁴ I repeat, I know that this man was snatched to Paradise (again, I do not know whether this actually happened or whether it was a vision—only God knows), and there he heard things which cannot be put into words, things that human lips may not speak. ⁵ So I will boast about this man—but I will not boast about myself, except the things that show how weak I am. ⁶ If I wanted to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be telling the truth. But I will not boast, because I do not want any of you to have a higher opinion of me than you have as a result of what you have seen me do and heard me say. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul then reveals that the man who had the experience, was in fact himself. And, that he received a physical ailment as a result, to keep him humble.

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STUDENT:

⁷ But to keep me from being puffed up with pride because of the many wonderful things I saw, I was given a painful physical ailment, which acts as Satan's messenger to beat me and keep me from being proud. ⁸ Three times I prayed to the Lord about this and asked him to take it away. ⁹ But his answer was: "My grace is all you need, for my power is greatest when you are weak." I am most happy, then, to be proud of my weaknesses, in order to feel the protection of Christ's power over me. ¹⁰ I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and difficulties for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Sometimes our weakness doesn't come from the Devil, or our enemies, sometimes our weakness comes from God. Why? As for me, I know I prayed a lot more in the hospital than I do in my backyard. God has used in my life sickness to get me to sit down and shut-up. And I thank Him for it. Full disclosure, sometimes it takes awhile.

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STUDENT:

We speak as Christ would have us speak in the presence of God, and everything we do, dear friends, is done to help you. ²⁰ I am afraid that when I get there I will find you different from what I would like you to be and you will find me different from what you would like me to be. I am afraid that I will find quarreling and jealousy, hot tempers and selfishness, insults and gossip, pride and disorder. ²¹ I am afraid that the next time I come my God will humiliate me in your presence, and I shall weep over many who sinned in the past and have not repented of the immoral things they have done—their lust and their sexual sins. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

As Paul closes with chapter 13 he lists some final thoughts and admonitions to prepare them for his 3rd visit.

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STUDENT:

This is now the third time that I am coming to visit you. "Any accusation must be upheld by the evidence of two or more witnesses"—as the scripture says. ² I want to tell those of you who have sinned in the past, and all the others; I said it before during my second visit to you, but I will say it again now that I am away: the next time I come nobody will escape punishment. ³ You will have all the proof you want that Christ speaks through me. When he deals with you, he is not weak; instead, he shows his power among you. ⁴ For even though it was in weakness that he was put to death on the cross, it is by God's power that he lives. In union with him we also are weak; but in our relations with you we shall share God's power in his life. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Paul wants them to make him proud, so he pleads with them to judge themselves.

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STUDENT:

⁵ Put yourselves to the test and judge yourselves, to find out whether you are living in faith. Surely you know that Christ Jesus is in you?—unless you have completely failed. ⁶ I trust you will know that we are not failures. ⁷ We pray to God that you will do no wrong—not in order to show that we are a success, but so that you may do what is right, even though we may seem to be failures. ⁸ For we cannot do a thing against the truth, but only for it. ⁹ We are glad when we are weak but you are strong. And so we also pray that you will become perfect. ¹⁰ That is why I write this while I am away from you; it is so that when I arrive I will not have to deal harshly with you in using the authority that the Lord has given me—authority to build you up, not to tear you down. (GNT)

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TEACHER:

Good advice, judge yourselves so you need not be judged. Where is that reference from? Sermon on the Mount.

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STUDENT:

¹¹ And now, my friends, good-bye! Strive for perfection; listen to my appeals; agree with one another; live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet one another with the kiss of peace.

All of God's people send you their greetings. ¹³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (GNT)

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NEXT LESSON GALATIANS

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*Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a
new creature.*

*Old things are passed away. Look, all things
are become new."*

2 Corinthians 5:17





