**The Second to the Corinthians**

**Outline of Contents**

**Chapter 1**

Greetings (verses 1, 2)

Comfort from God in all tribulation (verses 3-11)

Change in Paul’s travel plans (verses 12-24)

**Chapter 2**

Paul’s intention to bring joy (verses 1-4)

A sinner forgiven and reinstated (verses 5-11)

Paul in Troas and Macedonia (verses 12, 13)

The ministry, a triumphal procession (verses 14-17)

Not peddlers of God’s word (verse 17)

**Chapter 3**

Letters of recommendation (verses 1-3)

Ministers of the new covenant (verses 4-6)

New covenant’s superior glory (verses 7-18)

**Chapter 4**

Light of the good news (verses 1-6)

Unbelievers’ minds blinded (verse 4)

Treasure in earthen vessels (verses 7-18)

**Chapter 5**

Putting on the heavenly dwelling (verses 1-10)

Ministry of reconciliation (verses 11-21)

A new creation (verse 17)

Ambassadors for Christ (verse 20)

**Chapter 6**

God’s kindness not to be misused (verses 1, 2)

Paul’s ministry described (verses 3-13)

Do not become unevenly yoked (verses 14-18)

**Chapter 7**

Cleanse ourselves of defilement (verse 1)

Paul’s joy over the Corinthians (verses 2-4)

Titus brings a good report (verses 5-7)

Godly sadness and repentance (verses 8-16)

**Chapter 8**

Collection for Judean Christians (verses 1-15)

Titus to be sent to Corinth (verses 16-24)

**Chapter 9**

Motivation for giving (verses 1-15)

God loves a cheerful giver (verse 7)

**Chapter 10**

Paul defends his ministry (verses 1-18)

Our weapons not fleshly (verses 4, 5)

**Chapter 11**

Paul and the superfine apostles (verses 1-15)

Paul’s hardships as an apostle (verses 16-33)

**Chapter 12**

Paul’s visions (verses 1-7a)

Paul’s “thorn in the flesh” (verses 7b-10)

Not inferior to superfine apostles (verses 11-13)

Paul’s concern for the Corinthians (verses 14-21)

**Chapter 13**

Final warnings and exhortations (verses 1-14)

“Keep testing whether you are in the faith” (verse 5)

Be readjusted; think in agreement (verse 11)

**Chapter 1**

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through God’s will, and Timothy our brother, to the congregation of God that is in Corinth, including all the holy ones who are in all Achaʹia:

2 May you have undeserved kindness and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3 Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our trials so that we may be able to comfort others in any sort of trial with the comfort that we receive from God. 5 For just as the sufferings for the Christ abound in us, so the comfort we receive through the Christ also abounds. 6 Now if we face trials, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are being comforted, it is for your comfort, which acts to help you to endure the same sufferings that we also suffer. 7 And our hope for you is unwavering, knowing as we do that just as you share in the sufferings, so you will also share in the comfort.

8 For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the tribulation we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under extreme pressure beyond our own strength, so that we were very uncertain even of our lives. 9 In fact, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. This was so that we would trust, not in ourselves, but in the God who raises up the dead. 10 From such a great risk of death he did rescue us and will rescue us, and our hope is in him that he will also continue to rescue us. 11 You also can help us by your supplication for us, in order that many may give thanks in our behalf for the favor we receive in answer to the prayers of many.

12 For the thing we boast of is this, our conscience bears witness that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially toward you, with holiness and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but with God’s undeserved kindness. 13 For we are really not writing you about anything except what you can read and understand, and I hope you will continue to understand these things fully, 14 just as you have also understood to an extent that we are a cause for you to boast, just as you will also be for us in the day of our Lord Jesus.

