

Worksheet #12: 2 Corinthians 12:14–13:13

Summary:

As Paul closes the book of 2 Corinthians, he reemphasizes that he and his associates did not take advantage of the Corinthians in their ministry among them (12:17). Confident that his assessment of the church at Corinth will hold up to thorough examination, Paul looks forward to his upcoming visit with the Corinthians as a time when all his claims will be verified by others (13:1) and during which he will again minister to their needs (12:14–15).

In his concluding exhortations, Paul issues stern warnings to the Corinthians: they are to “examine,” “test,” and “know” themselves to determine whether “Jesus Christ is in you” or they are “disqualified” (13:5). Paul is concerned that the Corinthians become “complete” (13:9, 11). He desires that their conduct would evidence that their hearts had been filled with the “grace” of Christ Jesus, the “love” of the Father, and the “fellowship” of the Holy Spirit (13:14), Trinitarian graces that the Corinthian church sorely lacked.

Abbreviated Outline¹ (current passage in bold):

- I. Introduction (1:1–11)
- II. Paul’s Relationship with the Corinthians (1:12–2:11)
- III. Paul’s Defense of his Ministry (2:12–7:16)
- IV. The Collection for the Believers in Jerusalem (8:1–9:15)
- V. **Paul’s Renewed Defense of his Apostleship (10:1–13:4)**
 - A. The Tone of Paul’s Appeal (10:1–11)
 - B. Divine Commendation of Paul’s Ministry (10:12–18)
 - C. Danger of the False Apostles (11:1–15)
 - D. Paul’s Sufferings (11:16–33)
 - E. Paul’s Visions and Revelations (12:1–10)
 - F. Paul’s Miracles (12:11–13)
 - G. **Paul’s Final Defense (12:14–13:4)**
- VI. **Final Exhortations (13:5–12)**
- VII. **Closing (13:13)**

¹ Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 484.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. What goal does Paul likely have in mind when he says, “I do not seek yours, but you” (12:14)? How does the context help you answer this question?

2. How does Paul respond to the accusation that he had craftily “caught [the Corinthians] by cunning” (12:16)?

3. If Paul is “speak[ing] before God in Christ,” what is his claim in 12:19–21?

4. How does Paul intend for the Corinthians to react to his warnings in 13:1–2?

5. What is Paul’s point by portraying Christ as both “crucified in weakness” and alive “by the power of God” (13:4)?

6. Is Paul certain that all those affiliated with the church at Corinth are believers in Christ (13:5)? How does his confidence in his own qualifications (13:6) relate to his command that the Corinthians examine themselves?

7. How would it be possible for Paul to “seem disqualified” by the Corinthians’ conduct (13:8)?

8. What motivates Paul’s stern warnings in this passage (13:9–10)?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?
