

**This book is one of the letters
that the Apostle Paul wrote to
the Christians at Corinth. We
call this book
2 Corinthians**

2 Corinthians 1:1-2

Paul and Timothy greet the Christians who are in Corinth.

¹ *I, Paul, who write this letter to you, became an apostle of Christ Jesus because God chose me for that. Timothy, our fellow believer, is with me. I am sending this letter to you who are God's people in the congregations in Corinth city. I want the believers who live in other places in Achaia province to also read this letter.*

² *We(exc) desire that you will experience God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ acting kindly toward you and causing you to have inner peace.*

We thank God that he encourages us in all our troubles so that we are able to encourage you when you suffer. We suffered so much in Asia province that we were sure that we were going to die, but we learned to trust in God. He saved us from death and he will continue to save us from death.

2 Corinthians 1:3-11

³ *We should praise God, who is the father of our (inc) Lord Jesus Christ. He always pities us*

and helps us *because he is like* [MET] a father to us *and we are like his children*. He always encourages us (*inc*).

⁴ He has encouraged us (*exc*) whenever we suffered hardships. As a result, we (*exc*) are able to encourage others whenever they suffer hardships, just as/just like God has encouraged us (*exc*).

⁵ It is true that just like Christ suffered, we *who serve him* also continually suffer *because we belong to him*. But also, because we *belong to Christ*, God greatly strengthens us ◀just as/just like▶ *God strengthened him*.

⁶ So, whenever we (*exc*) experience sufferings, we *learn how to encourage you when you experience sufferings*. As a result, you will become more and more the kind of people God wants you to be. Whenever God strengthens us (*exc*) when we are suffering, he does that in order that you may see how he makes us strong when we are suffering. Then, as God encourages you in that way, you will learn to continue patiently trusting him when you suffer as we do.

⁷ As a result, we (*exc*) strongly expect that because you suffer just as/just like we do, God will encourage you ◀just as/just like▶ he encourages us.

⁸ Our fellow believers, we (*exc*) want you to know [LIT] about the trouble that we suffered in Asia *province*. That trouble was so very great that it was much more than we were able to endure. As a result, we (*exc*) thought that we would certainly die.

⁹ Indeed, we felt *like a person feels when he has heard a judge say, "I condemn you to die/ be executed [MET]."* But *God allowed us to think that we were going to die* so that we would not ◀rely on/trust in▶ our own strength. He wanted us instead to rely only on his strength, because he is the one who has power even to make those who have died live again.

¹⁰ And even though we (exc) were in terrible danger and were about to die, God rescued us. And he will continue to rescue us *whenever we are in trouble*. We confidently expect that he will continue to rescue us *time after time*.

¹¹ And we are also relying on you to help us by praying for us (exc). *If many people pray for us, many people will also thank God when he kindly answers those many prayers and delivers us from danger.*

You can trust what I tell you. I did not visit you, because I wanted to give you the opportunity to obey the instructions that I wrote to you. Now that you have punished enough the man who caused those problems, I urge you to forgive him and to encourage him.

2 Corinthians 1:12—2:11

¹² I am happy to say that I have behaved toward all people [MTY] in an honest and sincere way. My conscience assures me *that this is true*. Especially, I have behaved toward you *honestly and sincerely because that is what God wants us to do*. As I have done that, *my thoughts* have not been the thoughts that unbelieving people [MTY] *think are wise*. Instead, *I have behaved toward*

people only as God wants me to, depending on God to help me in ways that I do not deserve.

¹³ *I say that because in all my letters to you I have always written [LIT] clearly in a way that you can easily and completely understand when you read them.*

¹⁴ *Previously some of you, but not all of you, have completely understood that I am always honest and sincere with you. But I confidently expect that soon you will all be fully convinced about that. Then when the Lord Jesus [MTY] returns, you will all be able to say that you are pleased with me, just like I will be able to say that I am pleased with you.*

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ *It was because I felt sure that all of you were pleased with me that I was planning to visit you on my way from here to Macedonia province. I also planned to visit you again on my way back from there, so that I could spend time with you twice, and be able to help you more, and I was hoping that you would give me things that I needed [EUP] for my journey to Judea province.*

¹⁷ *So then, even though I changed my mind later and did not do what I first planned to do, it was not because I did not have an important reason for changing my plans. Surely you do not really think that I decide what I am going to do like people who do not know God do! [RHQ] I am not like that. I am not a person who says to people, "Yes, certainly I will do that," and then for no good reason changes his mind and says, "No, I will not do it."*

¹⁸ *Just as surely as God always does what he*

says *he will do, it is true that I have never said, "Yes, I will do this" when I really meant "No."*

¹⁹ *I follow the example of God's Son, Jesus Christ. When I, along with Silas and Timothy, taught you about Christ, we told you that he was not someone who said that he would do something and then did not do it. Jesus Christ never said to anyone, "Yes, I will do what you desire," and then did not do it.*

²⁰ *We(inc) know that is true, because everything that God promised to do for his people, he has done completely by sending Christ to save us. That is why we say, "Yes, it is true! God has done everything that he promised to do!" And we praise him for that!*

²¹ *Now it is only God himself who causes us (exc), as well as you, to keep on believing strongly in Christ. God is the one who chose us (inc) to belong to him and to have a close relationship with Christ.*

²² *He also sent his Holy Spirit into our (inc) lives to mark us as belonging to himself [MET]. Also, since he has sent his Spirit to live in us (inc), he wants us to know by this that he guarantees [MET] to give us every other ◀blessing/good thing▶ that he has promised.*

²³ *So now I will tell you why I changed my mind and did not visit you as I intended to do: God himself knows that what I am telling you is true. The reason that I did not return to Corinth was so that I might not have to speak to you severely about the wrong that you had done.*

²⁴ *It is not that Silas, Timothy and I want to*

boss you *and tell you that you must believe only what we say. Not at all!* On the contrary, we (exc) are working as partners *with you* in order to make you happy. *We do not try to force you to believe everything that we believe, because we are sure that you are continuing to trust the Lord Jesus Christ* and that you are remaining firmly committed to him.

2

¹ Anyway, I definitely decided that I would not come to visit you again *now*. *If I had come, I would have spoken severely to you again, and I would have made you unhappy as I did the last time I visited you.*

² And if I make you unhappy, I will have made unhappy *the only people who can cheer me up*, so ◀there will be none of you to cheer me up!/who would cheer me up?▶ [RHQ]

³ So, *instead of going to visit you at that time*, I wrote a letter *and sent it to you*. I wrote it the way I did so that *you would know what you should do*. Then when I come to visit you, you will not make me unhappy when you should be causing me to rejoice. I was quite sure that all of you *would do what I told you to do in that letter, and because of that* I would be happy and you would be happy, too.

⁴ I wrote to you *the way I did* because I felt very troubled and distressed about you. I was even crying very much as I wrote. *My purpose in writing was* not in order to make you feel bad,

but, instead, in order that you might know how deeply/much I love you.

⁵ *Now I want to write about the man who caused all this anguish. What he did was very wrong, but I know that it has caused you much more sorrow than it has caused me, because what he did has affected all of you to some extent. I say, "to some extent," because I do not want to say that he has done more harm than he really has done.*

⁶ *Since he has now stopped sinning in that way, the punishment that nearly all of you decided was right for him has continued long enough.*

⁷ *So now, instead of punishing him any longer, you need to forgive him and deal kindly with him. If you do not forgive him, he may become so sad that he will begin to think that you will never forgive him (OR, will stop believing in Christ).*

⁸ *For those reasons, I beg you to forgive him and accept him into your group again, and by doing that assure him that you truly love him.*

⁹ *I feel sure that you will do as I ask, because when I wrote severely to you before, I did it to test you by finding out whether or not you really would do everything that I, as your apostle, asked you to do.*

¹⁰ *So since you obeyed what I told you before, I feel sure that now you will obey what I am writing in this letter and forgive the man, as I have done, because I indeed have forgiven him for the wrong thing that he did. Anything he needed me to forgive him for, I have forgiven, and Christ knows that I have forgiven him sincerely. I have*

done that mainly to help you so that you and I will again have fellowship with each other; and that you will accept him into your group again.