15 So with this confidence, I was intending to come first to you, so that you might have a second occasion for joy; 16 for I intended to visit you on my way to Macedoʹnia, to return to you from Macedoʹnia, and then to have you send me off to Judeʹa. 17 Well, when I had such an intention, I did not view the matter lightly, did I? Or do I purpose things in a fleshly way, so that I am saying “Yes, yes” and then “No, no”? 18 But God can be relied on that what we say to you is not “yes” and yet “no.” 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you through us, that is, through me and Silvaʹnus and Timothy, did not become “yes” and yet “no,” but “yes” has become “yes” in his case. 20 For no matter how many the promises of God are, they have become “yes” by means of him. Therefore, also through him is the “Amen” said to God, which brings him glory through us. 21 But the one who guarantees that you and we belong to Christ and the one who anointed us is God. 22 He has also put his seal on us and has given us the token of what is to come, that is, the spirit, in our hearts.

23 Now I call on God as a witness against me that it is to spare you that I have not yet come to Corinth. 24 Not that we are the masters over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy, for it is by your faith that you are standing.

**Chapter 2**

1 For I have made up my mind not to come to you again in sadness. 2 For if I make you sad, who will be there to cheer me up except the one I saddened? 3 I wrote what I did, so that when I come I may not be saddened by those over whom I ought to rejoice, because I have confidence that what brings me joy brings all of you the same joy. 4 For out of much tribulation and anguish of heart I wrote you with many tears, not to sadden you, but to let you know the depth of love I have for you.

5 Now if anyone has caused sadness, he has saddened, not me, but all of you to an extent—not to be too harsh in what I say. 6 This rebuke given by the majority is sufficient for such a man; 7 now you should instead kindly forgive and comfort him, so that he may not be overwhelmed by excessive sadness. 8 I therefore exhort you to confirm your love for him. 9 For this is also why I wrote to you: to determine whether you would give proof of your obedience in all things. 10 If you forgive anyone for anything, I do also. In fact, whatever I have forgiven (if I have forgiven anything) has been for your sake in Christ’s sight, 11 so that we may not be overreached by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs.

12 Now when I arrived in Troʹas to declare the good news about the Christ and a door was opened to me in the Lord, 13 my spirit felt no relief because of not finding Titus my brother. So I said good-bye to them and departed for Macedoʹnia.

14 But thanks be to God, who always leads us in a triumphal procession in company with the Christ and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him in every place! 15 For to God we are a sweet fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 to the latter ones an odor of death leading to death, to the former ones a fragrance of life leading to life. And who is adequately qualified for these things? 17 We are, for we are not peddlers of the word of God as many men are, but we speak in all sincerity as sent from God, yes, in the sight of God and in company with Christ.

**Chapter 3**

1 Are we starting to recommend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some men, letters of recommendation to you or from you? 2 You yourselves are our letter, inscribed on our hearts and known and being read by all mankind. 3 For you are shown to be a letter of Christ written by us as ministers, inscribed not with ink but with the spirit of a living God, not on stone tablets but on fleshly tablets, on hearts.

4 We have this sort of confidence toward God through the Christ. 5 Not that we of ourselves are adequately qualified to consider that anything comes from us, but our being adequately qualified comes from God, 6 who has indeed adequately qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not of a written code, but of spirit; for the written code condemns to death, but the spirit makes alive.

7 Now if the code that administers death and that was engraved in letters on stones came with such glory that the sons of Israel could not gaze at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, a glory that was to be done away with, 8 why should the administering of the spirit not be with even greater glory? 9 For if the code administering condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious would be the administering of righteousness! 10 In fact, even what had once been made glorious has been stripped of glory because of the glory that excels it. 11 For if what was to be done away with was brought in with glory, how much greater would be the glory of what remains!

12 Since we have such a hope, we are using great freeness of speech, 13 and not doing what Moses did when he would put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel might not gaze intently at the end of what was to be done away with. 14 But their minds were dulled. For to this present day, the same veil remains unlifted when the old covenant is read, because it is taken away only by means of Christ. 15 In fact, to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies upon their hearts. 16 But when one turns to Jehovah, the veil is taken away. 17 Now Jehovah is the Spirit, and where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom. 18 And all of us, while we with unveiled faces reflect like mirrors the glory of Jehovah, are transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, exactly as it is done by Jehovah the Spirit.

