

English: Unlocked Literal Bible for 2 Corinthians

Formatted for Translators

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Bible Text: The English Unlocked Literal Bible (ULB)

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Notes: English ULB Translation Notes

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Introduction to 2 Corinthians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 2 Corinthians

1. Paul thanks God for the Corinthian Christians (1:1-11)
2. Paul explains his conduct and his ministry (1:12-7:16)
3. Paul speaks about contributing money for the Jerusalem church (8:1-9:15)
4. Paul defends his authority as an apostle (10:1-13:10)
5. Paul gives final greetings and encouragement (13:11-14)

Who wrote the Book of 2 Corinthians?

Paul was the author. He was from the city of Tarsus. He had been known as Saul in his early life. Before becoming a Christian, Paul was a Pharisee. He persecuted Christians. After he became a Christian, he traveled several times throughout the Roman Empire telling people about Jesus.

Paul started the church in Corinth. He was staying in the city of Ephesus when he wrote this letter.

What is the Book of 2 Corinthians about?

In 2 Corinthians, Paul continued to write about the conflicts among the Christians in the city of Corinth. It is clear in this letter that the Corinthians had obeyed his previous instructions to them. In 2 Corinthians, Paul encouraged them to live in a way that would please God.

Paul also wrote to assure them that Jesus Christ sent him as an apostle to preach the Gospel. Paul wanted them to understand this because a group of Jewish Christians opposed what he was doing. They claimed Paul was not sent by God and that he was teaching a false message. This group of Jewish Christians wanted Gentile Christians to obey the law of Moses.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "Second Corinthians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's Second Letter to the Church in Corinth."

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What was the city of Corinth like?

Corinth was a major city located in ancient Greece. Because it was near the Mediterranean Sea, many travelers and traders came to buy and sell goods there. This resulted in the city having people from many different cultures. The city was famous for having people who lived in immoral ways. The people worshipped Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love. As part of the ceremonies honoring Aphrodite, her worshipers had sexual intercourse with temple prostitutes.

What did Paul mean by "false apostles" (11:13)?

These were Jewish Christians. They taught that Gentile Christians had to obey the law of Moses in order to follow Christ. Christian leaders had met in Jerusalem and decided on the matter (See: Acts 15). However, it is clear that there were still some groups that disagreed with what the leaders in Jerusalem decided.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

Singular and plural "you"

In this book, the word "I" refers to Paul. Also, the word "you" is almost always plural and refers to the believers in Corinth. There are two exceptions to this: 6:2 and 12:9.

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in 2 Corinthians in the ULB?

The scriptures use such words to indicate any one of various ideas. For this reason, it is often difficult for translators to represent them well in their versions. In translating into English, the ULB uses the following principles:

- Sometimes the meaning in a passage implies moral holiness. Especially important for understanding the gospel is the fact that God considers Christians to be sinless because they are united to Jesus Christ. Another related fact is that God is perfect and faultless. A third fact is that Christians are to conduct themselves in a blameless, faultless manner in life. In these cases, the ULB uses "holy," "holy God," "holy ones," or "holy people."
- The meaning in most passages in 2 Corinthians is a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULB uses "believer" or "believers." (See: 1:1; 8:4; 9:1, 12; 13:13)
- Sometimes the meaning in the passage implies the idea of someone or something set apart for God alone. In these cases, the ULB uses "set apart," "dedicated to," "reserved for," or "sanctified."

The UDB will often be helpful as translators think about how to represent these ideas in their own versions.

What did Paul mean by the expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," and others like them?

This kind of expression occurs in 1:19, 20; 2:12, 17; 3:14; 5:17, 19, 21; 10:17; 12:2, 19; and 13:4. Paul used these phrases to express the idea of a very close union between Jesus Christ and believers—that believers belong to Christ. Belonging to Christ means the believer is saved and is made a friend with God.

These phrases also have specific meanings that depend on how Paul used them in a particular passage. Depending on the the context, the word "in" can mean "because of," "by means of," "that agrees with," "in submission to," "in the manner of," or "in regard to." See, for example, "A door was opened for me in the Lord," (2:12) where Paul specifically meant that a door was opened for Paul by the Lord. The translator may represent those more immediate senses. But, if possible, it would be good for the translator to choose a word or phrase that represents both the immediate sense and the sense of "in union with." (See: inchrist)

What does it mean to be a "new creation" in Christ (5:17)?

Paul's message was that God makes Christians part of a "new world" when a person believes in Christ. God gives a new world of holiness, peace, and joy. In this new world, believers have a new nature that has been given them by the Holy Spirit. Translators should try to express this idea.

What are the major issues in the text of the Book of 2 Corinthians?

- "and in your love for us" (8:7). Many versions, including the ULB and UDB, read this way. However, many other translations read, "and in our love for you." There is strong evidence that each reading is original. Translators should probably follow the reading preferred by other versions in their region.

2 Corinthians

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, and to all God's holy people in the entire region of Achaia:

²May grace be to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised. He is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort.⁴God comforts us in all our tribulation, so that we can comfort those who are in any tribulation. We comfort others with the same comfort that God used to comfort us.

⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ abound for our sake, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.⁶But if we are afflicted, it is for your comfort and salvation; and if we are comforted, it is for your comfort. Your comfort is working effectively in your endurance of the same sufferings that we also suffer.⁷Our hope concerning you is unshaken, for we know that as you share the sufferings, you also share our comfort.