¹¹ *I want you to forgive him so that Satan will not be able to take advantage of the problems among us and make the situation worse. We know very well [LIT] that Satan is always planning to cause problems among us.*

I did not find Titus in Troas, so I went on to Macedonia province. Everywhere we go, God causes people to know Christ through our teaching. We do not teach in order to get money; we teach with sincere motives.

2 Corinthians 2:12-17

¹² *I will continue by telling you what I did after I wrote to you from Ephesus city. I went to Troas city in order to tell people the message about Christ. When I arrived there, I found many people who had been prepared by the Lord Jesus [MET] to listen to what I told them about him.*

¹³ *But because my fellow believer Titus had not arrived with a report from you, I still felt very anxious and concerned about you. So, after spending only a short time at Troas, I said goodbye to the believers who were there and came here to Macedonia province to find Titus.*

¹⁴ *However, before I tell you any more about that, I want to thank God for what he is doing. As a great leader of fighting men causes all his prisoners to take part in his victory parade [MET], God leads us who are his workers to always be victorious over Satan because of our(exc) close relationship with Christ. God causes people to*

come to know Jesus Christ as a result of our (exc) teaching his message. That message is like [MET] the smell of perfume.

¹⁵ *When we(exc) tell God's message about Christ, it spreads out among people like the smell of perfume. Those who believe the message that we tell them are saved {Jesus Christ saves them} from the guilt of their sin. But those who reject that message will be separated from God forever.*

¹⁶ *To those who are on the way to hell, our message is like [MET] a foul smell because it is about dying and being separated from God forever. But, to those on the way to heaven, the message that we teach is like a pure fragrant smell, because we tell them that they will live forever with God. As we think about that, we think ◀no one is able to do such important work for God!/how can anyone be able to do such important work for God?▶ [RHQ]*

¹⁷ *But perhaps God considers us(exc) able, because we do not work/act like so many others whom you know. They teach God's message in a way that they think people will like, and they think that people will pay them for teaching that way. We (exc) certainly do not do that. On the contrary, as servants of Christ, and knowing that God is watching us (exc), we teach sincerely the message that God sent us to proclaim.*

3

The way you now live proves that we teach the

truth about Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:1-6

¹ As I write these things about myself, I am [RHQ] not *doing it* to boast about how good I am, as some of you say I do. Some people always carry letters with them that tell how well they work, *that other people have written*. But I do not [RHQ] need to *bring* letters like that *when I come to you*. Nor do I need to ask you *to write* letters like that *for me when I go to other congregations*.

² You yourselves are [MET] *like a letter* that recommends my work *for God to everyone*. People see *how Christ changed your lives when you believed the message that I taught you*. Everyone *who knows you can see the result of my work for God*.

³ You are [MET] *like a letter* that Christ himself *has written* that says good things about *my work for God in your lives*. You show people *by the way you now conduct your lives that God has changed your lives as a result of my work among you*. People *did not find out about you by reading a letter that was written to them on paper with pen and ink*. Instead, *they saw how the Spirit of the all-powerful God has changed your lives*. Nor *did people find out about you by reading a letter that was carved on stone slabs like the stone slabs that God gave to Moses*. Instead, *it was the change that God's Spirit made in your lives [MET] that they saw*.

⁴ I can very confidently write these things about the work that Silas, Timothy, and I did among you, because God knows that what I write is true.

We(exc) are true workers for God because of what Christ has done for us.

⁵ *We (exc), by ourselves, do not have the ability to do this work. None of us apostles can say, "I have changed the lives of these people." God is the one who has given us this ability.*

⁶ *He is the one who enables us (exc) to be his messengers. He has enabled us to tell people the message about the new agreement that he is making with them. This is not a message about obeying all the written laws of his old agreement that he made with the Jewish people. Instead, it is a message about God giving us his Spirit. Previously, God condemned people to be separated from him forever if they did not obey his laws. But by God's new agreement his Spirit enables people to live eternally.*

Our work of teaching people about God's New Agreement is much greater than the work of teaching people about his Old Agreement.

2 Corinthians 3:7-11

⁷ *Moses taught the people that if they did not obey God's laws completely they would be separated from God forever. God wrote his laws on stone slabs. Then he gave them to Moses to teach them to the people. Although God's laws condemned the people to die, when Moses brought those laws down from Sinai Mountain, God caused Moses' face to shine. Moses' face to shine radiantly to show the people that these laws were God's laws. It shone so brightly that the people of Israel could not keep looking at Moses'*

face. *They had to look away.* But the brightness was slowly fading away.

⁸ *So, since God showed in such a wonderful way that those laws that condemned the people to die were from him, surely when we (exc) teach people about how God's Spirit will change their lives, God will show in an even more wonderful way that it is his message. [RHQ]*

⁹ *The message that Moses taught them was wonderful, but when people heard that message, they realized that they were sinners and that God would punish them. But God's message that we (exc) teach is a much more wonderful message. We teach people that God will ◀erase the record of/declare people no longer guilty for▶ the sinful things that they have done.*

¹⁰ *The truth is that, although the work of teaching the people to obey God's laws was once important, it is not as important now, because the work of teaching people that God will forgive them and enable them to live to please him is far more important.*

¹¹ *Furthermore, the message that Moses taught was not a lasting message, just like the brightness on his face was not lasting and soon faded away. But when God gives his Spirit to people, the wonderful work that God's Spirit does in their lives is much greater because it lasts forever.*

We teach a message that transforms people's lives. So we teach it with great confidence.

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

¹² We (*exc*) know that the message that we teach is a *much more wonderful message than the message that Moses taught*. So we can preach boldly.

¹³ We do not *need to put a veil over our faces when we teach people*, as Moses did. Moses put a veil over his face so that the Israelites would not see that the radiance *on his face* soon faded away. *Similarly, the glory of the old agreement has also faded away.*

¹⁴ But the Israelis stubbornly refused to *understand that the old agreement would end*. Even now, when they read the old agreement, *they still do not realize that it has ended*. It is as if [MET] that same veil *that Moses put on his face* is now over their minds, *keeping them from understanding God's true message*. They will *understand that message only when they come to trust in Christ*. Then *it will be as though God has removed the veil*.

¹⁵ *Throughout all these years, even until now, when the Israelis read what Moses write, it is as though a veil is covering their minds.*

¹⁶ But when any of them believes in the Lord Jesus, God removes that veil from them.

¹⁷ *It is by the power of his Spirit that the Lord works in our lives, and the Lord's Spirit has set us free from trying to obey all the rules and rituals that God gave Moses.*

¹⁸ *It is as though God has removed the veil from our faces [MET]. We realize how awesome Jesus is. As we realize that, we are continually being changed {the Holy Spirit is continually changing*

us} to become more and more like Jesus, *so that people can see*, more and more, how awesome Jesus is. It is the Spirit of the Lord who does *this*.

4

We are servants of Jesus. It is Jesus who has shown us how great God is.

2 Corinthians 4:1-6

¹ So, because God has acted so kindly toward me, enabling me to teach this great message to people, I never get so discouraged that I stop teaching it.

² And I have determined that we (exc) will be honest [LIT] in everything that we do. We will not *do anything that would cause us to be ashamed if people found out about it*. We never try to deceive you with clever arguments, as some other people do. We never try to deceive you by changing God's message, as those same people do. Instead, we always teach people only the truth about Christ, and we teach it clearly. Knowing that God is watching what we do, we teach his message in an honest way, with the result that no one can accuse us (exc) of being deceitful.

³ And if, as some of you say, some people are not able to understand the message that we teach about Christ, it is not because we do not teach it clearly. It is because those people do not want to believe it. They are going to perish eternally.