**Chapter 4**

1 Therefore, since we have this ministry through the mercy that was shown us, we do not give up. 2 But we have renounced the shameful, underhanded things, not walking with cunning or adulterating the word of God; but by making the truth manifest, we recommend ourselves to every human conscience in the sight of God. 3 If, in fact, the good news we declare is veiled, it is veiled among those who are perishing, 4 among whom the god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, so that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through. 5 For we are preaching, not about ourselves, but about Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus’ sake. 6 For God is the one who said: “Let the light shine out of darkness,” and he has shone on our hearts to illuminate them with the glorious knowledge of God by the face of Christ.

7 However, we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the power beyond what is normal may be God’s and not from us. 8 We are hard-pressed in every way, but not cramped beyond movement; we are perplexed, but not absolutely with no way out; 9 we are persecuted, but not abandoned; we are knocked down, but not destroyed. 10 Always we endure in our body the death-dealing treatment that Jesus suffered, that the life of Jesus may also be made manifest in our body. 11 For we who live are ever being brought face-to-face with death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus may also be made manifest in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.

13 Now because we have the same spirit of faith as that of which it is written: “I exercised faith, therefore I spoke”; we too exercise faith and therefore we speak, 14 knowing that the One who raised Jesus up will raise us up also with Jesus and will present us together with you. 15 For all these things are for your sake, so that the increase of the undeserved kindness should abound even more because many more are offering thanksgiving to the glory of God.

16 Therefore, we do not give up, but even if the man we are outside is wasting away, certainly the man we are inside is being renewed from day to day. 17 For though the tribulation is momentary and light, it works out for us a glory that is of more and more surpassing greatness and is everlasting; 18 while we keep our eyes, not on the things seen, but on the things unseen. For the things seen are temporary, but the things unseen are everlasting.

**Chapter 5**

1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, should be torn down, we are to have a building from God, a house not made with hands, everlasting in the heavens. 2 For in this house we do indeed groan, earnestly desiring to put on the one for us from heaven, 3 so that when we do put it on, we will not be found naked. 4 In fact, we who are in this tent groan, being weighed down, because we do not want to put this one off, but we want to put the other on, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now the one who prepared us for this very thing is God, who gave us the spirit as a token of what is to come.

6 So we are always of good courage and know that while we have our home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, 7 for we are walking by faith, not by sight. 8 But we are of good courage and would prefer to be absent from the body and to make our home with the Lord. 9 So whether at home with him or absent from him, we make it our aim to be acceptable to him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of the Christ, so that each one may be repaid according to the things he has practiced while in the body, whether good or bad.

11 Therefore, since we know the fear of the Lord, we keep persuading men, but we are well-known to God. However, I hope that we are well-known also to your consciences. 12 We are not recommending ourselves to you again but giving you an incentive to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast over the outward appearance but not over what is in the heart. 13 For if we were out of our mind, it was for God; if we are sound in mind, it is for you. 14 For the love the Christ has compels us, because this is what we have concluded, that one man died for all; so, then, all had died. 15 And he died for all so that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised up.

16 So from now on we know no man from a fleshly viewpoint. Even if we once knew Christ according to the flesh, we certainly no longer know him in that way. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in union with Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; look! new things have come into existence. 18 But all things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of the reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was by means of Christ reconciling a world to himself, not counting their offenses against them, and he entrusted to us the message of the reconciliation.

20 Therefore, we are ambassadors substituting for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us. As substitutes for Christ, we beg: “Become reconciled to God.” 21 The one who did not know sin, he made to be sin for us, so that by means of him we might become God’s righteousness.

**Chapter 6**

1 Working together with him, we also urge you not to accept the undeserved kindness of God and miss its purpose. 2 For he says: “In an acceptable time I heard you, and in a day of salvation I helped you.” Look! Now is the especially acceptable time. Look! Now is the day of salvation.