⁴ Satan, who is the one who rules this world, controls the thoughts of those unbelievers. He prevents them from understanding the message

about how wonderful Christ is. *They are not able to understand that Jesus is like God in every way.*

⁵ That is why, *when we(exc) teach people*, we do not boast about ourselves, *as some people say that we do*. Instead, *we teach you* that Jesus Christ is our Lord. We ourselves are *only* your servants. *We want to honor and obey Jesus.*

⁶ When God *created the world*, he commanded the light to shine *where there was nothing but darkness*. He is the one who has *made his message about Jesus to be like* [MET] a light shining into our (*inc*) minds. *God has done that for all of us who believe in Jesus. He has done that so that we will understand that when people saw Christ, they saw how awesome God himself was.*

As Jesus' servants we suffer, but through our suffering many people will receive eternal life and thank and praise God.

2 Corinthians 4:7-15

⁷ *This work that God has given to us (exc) is* [MET] *like a very valuable treasure*. But we who have that treasure *are as weak as fragile* [MET] *clay pots*. *God has planned it like that* in order that *people* will know that the power *that changes lives* is God's power, and not any power of our own.

⁸ We are continually oppressed {*People continually oppress us*} in many ways, but *we have not been prevented* {*God has not allowed them to prevent us*} *from teaching the message about Jesus Christ*. We often do not know what to do *in difficult situations*, but we never say, "God has abandoned us."

⁹ *We are frequently persecuted {People frequently cause us to suffer}, but God never abandons us. Sometimes we are badly wounded {people badly wound us}, but God does not allow us to be killed {them to kill us}.*

¹⁰ *Wherever we(exc) go, we continually realize that because people killed Jesus, people may kill us for teaching his message. But we are willing to go on living this way in order that people will know that Jesus is alive and that he is directing us [SYN].*

¹¹ *So, although we are still alive, we always realize that we may be killed {that people some day may kill us} because we teach about Jesus. God allows us to suffer in order that people will see that Jesus is alive and that he is strengthening our bodies that are some day going to die.*

¹² *So I conclude that although we apostles are constantly suffering and may soon die, the result of that is that all of you have now received eternal life.*

¹³ *We are not discouraged. We are like the person who wrote in the Scriptures, "God, I trusted in you and so I continue speaking your message." We (exc) also trust in God, so we continue speaking his message.*

¹⁴ *We do this because we (exc) know that although people might kill us, God, who caused the Lord Jesus to live again after he died, will also cause us (exc) to live again after we die. God will do this because we belong to Jesus. And then God will bring us (exc), together with you, to be with him.*

¹⁵ So I say that all these things that we(exc) suffer happen in order to help you. We have suffered all this in order that more and more people, as a result of hearing that God will kindly/freely forgive their sins, will thank him and praise him. Then they will greatly honor him and worship him.

As our bodies get weaker, God continually makes our inner lives stronger. He will reward us for all that we have suffered.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

¹⁶ So, because we know that as a result of our suffering many people will honor God, we (exc) never get so discouraged that we stop teaching his message. Although our bodies are getting weaker, God encourages us every day and strengthens us spiritually.

¹⁷ I know that all these troubles that happen to us in this life are not significant and will not last forever. When we think of the glorious things that God is preparing for us to enjoy forever in heaven, all our suffering now is not important.

¹⁸ That is why we say, "We will not continue thinking about all the suffering that we are experiencing now. Even though we cannot see all the things that God has prepared for us in heaven, those are what we should be thinking about." That is how we should think, because all these troubles that we(exc) have now will last only a short time. But what we will have in heaven, what we cannot see now, will last forever.

5

God will give all of us new heavenly bodies, and he will reward us according to what we did while we were living in our earthly bodies.

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

¹ We know that *these bodies* we live in *here in this world* are like [MET] tents. *They are like temporary living/dwelling places. So we should not be concerned about what happens to our bodies.* We know that if we are killed {if someone kills us}, God will give us *permanent living places*. *Those permanent living places* [MET] will not be houses that people have made. *They will be new bodies in which we will live forever in heaven.*

² *While we are here on earth, we suffer.* We often groan because we desire *to go to heaven where God will give us our new bodies* [MET].

³ *When God gives us(inc) our new bodies* [MET], *our spirits will have* [LIT, MET] *bodies to live in that will last forever.*

⁴ *It is true that while we are still living in these bodies* [MET] *that do not last forever, we often groan* [DOU] *because we desire to be free from them.* We are not longing to be without a body. Instead, *we groan because we desire to receive our new bodies* [MET] *in heaven. We long for this to happen so that these bodies that are going to die some day will suddenly be changed into bodies that will live forever.*

⁵ *It is God himself who has prepared us to receive these new bodies.* He is also the one who has guaranteed/assured us (*inc*) that this

will happen. He has guaranteed it by sending his Spirit *to live inside us now*.

⁶ So, *because God's Spirit lives in us*, we are always confident *that God will give us new bodies*. We know that as long as we have bodies here on *earth*, we are not yet *living together* with the Lord Jesus in heaven.

⁷ While we (exc) live *here*, we do not have our *new bodies*, but we are trusting *that God will give them to us*.

⁸ As I said, we (exc) are confident *that he will give us new bodies*. We (exc) would much prefer to leave these bodies *which we have now*, and be with the Lord Jesus in our home in heaven.

⁹ Because of all that, we always want to please Jesus in everything that we do. Whether we (exc) are still living here in these bodies or whether we have left them and are living in our home in heaven, we want to please him.

¹⁰ And we need to try hard to do that because each one of us *believers* must stand before Christ to be judged by him {when he will judge his people}. At that time he will reward each one of us according to what we have done while we lived in this world in these bodies. He will reward us according to whether we have done good things or whether we have done evil things.

Christ has shown me how much he loves people. That is why I teach his message with all the strength that I have. Therefore, I plead with you to believe that God will forgive you because of what Christ did for you.

2 Corinthians 5:11—6:2

¹¹ It makes me fearful *to think that some day I will stand before the Lord for him to judge me. So I do everything that I can to convince people that they should believe (OR, that I teach sincerely) God's message.* God knows very well *how I conduct my life and what I teach,* and I really believe that you know it, too.

¹² Once again *I say, as I write this,* I am not just trying to make you think well/highly of me, *as some people will probably say that I am.* Instead, I am *telling you in this letter why you have good reason to tell those who criticize me that you think highly of me. I am telling you this so that you will know what to say to those teachers of false doctrine among you.* They are proud of *what they have done,* instead of *making sure that they are right with God and being pleased with that.*

¹³ *Some of them say that after God has enabled me to see visions, I talk like a crazy person. If that is so, I want you to realize that I talk that way in order to please God. On the other hand, if you think that I speak and act wisely, that is good. I want you to know that I do speak and act wisely in order to help you.*

¹⁴ *I speak and act the way I do because the love that Christ has for people influences me in everything that I say and do. When Christ died, he suffered the punishment for the sins of all people. So, we should all think of ourselves as having died with him, being as unresponsive to sinful desires as [MET] a corpse is.*

¹⁵ *When Christ died for the everyone, he died in order that we believers who are alive now*

should not conduct our lives in a way that will just *please ourselves*. Instead, *we should conduct our lives in a way that will please Christ*, because he is the one who died for us and was brought back to life {whom *God raised*} again.

¹⁶ So, *because I realize how much Christ loves everyone*, I no longer think about people in the way that those who do not believe *in Christ* think about *them*. Before I *was a believer*, I thought about Christ in the way that other non-believers did. But I do not think of him that way any more.

¹⁷ The fact is that God makes every one of us who *trusts in Christ* to be completely different *than we were before*. Our old *way of conducting our lives* is gone. We now have a *completely new way of conducting our lives*.

¹⁸ This *complete change in our lives* is all something that God *does*. It is God who made it possible for us to have a peaceful relationship with him. *He was able to do that* because of what Christ *did for us*. Now God *has sent me*, and those *who work with me*, to tell *people that they* can have a peaceful relationship with him.

¹⁹ That is, *he sent us(exc) to tell them that* when Christ *died*, God was *making it possible for everyone* [MTY] in the world to have a peaceful relationship with him. He no longer keeps a record of the sinful things that *we believers* have done. The message that *God has given to us to tell people is how we can have a peaceful relationship with him*.