3 In no way are we giving any cause for stumbling, so that no fault may be found with our ministry; 4 but in every way we recommend ourselves as God’s ministers, by the endurance of much, by tribulations, by times of need, by difficulties, 5 by beatings, by imprisonments, by riots, by hard work, by sleepless nights, by times without food; 6 by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by kindness, by holy spirit, by love free from hypocrisy, 7 by truthful speech, by God’s power; through the weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left, 8 through glory and dishonor, through bad report and good report. We are regarded as deceivers and yet we are truthful, 9 as unknown and yet we are recognized, as dying and yet look! we live, as punished and yet not handed over to death, 10 as sorrowing but ever rejoicing, as poor but making many rich, as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

11 We have opened our mouth to speak to you, Corinthians, and we have opened wide our heart. 12 We are not restricted in our affections for you, but you are restricted in your own tender affections for us. 13 So in response—I speak as to my children—you too open your hearts wide.

14 Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness? 15 Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Beʹlial? Or what does a believer share in common with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement does God’s temple have with idols? For we are a temple of a living God; just as God said: “I will reside among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” 17 “‘Therefore, get out from among them, and separate yourselves,’ says Jehovah, ‘and quit touching the unclean thing’”; “‘and I will take you in.’” 18 “‘And I will become a father to you, and you will become sons and daughters to me,’ says Jehovah, the Almighty.”

**Chapter 7**

1 Therefore, since we have these promises, beloved ones, let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. 3 I do not say this to condemn you. For I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together. 4 I have great freeness of speech toward you. I have great boasting in regard to you. I am filled with comfort; I am overflowing with joy in all our affliction.

5 In fact, when we arrived in Macedoʹnia, our bodies got no relief, but we continued to be afflicted in every way—there were fights on the outside, fears within. 6 But God, who comforts those who are downhearted, comforted us by the presence of Titus; 7 and not only by his presence but also by the comfort he received because of you, as he reported back to us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, and your earnest concern for me; so I rejoiced even more.

8 For even if I saddened you by my letter, I do not regret it. Even if I did at first regret it (seeing that the letter saddened you, though only for a little while), 9 now I rejoice, not because you were just saddened, but because you were saddened into repenting. For you were saddened in a godly way, so that you suffered no harm because of us. 10 For sadness in a godly way produces repentance leading to salvation, leaving no regret; but the sadness of the world produces death. 11 For see what a great earnestness your being saddened in a godly way produced in you, yes, clearing of yourselves, yes, indignation, yes, fear, yes, earnest desire, yes, zeal, yes, righting of the wrong! In every respect you demonstrated yourselves to be pure in this matter. 12 Although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the one who did the wrong, nor for the one who was wronged, but so that your earnestness for us might be made evident among you in the sight of God. 13 That is why we have been comforted.

But in addition to our comfort, we rejoiced even more over the joy of Titus, because all of you refreshed his spirit. 14 For if I have boasted to him about you, I have not been put to shame; but just as all the things we told you were true, so also our boasting to Titus has proved true. 15 Also, his tender affections toward you are greater as he remembers the obedience of all of you, how you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice that in every way I may have confidence in you.

**Chapter 8**

1 Now we want you to know, brothers, about the undeserved kindness of God that has been granted to the congregations of Macedoʹnia. 2 During a great test under affliction, their abundance of joy and their deep poverty made the riches of their generosity abound. 3 For it was according to their means, yes, I testify, it was even beyond their means, 4 while they on their own initiative kept earnestly begging us for the privilege of kindly giving, to have a share in the relief ministry for the holy ones. 5 And not merely as we had hoped, but first they gave themselves to the Lord and to us through God’s will. 6 So we encouraged Titus that, just as he had initiated this work among you, he should also complete this same kind giving on your part. 7 Nevertheless, just as you abound in everything, in faith and word and knowledge and all earnestness and in our love for you, may you also abound in this kind giving.

8 I am saying this, not to command you, but to make you aware of the earnestness of others and to test the genuineness of your love. 9 For you know the undeserved kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, that although he was rich, he became poor for your sake, so that you might become rich through his poverty.