²⁰ So, it is I and my companions who are Christ's representatives *in this world*. *When we*

tell people the message about Christ, it is God himself who is pleading with them by means of what we say. So, as true representatives of Christ, we plead with you: Believe God's true message about Christ in order that you may be reconciled to {have a peaceful relationship with} him.

²¹ *You must believe that even though Jesus never sinned, God punished him for all the sinful things that people do, just as if Jesus had done those sinful things himself. And because of our close relationship with Christ, God has erased the record of our sins/declared us no longer guilty for our sins.*

6

¹ *Therefore, because I am working together with God himself, I say this to you very strongly: God has already kindly forgiven you because Christ died for you, so do not now say "It does not matter if I live just to please myself."*

² *For God said long ago in the Scriptures:*

When it is the right time for me to help you, you will ask me to help you, and I will hear you. Then I will send a Savior to help you.

So listen to what I am telling you: God has sent his Savior, so now is the time when God is ready to save people from the guilt of their sins.

In spite of much suffering, we have lived as servants of God should live.

2 Corinthians 6:3-10

³ *Neither I nor the men working with me do anything that would hinder people from trusting*

in Christ, and so we cannot be accused {no one can accuse us} *of not serving God properly.*

⁴ Instead, in everything *that we(exc) say and do*, we show *people* that we serve God faithfully. We patiently endure *all the things that happen to us*. *People cause us* many troubles and, as a result, we are anxious *and often do not know what to do.*

⁵ Sometimes we have been beaten *and bound* {People have beaten us *and tied us*} *with chains* in prison. *Angry mobs* have attacked us, *wanting to kill us*. We have continued working *for God until we had no more strength to work*. We have had many sleepless nights, and we have *often been without food.*

⁶ *All that we think about and all that we do is pure in God's sight*. Knowing how God wants us *to conduct our lives*, we *do what pleases him*. We are patient *with those who oppose us*. We are kind *to everyone*. We *depend on the Holy Spirit to help us*. We love people sincerely *as God wants us to love them.*

⁷ We faithfully teach *the true message about Christ*, and God gives us his power *as we teach it*. *Like soldiers* using weapons [MET] *in a battle*, we, by living righteously, *defend God's message and refute those who attack it.*

⁸ We serve God faithfully, whether people praise us (exc) or *whether they despise us*, whether *people say bad things about us(exc)* or *whether they say good things about us*. We keep teaching the truth, *even though some people say that we are deceiving people.*

⁹ *Some people know well that we are true servants of God, and yet others, who know us, refuse to believe that. People have often tried to kill us (inc), yet we are still alive. We have often been beaten, but we have not been killed {People have often beaten us (exc), but they have not killed us}.*

¹⁰ *Although we (exc) are often very sad because people have rejected our message, we are always joyful because of all that God has done for us. Even though we (exc) are poor, we make it possible for many people to be spiritually rich. It is true that in this world we (exc) have nothing valuable [HYP], but because we belong to God's family, all that God has belongs to us.*

I ask you to accept us and love us as we love you.

2 Corinthians 6:11-13

¹¹ *You fellow believers in Corinth, I have been completely honest with you. I have told you exactly how we(exc) feel about you, that we love you very much [IDM].*

¹² *We are not treating you as though we do not love you, but you are treating us as though you do not love us.*

¹³ *In return for our loving you, will you not love us [IDM] just as much as we love you? I am writing to you as if you were my own children.*

Do not get involved with people who do not honor God.

2 Corinthians 6:14—7:1

¹⁴ Do not ◀team up/have a close relationship▶ with anyone who does not trust in Christ. I say this because we who trust in Christ and do what is right should not [RHQ] want to do things with wicked people. Or to say it in another way, just like light and darkness never join together, so those who belong to Christ and those who belong to Satan should never join together [RHQ].

¹⁵ There is no [RHQ] agreement of any kind between Christ and Satan. So, believers have no [RHQ] common spiritual interests with unbelievers.

¹⁶ Just as no one would dare to bring idols into the Temple in Jerusalem, believers should never [RHQ] join with those who worship idols. I say that because [MET] the Holy Spirit is in us, and so we are like the Temple of the all-powerful God. It is as God himself said in the Scriptures:

I will live in my people.

I will always be with/helping them.

They will say to me, "You are our God," and

I will say to them, "You are my people."

¹⁷ In another place in the Scriptures we read that the Lord said:

Get away from those who do evil things;

keep yourselves separated from them.

Do nothing sinful that would make you unacceptable to me.

Then I will welcome you as members of my family.

¹⁸ The Lord also said:

I will care for you as [MET] a loving father cares for his children,

and *it will be as though* you are my own sons and daughters.

I, the all-powerful Lord, am saying this *to you*.

7

¹ My friends, whom I love, because *God* has promised *to accept us(inc) as his children*, we (*inc*) must stop doing anything that is sinful. We must not do sinful things with our bodies, and we must not *think* sinful thoughts. *Because* we greatly revere God, we must strive to *live* a completely pure life. By doing that we will become the kind of people that he wants us to be.

I love you all and I have great confidence in you.

2 Corinthians 7:2-4

² So, as I just wrote, I want you to love me (OR, us [IDM] *who are true apostles of Christ*). I/we (*exc*) have never done anything wrong to any of you. I/we have not done anything to harm any one of you spiritually or financially. And I/we have not tried to get money from you ◀for myself/for ourselves▶.

³ *It is true that some people among you have said that I have done such things. Nevertheless,* I am not trying to make you all feel ashamed because, as I wrote before, I will continue to love you all very much [IDM], whether I live with you or die with you. I am very confident about you.

⁴ I am very pleased with you. You have greatly encouraged me, so that I am now very joyful in spite of all the hardships that I have endured.

Titus told me that my letter caused you to repent, and so now I am very happy.

2 Corinthians 7:5-16

⁵ Now I will write more about what I was saying about Titus. When I left Troas and came here to Macedonia province, I still did not get any rest. Everywhere we (exc) went, people were constantly causing us trouble. And not only were people constantly causing us trouble, but I was greatly concerned about you all.

⁶ But God, who always encourages his people when they are discouraged, encouraged us by sending Titus back to us.

⁷ I was encouraged by seeing Titus, but when I heard how you had encouraged him, that encouraged me even more. He told me how much you wanted to see me. He told me that you were very sorry that you had made me so unhappy. He also told me that you are very eager for me to continue to serve as your apostle. When Titus told me those things, I was very, very happy.

⁸ Even though what I wrote in my letter ◀distressed you/made you sad▶, I am not sorry that I wrote it. For a while I was sorry that I had written it, because I knew that it would distress you. Now Titus has also told me that it did distress you when you read it, but you were distressed only for a short time.

⁹ So now I am happy that I wrote it. I am not happy that you were distressed {that I distressed you}, but I am happy because, when you became distressed, you felt sorry for what you had done and you asked God to forgive you. What I mean

is that you felt sorry in the way that God wanted you to feel sorry, so my making you feel sorry did not harm you at all.

¹⁰ *The fact is that when God causes us to feel truly sorry for having sinned and we turn from our sinful behavior, then God saves us and will not punish us for the sinful things that we have done. And no one is ever sorry about that. However, the people who do not trust in God [MTY] may be sorry for the sinful things that they have done. But if they do not turn from their sinful behavior and ask God to forgive them, they will remain separated from him forever.*

¹¹ *But think about what happened when you read my letter: God caused you to be truly sorry for what you had done. You eagerly wanted to do what was right, and you wanted to show God (OR, me) that you had done the right thing. You were angry about what had happened, and you were worried that God would punish you if the situation continued. You also wanted me to visit you to encourage and help you. You wanted me to know that you really do accept me as your apostle, and that you punished the man who had sinned, as I told you to do. By doing all of those things, you have shown me that you have done what is right in this matter.*

¹² *So, even though I wrote that severe letter to you, I did not write it just so that you would punish the man who had done what was wrong. Also, I did not write it for the benefit of the person whom he had wronged. Instead, I wrote it so that, when you read the letter, God would enable you*

to realize how much you really do respect *my authority*.

¹³ So, *because you listened to me and did what I asked you to do*, ◀I was/we (exc) were all▶ encouraged. Not only ◀was I/were we▶ encouraged, but ◀I was/we (exc) were▶ also very happy to see how happy Titus was *when he arrived here*. He told me/us that he did not need to worry any more, because he saw that you all had a good attitude toward me.

¹⁴ I had told Titus that I was pleased about you. And I did not need to be ashamed *for feeling that way about you*, because you did what I knew that you would do. Just like everything that I have taught you *and written to you* has been the truth, the good things that I told Titus about you were also true.

¹⁵ Now he happily remembers how you all were willing to do what I asked you to do. He is also happy about the way you treated him with great respect. *When he thinks about those things, it makes him love you even more than he did when he was with you.*

¹⁶ As for me, I am very happy because now I am certain that I can depend on you to do what you know God wants you to do.

8

The believers in Macedonia have already collected the money that they are going to send to the believers in Jerusalem. You should also finish

collecting the money that you are preparing to send, and have it ready to send to Jerusalem soon.

2 Corinthians 8:1-15

¹ Now, my fellow believers, I want to tell you *what happened because of God's acting kindly in the lives of the believers in the congregations here in Macedonia province.*

² Even though *the non-believers here* have been causing the believers to suffer severely, the believers are always very joyful. *Although they are very poor, they gave very generously to help other believers.*

³ *I know that this is true, because I have seen for myself that they not only gave money [EUP] that they were able to give, they gave so much money that they did not even keep enough to buy what they needed for themselves. Without anyone telling them to share their possessions,*

⁴ *they themselves kept requesting us to let them participate in what other believers are doing in sending a gift of money to [EUP] God's people in Judea province.*

⁵ *I thought that they would give only a little of their money, but they did much more than that. First, they told the Lord Jesus that they wanted to do what pleases him. After that, they told me that they wanted to do whatever I thought was good for them to do, because they were sure that would be what God wanted them to do.*

⁶ *So, because Titus was the one who helped you to begin gathering the money [EUP, MTY] for your gift, I urged him to also help you finish collecting the rest of your generous and loving gift.*

⁷ You are doing very well in so many *other* ways. *God's Spirit enables you to believe that God will do miracles. His Spirit has given you the ability to tell God's message to others. His Spirit makes you able to know things that he reveals to you.* You eagerly *want to help people*, and you love us (*exc*) very much. So now, try to also do well in getting your generous *gift of money* [EUP] *ready to send to the believers in Judea province.*

⁸ I am not commanding you *to do this*. But *because I have seen how believers in other places are eager to help other believers who do not have ◀what they need/enough to live on▶*, I want you similarly to show that you love others sincerely.

⁹ You already know *how much* our Lord Jesus *did for you* that you did not deserve. Everything *in heaven* belonged to him. But in order to benefit you, *he left all of those things behind and became a human being. Here on earth he had very few possessions of his own.* But because he became poor like that, he is *able to cause you (pl)* to become *spiritually rich*.

¹⁰ So, *as you think of our Lord's example, I will tell you what I think that you should do in this matter of giving money. As you know, last year, because you desired to give money to help God's people in Judea province, you began collecting money* [EUP].

¹¹ So now you should finish *collecting the money* [EUP] that you began *to gather*. In that way, *everyone will know that you are just as ready to finish collecting this gift as you were to begin collecting it.* Give what you are able to

give.

¹² *Keep in mind that if you really want to give something to help others, whatever any one of you is able to give will be pleasing to God. God does not expect his people to give more than they can afford to give.*

¹³ *I do not mean that you should give so much to help others that you yourselves do not have what you need. No, what I want is that both you and others will have what you need.*

¹⁴ *Right now, when you have ◀more than you need/plenty▶ and the believers in Judea do not have ◀enough/all that they need▶, with your gift you will enable them to have enough. Maybe some day when you do not have ◀enough/all that you need▶ and they have more than they need, they will be able to help you. Then everyone will have enough (OR, In that way each will share alike).*

¹⁵ *If that happens, the result will be like it is written {like someone/Moses wrote} in the Scriptures about the time when God provided manna for his people,*

If someone gathered a lot of manna, he still did not have more than he needed, because he gave some to someone who did not have enough. And those who gathered only a little manna still had all that they needed [LIT], because others who gathered more than they needed gave some manna to them.

I am sending Titus to you, along with two other believers, to help you get your gift ready. They are all well respected and trustworthy men, so treat

them well. It will be good if you have your gift ready to send to Judea province by the time I arrive in Corinth.

2 Corinthians 8:16—9:5

¹⁶ *So now I am sending Titus to visit you again. God has caused him to be just as eager to help you prepare your gift as I am. I thank God for that.*

¹⁷ *He is going there, not only because we urged him to go, but because he himself is very eager to visit you again.*

¹⁸ *I am sending with Titus another believer whom you know well. All the groups of believers in this area think highly of him because he has faithfully taught the good message about Christ.*

¹⁹ *Not only that, but he was appointed by the congregations in this area {the congregations in this area appointed him} to go to Jerusalem with us (exc). He will go with us when we take the generous gift of money [EUP] to the believers in Jerusalem. We are taking this gift to honor the Lord Jesus and to show them that we all very much want to help them.*

²⁰ *The believers have given money [EUP] generously. So, by sending that fellow believer along with Titus to take the money to Jerusalem, we are trying to make sure that no one will be able to accuse us (exc) of taking some of the money for ourselves.*

²¹ *I say that because we (exc) want to make sure that the Lord God will see that what we (exc) do is right, and other people will see it, too.*

²² *Furthermore, there is also another believer*

here whom we are sending to you along with the two men whom I have just mentioned. Many times I have seen his good work for the Lord, and I know that he is eager to serve the Lord. Now, because he knows for sure that you want to give this gift the same as other believers do, he is even more eager than he was before to go with the two other men.

²³ As for Titus, *I have chosen him because he is my partner, and he has worked faithfully with me to help you. As for the other two men, the congregations in this area are sending them as their messengers. These two men honor Christ by everything they do.*

²⁴ So then, show them that you truly love others, and in that way help other congregations to understand why we (exc) are always saying such good things about you.

9

You and I will be ashamed if your gift is not ready when I arrive.

2 Corinthians 9:1-5

¹ Now *I want to write more about the gift of money [EUP] that you and other believers are preparing to send to the believers in Judea province. I do not really need to continue writing to you about it,*

² *because I already know that you really want to help them. In fact, I have been boasting about you, telling the believers here in Macedonia province that you people in Achaia province have been ready to help, since last year. As a result,*

because you are very eager to help *the believers in Judea province*, you have made most of *the believers here in Macedonia province* also want to give a gift.

³ However, I am sending Titus and the other two believers in order that *they will be able to help you finish collecting the money*. Then when I and others arrive later, *the people with me will see for themselves that the things that I have been boasting about you are true [LIT]*. I want you to have your gift ready for us(exc) to take to Jerusalem, just like I have been telling others that you were ready.

⁴ When I come, if any of *the believers from Macedonia* come with me, *I do not want them to find that your gift is [MTY, EUP] not ready*. If that were to happen, I would be very ashamed, and you yourselves would be even more ashamed.

⁵ So that is why I felt that it was necessary to urge these *three believers* to go and visit you before I come. *In that way, they would be able to help you finish collecting the generous gift [EUP] that had been promised by you {you had said you would give}*. *If you do that, not only will the gift be ready by the time that we arrive, but everyone will see that you have given because you really want to give, and not because anyone has forced you to give*.

If you give generously and willingly, God will always continue to bless you so that you will have enough to continue giving generously, and your

generosity will cause many other people to praise and honor God.

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

⁶ Do not forget this: “A farmer who sows only a few seeds will not gather/reap a large harvest, but the one who sows a lot of seeds will gather/reap a large harvest [MET].” Similarly, if you give just a little to help others, God will give you only a few blessings. But if you give willingly and cheerfully to help people, you will receive in return many blessings from God.