10 And in this I give my opinion: This is for your benefit, seeing that already a year ago you not only initiated the action but also showed your desire to do it. 11 So now, also complete what you started to do, so that your readiness to act may be completed according to the means you have available. 12 For if the readiness is there first, it is especially acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what a person does not have. 13 For I do not want to make it easy for others, but difficult for you; 14 but that by means of an equalizing, your surplus at the present time might offset their need, so that their surplus might also offset your deficiency, that there may be an equalizing. 15 Just as it is written: “The person with much did not have too much, and the person with little did not have too little.”

16 Now thanks be to God for putting the same earnest concern for you in the heart of Titus, 17 because he has indeed responded to the encouragement, but being very eager, he is coming to you on his own initiative. 18 But we are sending along with him the brother whose praise in connection with the good news has spread through all the congregations. 19 Not only that, but he was also appointed by the congregations to be our traveling companion as we administer this kind gift for the glory of the Lord and in proof of our readiness to assist. 20 Thus we are avoiding having any man find fault with us in connection with this liberal contribution that we are administering. 21 For we ‘care for everything honestly, not only in the sight of Jehovah but also in the sight of men.’

22 Moreover, we are sending with them our brother whom we have often tested and found to be diligent in many matters, but now much more diligent on account of his great confidence in you. 23 If, though, there is any question about Titus, he is my companion and a fellow worker for your interests; or if there are questions about our brothers, they are apostles of congregations and a glory of Christ. 24 So demonstrate the proof of your love to them, and show the congregations why we boasted about you.

**Chapter 9**

1 Now concerning the ministry that is for the holy ones, it is not really necessary for me to write you, 2 for I know your willingness about which I am boasting to the Macedoʹnians, that Achaʹia has been ready now for a year, and your zeal has stirred up the majority of them. 3 But I am sending the brothers, so that our boasting about you might not prove empty in this respect and that you may really be ready, just as I said you would be. 4 Otherwise, if the Macedoʹnians should come with me and find you not ready, we—not to mention you—should be put to shame by our confidence in you. 5 So I thought it necessary to encourage the brothers to come to you ahead of time and to get your promised bountiful gift ready in advance, so that this might be ready as a generous gift, and not as something extorted.

6 But as to this, whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

8 Moreover, God is able to cause all his undeserved kindness to abound toward you so that you are always completely self-sufficient in everything, as well as having plenty for every good work. 9 (Just as it is written: “He has distributed widely; he has given to the poor. His righteousness continues forever.” 10 Now the One who abundantly supplies seed to the sower and bread for eating will supply and multiply the seed for you to sow and will increase the harvest of your righteousness.) 11 In everything you are being enriched for every sort of generosity, which produces through us an expression of thanks to God; 12 because the ministry of this public service is not only to provide well for the needs of the holy ones but also to be rich in many expressions of thanks to God. 13 Through the proof that this relief ministry gives, they glorify God because you are submissive to the good news about the Christ, as you publicly declared, and because you are generous in your contribution to them and to all. 14 And with supplication for you, they express affection for you because of the surpassing undeserved kindness of God upon you.

15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable free gift.

**Chapter 10**

1 Now I myself, Paul, appeal to you by the mildness and kindness of the Christ, lowly though I am when among you face-to-face, but bold toward you when absent. 2 I beg that when present, I may not have to be bold and take the strong measures that I expect against some who view us as if we walked in a fleshly manner. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not wage warfare according to what we are in the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful by God for overturning strongly entrenched things. 5 For we are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are bringing every thought into captivity to make it obedient to the Christ; 6 and we are prepared to inflict punishment for every disobedience, as soon as your own obedience is complete.