⁷ Each of you should decide how much you (sg) should give, and then give that amount. You (sg) should not be thinking to yourself, “I really do not want to give this money.” And you(sg) should not give just because someone tells you to give. Instead, you should give willingly and cheerfully, because God loves those who give cheerfully.

⁸ Moreover, God can enable you to give to others cheerfully. If you give that way, God will in return give you many good blessings. He will do that so that at all times you will always have everything that you need. Indeed, you will have even more than you need. As a result, you will be able to do many more good things to help others.

⁹ Those who give willingly and cheerfully will be rewarded like the man about whom it is written {about whom ◀someone/the Psalmist▶ wrote} in the Scriptures,

He generously helps others,

he gives to those who are poor.

God will remember the good things that he did,
and reward him with good things forever.

¹⁰ *God always gives seeds to farmers to plant, and also gives them food to eat. So, similarly, God will always make it possible for you to have enough money [MET], so that you will be able more and more to generously help those who are needy.*

¹¹ *God will give you many blessings in many different ways as a result of your generously helping others. Furthermore, the generous gift that you are getting ready for us (exc) to take to the believers in Judea province will cause many people to thank God.*

¹² *Also remember that when you give money to [EUP] help God's people, you not only give them what they need, but also, because of that, many people will thank God very much for you and for what you have done.*

¹³ *As a result of your giving money to help others, they will praise God, not only because you have believed the good message about Christ, but also because you have generously given some of your possessions so that they and other believers will all have ◀enough/their needs supplied▶.*

¹⁴ *Also, when they pray for you, asking God to bless you, they will remember how grateful they are [IDM] that God caused you to give very willingly and cheerfully.*

¹⁵ *Finally, we should all thank God because he gave us the greatest gift of all when he sent his Son to save/rescue us(inc) ◀from the guilt of our sin/from being punished for our sin▶. That is a gift too wonderful for anyone to be able to tell*

about completely!

10

I Paul say to you, "Do not listen to those who say that I am afraid to rebuke you when I am with you and that I behave like people do who are not believers."

2 Corinthians 10:1-6

¹ Now I myself, Paul, appeal to you in a gentle and humble way, like Christ *would*. *Certain people among you have falsely accused me by saying, "When Paul is with you, he is humble and speaks gently to you, but when he is away from you, in the letters he writes to you he threatens to punish you."* Those people claim that I do not have authority over you as an apostle.

² I strongly plead with you, "*Please do not listen to people who say things like that!*" I strongly plead with you not to listen to them, so that when I am there with you I will not need to speak severely to you in the same severe way as I *plan* to speak to those people who think that I behave like people who are not believers.

³ Remember that although I am *human like everyone else* in the world, I do not fight against those who oppose me in the way that people who are not believers fight those who oppose them.

⁴ I will tell you what I mean by that: Just like soldiers use various weapons to fight their enemies [MET], I *◀fight against/oppose▶* those who oppose God's message, but I do it in a different way. I do not use *human arguments and clever/sweet talk*, like unbelievers do. Instead,

I fight against my opponents with the powerful means that God has given me. With that power I destroy their arguments against God's message and against me, just like soldiers destroy [MET] the fortresses of their enemies.

⁵ *Specifically, I show that the human arguments that they use to deceive people are completely wrong. When they proudly say things that keep other people from knowing God, I show them that they are completely wrong. I also enable people to change their ways of thinking so that they think about everything as Christ wants them to think.*

⁶ *I am also ready to discipline everyone among you who has not obeyed the things that Christ taught. I will do this as soon as you who truly want to obey Christ show me that you are going to obey him completely.*

Those who teach what is false must come to realize that I also belong to Christ and that God has given me authority over you. I worry that they will deceive you and that you will stop being faithful to Christ alone.

2 Corinthians 10:7—11:6

⁷ *I want you to understand what is happening among you. There are certain people there who are telling you that they know for sure that they are Christ's representatives and that I am not. Those people should realize that I represent Christ as much as they do.*

⁸ *I say that because the authority that the Lord gave me as his apostle is to help you to*

become mature believers, not to cause you to stop *trusting in Christ*. So even if I were to boast a little more than I have *already done* (OR, proudly talk a little more than I have *already talked* about the authority the Lord gave me *as his apostle*), *no one would be able to make me* ashamed by *proving that Jesus has not given me that authority*.

⁹ I do not intend to make you afraid of me by the letters that I *write to you*.

¹⁰ I say that because some people are saying, “When Paul writes letters, he says severe things *in order to make you obey him*, but when he is here with you, *people look at him and say he is weak*, and he certainly is not a skillful speaker.”

¹¹ The *people who say* such things should think carefully about this: The kind of *severe* person that *you think* me to be when you read my letters is exactly the kind of person I will be when I come. *I will do what I wrote that I would do*.

¹² *Those who oppose me* tell others how good they are. *If they really were superior to me* [IRO], I would not be so bold as to say that I *was equal to them*, or to compare myself with them. *But they are not superior to me*. They make up their own standards *about what God’s servants should be like*, and then they look at their own *conduct* and decide *whether or not they meet those standards*. *By doing that, they show that they are foolish*.

¹³ But as for me, I will not boast about *working among people living in areas outside of the areas that God sent/assigned me to work in*. But it is *right for me to say that I have worked in the areas that God assigned to me*. *And since those areas*

include the one where you live,

¹⁴ *when I talk about working among you, I am not boasting about working in an area where God did not give me the right to work. What those who oppose me say about my not having authority as an apostle to you might be true if I had not already come all the way to your area. But that is not true, because I was the one who first brought the message about Christ to you. I came to Corinth before they did!*

¹⁵ Also, my opponents boast about work that others have done *as if it were their own work*. It is improper for them to do that, but I do not do as they do. I confidently expect that as you trust more and more *in the gospel that I preach*, you will more and more *agree that God has given me the right to work as Christ's representative among you*.

¹⁶ Then I will be able to go to places beyond where you are. I will be able to tell the good message about Christ *to people in areas where no one has yet gone to tell that message*. And I will be able to talk about the work I myself have done *in that area*, instead of boasting about work that someone else has already done *as if it were my work*.

¹⁷ *I try to do according to what someone/ Jeremiah wrote in the Scriptures,*

If anyone wants to boast *about something*, he should boast *only* about what the Lord God *has done*.

¹⁸ *You can realize, then, that it is not those who*
◀ *praise themselves/tell you what great things*

they have done►, *as my opponents do*, whom you should accept *as apostles*. Instead, you *should accept as true apostles only* those whom the Lord commends.

11

¹ *But now, because my opponents are saying that Christ sent them to you as his representatives and that he did not send me, please be patient with me, too, while I say a few things that may sound as if [IRO] I am praising myself, like a foolish person would do. You have been ◀putting up with/tolerating► those who teach what is false; now then, ◀put up with/tolerate► me too.*

² *I really do care about what happens to you, just as God cares about what happens to you. Just like a father wants his daughter to be sexually pure when he presents her to the man she will marry [MET], I want you to belong to Christ alone and to no other. I want to present you to him as people who remain faithful to him only, and who have not believed the deceitful message of those who are teaching what is false.*

³ *However, just like Satan, when he cunningly appeared as a snake, deceived Eve and caused her to disobey the Lord God, I am concerned that those teachers will cause you to think wrongly so that you will no longer be faithful to Christ alone.*

⁴ *I say that because some people have come among you who are teaching their own thoughts about Jesus. They are saying about him things that are entirely different from what I taught you. They are urging you to receive a powerful spirit*

who would come to live in you, but it is not the same Spirit that you received from God when you believed in Christ. They preach what they call a good message, and you accept *their message*, even though it is not the same as the good message about Christ that you heard from me. And you have gladly accepted them and their message!

⁵ I consider that [LIT] none of those men, even though they think of themselves as being [IRO] extra-special apostles, are in any way greater than I am.

⁶ I admit that I am not an eloquent speaker, but I do know God's message. I have made that clear to you by everything that I have done among you and by everything that I have taught you.

You are mistaken if you think that I do not love you because I refused to accept money from you for my teaching. I will go on doing that to prevent those false apostles among you from boasting that they work just as I do.

2 Corinthians 11:7-15

⁷ I refused to accept money from you as pay for teaching you God's message about Christ. ◀It is ridiculous for you to think that what I did was wrong!/Was that wrong?▶ [RHQ] I know that by teaching you without pay, I made myself seem [IRO] unimportant to you. But I did it to honor you.

⁸ Some people might say that it was as though [IRO] I was robbing other congregations because I accepted money from them in order that I might work among you.

⁹ Furthermore, when I was *there* with you and had no *money to buy the things that I needed*, I did not cause any of you *◀to have difficulties by my depending on you/by asking you for money/support▶*, because our *(inc)* fellow believers who came from *here in Macedonia province* brought enough *money for me to buy everything* that I needed. So I have not caused you any difficulty at all *by asking you for money*, and I never will *ask you for money* [EUP].

¹⁰ And as sure as you know that everything that Christ says is true, you can be sure that what I say to you now is true. Wherever I go there in Achaia province, I do not let you believers pay me for doing God's work among you. And no one will be able to prevent me from boasting about that.

¹¹ No one should wrongly [RHQ] think that it is because I do not love you that *I do not take pay from you*. God knows that you truly/really are very dear to me.

¹² There are some men there among you who would like to be able to say boastfully that they work among you just as I do. So, in order to make it impossible [IDM] for them to say that, I have refused to accept pay from you, and I will continue doing that.

¹³ Those men are lying when they say that they are apostles. They work deceitfully. Even though they say that they work for God, they are working only for themselves. They try to make people think that Christ sent them as his apostles, but they do not truly represent him.

¹⁴ I am not surprised *that they act like that*, because Satan himself causes people to think *that he has come as a shining messenger from God*.

¹⁵ So it should not surprise *you* if these men, who *really serve Satan, do good things in order to make you think they serve God*. Some day God will *punish them* according to what they deserve because of the *evil things that they do*.

You seem to listen to those who boast, so I too will boast. I will boast about being a Jew (as those others do), and I will boast about having suffered greatly for Christ, and about an extraordinary vision that God gave me. Although God caused me to suffer an affliction, he promised that he would help me and strengthen me.

2 Corinthians 11:16—12:10

¹⁶ I say again: I do not want any of you to think that my *boasting about myself* is like foolish people boast. But even if anyone *thinks that I am boasting about myself like a foolish person boasts*, listen to what I *have to say anyway, just like you listen to those false apostles*. They really *speak foolishly!* Listen to me while I also boast a little.

¹⁷ About the things that I am *going to tell you*, boasting confidently *about myself*, surely you *know that they are not the kind of things that the Lord Jesus would say*. Instead, *I will speak as a foolish person would speak*.

¹⁸ Because many among you are boasting *about their own work*, as unbelievers do, I will also boast *about myself and my work* [MTY, IRO].

¹⁹ *I am sure that you, who think that you are so wise, will accept what I say because you gladly accept the false teachers and the foolish things that they say.*

²⁰ When people *treat* you as if they were your bosses, you gladly submit *to them*. You think that it is all right when others force you to provide for their needs. You think that it is all right when people take control over you, when they boast about themselves, or when they insult you by slapping you in the face.

²¹ I agree that I was not bold enough to treat you in such ways. *Ha! Do you think that [IRO] I should feel ashamed because I did not do that?*

So now, talking like a person who does not have any sense, I will boldly tell you *some things about myself, just like those false apostles tell you things about themselves.*

²² Do they tell you that they are Hebrews and can speak the Hebrew language? Well, I can say the same thing about myself. Do they tell you that they belong to God's people, the nation of Israel? Well, I can say the same thing about myself. Do they tell you that they are descendants of our great ancestor Abraham? Well, he is my ancestor, too.

²³ Do they tell you how much work they have done for Christ? Now I am talking like a crazy person talks [EUP]. Well, I work for Christ much more than they do. I have been in prison many more times than they have. Many times I have been beaten {people have beaten me} very severely because I believe in and obey Christ.

Many times I almost died *because of serving Christ*.

²⁴ On five occasions Jewish *religious leaders* beat me 39 times with a whip.

²⁵ On three occasions I was beaten {*Roman officials beat me*} with wooden sticks. On one occasion *a large crowd of people* threw stones at me *to kill me*. On three occasions the ship *that I was traveling on* was wrecked and sank. On one of those occasions I was floating in the water a night and a day *before I was rescued*.

²⁶ As I have often traveled to other places, *I have often risked losing my life*. For example, sometimes I have been in danger *crossing rivers*. *I have been in danger traveling in places* where there were bandits. *At times I have been in danger among people of my own nation, the Jews, and at other times I been in danger among those who are not Jews*. *I have been in danger in cities, and I have been in dangerous situations in barren areas*. I have been in dangerous situations *when I was traveling in ships*. *I have been in danger among people who falsely claim to be fellow believers*.

²⁷ I have worked very hard [DOU] *to earn ◀a living/what I need▶*, and often I did not sleep. At times I was hungry and thirsty, and at times I did not have enough time to eat. Sometimes I was cold *because I did not have enough clothes to wear*.

²⁸ In addition to all that, I am constantly and deeply concerned about all the congregations *that I have helped to begin*.

²⁹ *Every time that I hear about fellow believers [RHQ] who are not strong spiritually, I sympathize with them and try to help them. Every time that I learn about a fellow believer [RHQ] who causes another believer to do something wrong, that makes me very angry.*

³⁰ *Because it seems that it is necessary for me to continue boasting about myself, I will boast about things that caused some people to think of me as being weak.*

³¹ *God, who is the Father of our (inc) Lord Jesus, and who is the one whom we should praise forever, knows that I am not lying about this.*

³² *One time when I was in Damascus city, the governor whom King Aretas had appointed to rule part of his area, told his soldiers to guard the gates of the city so that they could seize me if I tried to leave the city.*

³³ *But my friends helped me to escape by putting me in a large basket and lowering me to the ground by a rope through an opening in the city wall. That was really humiliating!*

12

¹ *It seems that I must go on boasting about myself. Although I do not think that my telling you about this will help you to accept me as Christ's representative to you, I will say this anyway. I will tell you about visions that the Lord gave a certain man and about things that he supernaturally revealed to that man. I will tell you this because some of the people among you boast that it was*

in visions that they received the things that they teach.

² The man that I will tell you about is one *who believes in Christ*. Fourteen years ago he was taken {*Christ took him*} up into the third heaven, *the highest heaven, the place where God is*. I do not know whether he went there *in his physical body* or whether he was outside of his body *at that time and only his spirit went*. Only God really knows.

³⁻⁴ But he was *suddenly* taken {*Christ suddenly took him*} up to a *place called Paradise, that wonderful place where God lives*. I repeat that I do not know whether his body *went there* or only his spirit. Only God knows *that*. While he was *there*, God told him some things that he does not allow *human beings* to tell *others* about.

⁵ I will proudly talk about that man. However, I will not be boasting as I say that I *am the one who saw and heard those wonderful things*. I will talk only about the things that *cause others to think of me as a weak human being like everyone else*.

⁶ But even if I should choose to boast *to you about such wonderful things that happened to me*, I would not be *speaking like a fool*, because I would be telling you the truth. But I will not *talk proudly about such things*, because I do not want any of you to think highly of me *because of the things that have happened to me*. Instead, I want you to *decide what kind of person I am by the way you see me acting and by what you hear me teach*.

⁷ In order that I might not become proud because of those many wonderful things *that Christ revealed to me, God permitted Satan to send a messenger to humble me* (OR, *to make me sick*). *What that messenger did to me was painful, like [MET] a thorn pricking my body.*

⁸ Three times I prayed to the Lord about it, begging him to take this away from me.