7 You look at things according to their face value. If anyone is confident in himself that he belongs to Christ, let him reflect again on this fact: Just as he belongs to Christ, so do we also. 8 For even if I should boast a bit too much about the authority that the Lord gave us to build you up and not to tear you down, I would not be put to shame. 9 For I do not want to seem as though I were trying to terrify you by my letters. 10 For they say: “His letters are weighty and forceful, but his presence in person is weak and his speech contemptible.” 11 Let such a man consider that what we say by letters when absent, this we will also do when present. 12 For we do not dare to class ourselves or compare ourselves with some who recommend themselves. But when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

13 However, we will not boast outside our assigned boundaries, but within the boundary of the territory that God measured out to us, making it reach even as far as you. 14 Really, we are not overextending ourselves as if we did not reach you, for we were the first to reach as far as you with the good news about the Christ. 15 No, we are not boasting outside our assigned boundaries about the labors of someone else, but we hope that as your faith continues to increase, what we have done may be made to increase, within our territory. Then we will abound still more, 16 so that we may declare the good news to the countries beyond you, so as not to boast in what has already been done in someone else’s territory. 17 “But the one who boasts, let him boast in Jehovah.” 18 For it is not the one who recommends himself who is approved, but the one whom Jehovah recommends.

**Chapter 11**

1 I wish you would put up with me in a little unreasonableness. But, in fact, you are putting up with me! 2 For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I personally promised you in marriage to one husband that I might present you as a chaste virgin to the Christ. 3 But I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent seduced Eve by its cunning, your minds might be corrupted away from the sincerity and the chastity that are due the Christ. 4 For as it is, if someone comes and preaches a Jesus other than the one we preached, or you receive a spirit other than what you received, or good news other than what you accepted, you easily put up with him. 5 For I consider that I have not proved inferior to your superfine apostles in a single thing. 6 But even if I am unskilled in speech, I certainly am not in knowledge; indeed we made it clear to you in every way and in everything.

7 Or did I commit a sin by humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I gladly declared the good news of God to you without cost? 8 Other congregations I deprived by accepting provisions in order to minister to you. 9 Yet, when I was present with you and I fell into need, I did not become a burden on anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedoʹnia abundantly supplied my needs. Yes, in every way I kept myself from becoming a burden to you and will continue to do so. 10 As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, I will not stop this boasting in the regions of Achaʹia. 11 For what reason? Because I do not love you? God knows I do.

12 But what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to eliminate the pretext of those who are wanting a basis for being found equal to us in the things about which they boast. 13 For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder, for Satan himself keeps disguising himself as an angel of light. 15 It is therefore nothing extraordinary if his ministers also keep disguising themselves as ministers of righteousness. But their end will be according to their works.

16 I say again: Let no one think I am unreasonable. But even if you do, then accept me as an unreasonable person, so that I too may boast a little. 17 What I now say is, not as following the Lord’s example, but as an unreasonable person would, with boastful self-confidence. 18 Since many are boasting according to the flesh, I too will boast. 19 Since you are so “reasonable,” you gladly put up with the unreasonable ones. 20 In fact, you put up with whoever enslaves you, whoever devours your possessions, whoever grabs what you have, whoever exalts himself over you, and whoever strikes you in the face.

21 I say this to our dishonor, since it may seem that we have acted in weakness.

But if others act boldly—I am talking unreasonably—I too act boldly. 22 Are they Hebrews? I am one also. Are they Israelites? I am one also. Are they Abraham’s offspring? I am also. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? I reply like a madman, I am more outstandingly one: I have done more work, been imprisoned more often, suffered countless beatings, and experienced many near-deaths. 24 Five times I received 40 strokes less one from the Jews, 25 three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I experienced shipwreck, a night and a day I have spent in the open sea; 26 in journeys often, in dangers from rivers, in dangers from robbers, in dangers from my own people, in dangers from the nations, in dangers in the city, in dangers in the wilderness, in dangers at sea, in dangers among false brothers, 27 in labor and toil, in sleepless nights often, in hunger and thirst, frequently without food, in cold and lacking clothing.

28 Besides those things of an external kind, there is what rushes in on me from day to day: the anxiety for all the congregations. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I am not incensed?