⁹ But he said to me, "*No, I will not take this away from you. Instead, I will kindly help you, and that will be all that you need, because it is when you are weak that I can best work powerfully to help you.*" So, because of *what the Lord said to me*, I will very gladly boast about *the things that make me seem weak*, so that *people may realize that it is Christ who gives me power to serve him.*

¹⁰ For that reason, *whenever I am weak, or when people insult me, or when I have to endure hardships, or when I am persecuted {people cause me to suffer}, or when I am in situations that distress me, I am content because I am serving Christ. I can say that because at any time when I myself am weak, that is the very time when Christ powerfully helps me.*

When I was with you, I did things that showed you that I am truly Christ's representative. But I still will not take pay from you when I come to visit you again. And those people are wrong who say that I tricked you by sending Titus to get money for myself from you.

2 Corinthians 12:11-18

¹¹ It has been foolish for me *to talk about myself like this*, but it is you who forced me to do it. Truly *if the Lord would not help me*, I would be worthless, as *my opponents say that I am*. But none of the men whom you *wrongfully think [IRO]* are great apostles are greater in any way than I am. So it would have been right/proper for you to say good things about me.

¹² *You should have done that*, because when I was with you *I repeatedly did the things that showed you that I am truly an apostle*, such as performing many [DOU] miracles.

¹³ And I have *certainly treated you as well as I treated the other congregations that I helped to start*. Or do you think that by not asking you to *pay me for my work*, I was not treating you as well as I treated the other congregations? ◀It is foolish for you to *think that [IRO] it was wrong for me not to ask for pay from you for my work, and therefore I should ask you to forgive me for that! / Do you think that it was wrong for me not to ask for pay from you for my work, and therefore I should ask you to forgive me for that?*▶ [RHQ]

¹⁴ Now listen to me! It is time for me to come to you for a third visit. *When I come*, I still will not insist that you *pay me for my work*, because I do not want *any of your money* [EUP]! What I want is for you [MTY] *to love and appreciate me*. It is not *normally the duty of children to save money to provide for the needs of their parents*. Instead, it is *the duty of parents to provide for their children* [MET]. In the same way, *it is not your duty to provide for me. Instead, it is my duty*

to provide spiritual help for you because you are my spiritual children.

¹⁵ So, for my part, as a good parent would do, I will be very happy to use everything that I have, and do everything that I possibly can, *in order to help you*. And because I love you very much, ◀I will be very disappointed if you do not love me a little bit, too./will you not love me a little bit, too?▶ [RHQ]

¹⁶ *You all* know that I did not depend on you to provide for my needs. However, *there are some who accuse me, saying that* [IRO] I was very clever and got money from you by tricking you.

¹⁷ But did I ever do that? No! I never [RHQ] asked any of the men whom I sent to you *to get money from you and bring it to me*

¹⁸ Titus went *and visited you* because I urged him to do so. I also sent the other believer, *whom you know*, to go with Titus. *You know that* Titus did not [RHQ] *trick you in order to get money from you*. And you certainly know that he and I have always [RHQ] acted in exactly the same *honest way towards you*.

I am worried that when I visit you I will find that many of you are still sinning. I pray that God will help you turn from your sinful behavior, so that I will not have to discipline you when I come.

2 Corinthians 12:19—13:10

¹⁹ While you have been reading this letter, if you have been thinking that I have just been saying these things to defend myself against those who accuse me, you are wrong. I have been

saying *these things honestly, knowing* that God is listening to me. *I also speak as one who has a close relationship with Christ.* Everything that I do and *everything that I say* is to help you whom I love ◀to grow *spiritually*/ to become *spiritually mature*▶.

²⁰ *I have written this way to you because I worry that when I come to visit you, I will see that some of you are not conducting your lives the way that I want you to. If that is so, when I get there you will see that I will have to act in a very severe way toward you, and I am sure that you do not want that. Specifically, I am afraid that some of you may be quarreling, or that you are being jealous of each other, or that you quickly get very angry with them, or that you are acting selfishly, or that some of you are saying bad things about others, or that you are ◀spreading false rumors/ saying false things▶ about each other, or that you are acting proudly, or that you are doing things in a disorderly manner.*

²¹ *I ◀feel anxious/am concerned▶ about you. I worry that when I visit you again, God, the one whom I serve, will make me feel ashamed of you when I see that you still are not conducting your lives as believers should. Then I will feel very sad about some of you who were sinning previously and have not stopped your sinful behavior. Some of you may still have impure thoughts. Some of you may be having sexual intercourse with those to whom you are not married. And some of you may be doing other shameful things.*

13

¹ *In the Scriptures it is stated that when one person accuses another of wrongdoing, you must not believe his accusation right away. First, you must listen to at least two or three people who actually saw what happened. So keep in mind that this will be the third time that I will visit you!*

² *When I visited you the second time, I warned you that I was going to punish all the wrongdoers among you. And now I am warning you again while I am still away from you. When I visit you this third time, I will punish those who were sinning at the time when I visited you before and who are still sinning, and I will punish the others who have been sinning since then, if they have not stopped their sinful behavior.*

³ *Because you have demanded that I prove to you that Christ is speaking to you when I speak to you, I will show you that I speak to you as his apostle. Christ does not approve of your sinful behavior. On the contrary, he will powerfully discipline you.*

⁴ *It is true that Christ seemed to be weak when he was crucified {when people killed him by nailing him to the cross}. But it is also true that he now lives because God worked powerfully to bring him back to life. Similarly, as I serve God, I also am a weak human being as Christ was. But I also have a close relationship with Christ who is now alive again. And with his authority I will use God's power to discipline you.*

⁵ *Each of you should ask yourself: "Do I believe*

God's message about Christ?" Each of you should examine yourselves to make sure that you truly do believe in Christ and so truly belong to him, and that his Spirit lives in you (pl). When you examine yourselves in that way, I am sure that you will [RHQ] say to me, "Yes, of course we belong to Christ."

⁶ *I am also certain that you will know that I belong to Christ, just like you do.*

⁷ *But because I do not want to have to punish you, I am praying to God that he will help you not to do anything evil that would cause me to have to punish you. I pray this, not in order that when people who say that I am not your apostle realize that my ministry among you has been very successful, they will have to agree that I do have authority from Christ. Instead, I pray this because I want you to do what is right, even though that might mean that my opponents would think that I do not have authority from Christ, since I would not have an opportunity to show my authority to discipline you.*

⁸ *If you do what is right, I will not discipline you, because it would not be right for me to do that if you are conducting your lives the way you should, like God's true message says that you should. What God asks me to do is to help people to know and obey his true message.*

⁹ *I am happy whenever you are strongly trusting and obeying Christ, and because of that I do not have to use my authority to discipline you. It does not matter to me if that makes people think that I do not have any authority. Truly, what*

I am praying for is that *God* will *help* you to completely change your conduct.

¹⁰ That is why I am writing these things while I am still away from you. *What I want is that* when I visit you, *you will already be conducting your lives as God wants you to*, and so I will not have to *discipline you severely*, as the *Lord Jesus Christ gave me* the authority to do. The authority that I have from the Lord is to help you to become *spiritually* mature believers, not to cause you to stop *trusting in him*.

I finish my letter with some advice. All of us here send you our greetings, and I pray that God will bless you.

2 Corinthians 13:11-14

¹¹ Finally, my fellow believers, *I say to you*, be joyful. *Completely change how you conduct your lives*, and do what I have urged you to do. Be united in what you think *about the matters about which I have written to you*. Live peacefully *with each other*. *If you do those things*, God, who *enables you to love each other* and be peaceful, will bless [MTY] you.

¹² Greet each other affectionately as *fellow members of God's family should*.

¹³ All God's people *here* send you greetings.

¹⁴ *I pray that* the Lord Jesus Christ will act kindly *toward* all of you, in ways that you do not deserve, that God will *show all of you how much he loves you*, and that the Holy Spirit will *cause you to have good fellowship with him and with each other*.

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Dialect: American

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2025-07-11

PDF generated using Haiola and XeLaTeX on 11 Jul 2025 from source files dated 11 Jul 2025

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