30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, the One who is to be praised forever, knows I am not lying. 32 In Damascus the governor under Areʹtas the king was guarding the city of the Damascenesʹ to seize me, 33 but I was lowered in a basket through a window in the city wall, and I escaped his hands.

**Chapter 12**

1 I have to boast. It is not beneficial, but I will move on to supernatural visions and revelations of the Lord. 2 I know a man in union with Christ who, 14 years ago—whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know; God knows—was caught away to the third heaven. 3 Yes, I know such a man—whether in the body or apart from the body, I do not know; God knows— 4 who was caught away into paradise and heard words that cannot be spoken and that are not lawful for a man to say. 5 I will boast about such a man, but I will not boast about myself except of my weaknesses. 6 For even if I want to boast, I will not be unreasonable, for I would say the truth. But I refrain from doing so, in order that no one should give me more credit than what he sees in me or hears from me, 7 just because of receiving such extraordinary revelations.

To keep me from becoming overly exalted, I was given a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan, to keep slapping me, so that I might not be overly exalted. 8 Three times I begged the Lord about this, that it would depart from me. 9 But he said to me: “My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you, for my power is being made perfect in weakness.” Most gladly, then, I will boast about my weaknesses, in order that the power of the Christ may remain over me like a tent. 10 So I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in times of need, in persecutions and difficulties, for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am powerful.

11 I have become unreasonable. You compelled me to, for I ought to have been recommended by you. For I did not prove to be inferior to your superfine apostles in a single thing, even if I am nothing. 12 Indeed, the signs of an apostle were produced among you with great endurance, and by signs and wonders and powerful works. 13 For how were you less favored than the rest of the congregations, except that I myself did not become a burden to you? Kindly forgive me for this wrong.

14 Look! This is the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not become a burden. For I am seeking, not your possessions, but you; for the children are not expected to save up for their parents, but the parents for their children. 15 For my part, I will most gladly spend and be completely spent for you. If I love you so much more, am I to be loved the less? 16 But be that as it may, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, you say I was “crafty” and I caught you “by trickery.” 17 I did not take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you, did I? 18 I urged Titus and I sent the brother with him. Titus did not take advantage of you at all, did he? We walked in the same spirit, did we not? In the same footsteps, did we not?

19 Have you been thinking all along that we have been making our defense to you? It is before God that we are speaking in union with Christ. But, beloved ones, all that we do is to build you up. 20 For I am afraid that somehow when I arrive, I may not find you as I wish and I may not be as you wish, but instead, there may be strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, dissension, backbiting, whispering, being puffed up with pride, and disorder. 21 Perhaps when I come again, my God might humiliate me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who previously sinned but have not repented of their uncleanness and sexual immorality and brazen conduct that they have practiced.

**Chapter 13**

1 This is the third time I am coming to you. “On the testimony of two or three witnesses every matter must be established.” 2 Although I am absent now, it is as if I were present for the second time, and I give my warning in advance to those who sinned previously and to all the rest, that if ever I come again I will not spare them, 3 since you are seeking proof that Christ, who is not weak toward you but strong among you, is really speaking through me. 4 For, indeed, he was executed on the stake because of weakness, but he is alive because of God’s power. True, we also are weak with him, but we will live together with him because of God’s power toward you.

5 Keep testing whether you are in the faith; keep proving what you yourselves are. Or do you not recognize that Jesus Christ is in union with you? Unless you are disapproved. 6 I truly hope you will recognize that we are not disapproved.

7 Now we pray to God that you may do nothing wrong, not that we may appear approved, but that you may do what is fine, even if we may appear disapproved. 8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth. 9 We certainly rejoice whenever we are weak but you are powerful. And this is what we are praying for, your being readjusted. 10 That is why I write these things while absent, so that when I am present, I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord gave me, to build up and not to tear down.

11 Finally, brothers, continue to rejoice, to be readjusted, to be comforted, to think in agreement, to live peaceably; and the God of love and of peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. 13 All the holy ones send you their greetings.

14 The undeserved kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the sharing in the holy spirit be with all of you.