⁸For we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the tribulation we had in Asia. We were utterly burdened beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life.⁹Indeed, we had the sentence of death on us. But that was to make us not put our trust in ourselves, but instead in God, who raises the dead.¹⁰He rescued us from such a deadly peril, and he will rescue us. On him we have set our hope that he will rescue us.

¹¹He will do this as you also help us by your prayer. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the favor given to us through the prayers of many.

¹²Our boast is this: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world with integrity and godly sincerity, not relying on fleshly wisdom but on the grace of God.¹³We write to you nothing that you cannot read and understand, and I hope that you will fully understand¹⁴as you have understood us in part, that you can boast of us on the day of our Lord Jesus, just as we will boast of you.

¹⁵Because I was confident about this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might receive a second favor.¹⁶I was planning to visit you on my way to Macedonia. Then I wanted to visit you again on my trip from Macedonia, and then for you to send me on my way to Judea.

¹⁷When I was thinking this way, was I hesitating? Do I plan things according to the flesh, so that I say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time?¹⁸But just as God is faithful, our word to you is not "Yes" and "No."

¹⁹For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom Silvanus, Timothy, and I proclaimed among you, is not "Yes" and "No." Instead, he is always "Yes."²⁰For all the promises of God are "Yes" in him. So also through him we say "Amen" to the glory of God.

²¹Now it is God who confirms us with you in Christ, and he anointed us,²²he set his seal on us, and he gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee of what is to come.

²³But I call God as witness to my soul that the reason I did not come to Corinth was so that I might spare you.²⁴This is not because we want to be lords over your faith. Instead, we are fellow laborers with you for your joy, as you stand firm in your faith.

2 Corinthians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first paragraph reflects a common way to begin a letter in the ancient Near East.

Special Concepts

Paul's integrity

People were criticizing Paul and saying he was not sincere. He refutes them by explaining his motives for what he was doing.

Comfort

Comfort is a major theme of this chapter. The Holy Spirit comforts Christians. The Corinthians probably were afflicted and needed to be comforted.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical question

Paul uses two rhetorical questions to defend himself against a charge of not being sincere.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul uses the pronoun "we". This likely represents at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Guarantee

Paul says the Holy Spirit is the guarantee, which means pledge or down payment, of a Christian's eternal life. Christians are securely saved. But they will not experience all of God's given promises until after they die. The Holy Spirit is a personal guarantee that this will happen. This idea comes from a business term. A person gives some valuable item to another person as a "guarantee" that they will repay money. (See: eternity and save)

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 1:1 Notes](#)
- [2 Corinthians intro](#)

2 Corinthians 1:1

Paul ... to the church of God that is in Corinth

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter and its intended audience. Alternate translation: "I, Paul ... wrote this letter to you, the church of God that is in Corinth"

Timothy our brother

This indicates that both Paul and the Corinthians knew Timothy and considered him to be their spiritual brother.

Achaia

This is the name of a Roman province in the southern part of modern-day Greece.

2 Corinthians 1:2

General Information:

The word "you" throughout this letter refers to the people of the church in Corinth and to the rest of the Christians in that area.

May grace be to you and peace

This is a common greeting that Paul uses in his letters.

2 Corinthians 1:3

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "May we always praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"

the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort

These two phrases express the same idea in two different ways. Both phrases refer to God.

the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort

Possible meanings are 1) that the words "mercies" and "all comfort" describe the character of "Father" and "God" or 2) that the words "Father" and "God" refer to one who is the source of "mercies" and "all comfort."

2 Corinthians 1:4

comforts us in all our tribulation

Here "us" and "our" include the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 1:5

For just as the sufferings of Christ abound for our sake

Paul speaks of Christ's sufferings as if they were objects that could increase in number. Alternate translation: "For just as Christ suffered greatly for our sake"

the sufferings of Christ

Possible meanings are 1) that this refers to the suffering that Paul and Timothy experience because they preach the message about Christ or 2) that this refers to the suffering that Christ experienced on their behalf.

our comfort abounds

Paul speaks of comfort as if it were an object that could increase in size.

2 Corinthians 1:6

But if we are afflicted

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and Timothy, but not to the Corinthians. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "But if people afflict us"

if we are comforted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if God comforts us"

Your comfort is working effectively

"You experience effective comfort"

2 Corinthians 1:7

Our hope concerning you is unshaken

Hope is spoken of here as if it were a building that could be shaken and destroyed. Paul means that his hope for the Corinthians is strong and he continues to have hope for them. Alternate translation: "Our hope concerning you is strong" or "We have not stopped having hope for you"

Our hope concerning you is unshaken

Paul was probably hoping that the Corinthian Christians would continue to have faith in God, even though they were suffering, and that they would be comforted. Alternate translation: "We continue to be confident concerning you" or "We continue to confidently expect good for you"

2 Corinthians 1:8

we do not want you to be uninformed

This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "we want you to know"

We were utterly burdened beyond our strength

The word "burdened" is a metaphor for feeling stressed or overwhelmed. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We felt so overwhelmed beyond our strength" or "The troubles we had caused us so much more stress than we could handle"

we despaired even of life

"we could not see any way we could stay alive" or "we were sure we would die"

2 Corinthians 1:9

we had the sentence of death on us

Paul and Timothy are comparing their feeling of despair to that of someone condemned to die. Alternate translation: "we were in despair like someone who is condemned to die"

but instead in God

The words "put our trust" are left out of this phrase. Alternate translation: "but instead to put our trust in God"

who raises the dead

Here to raise is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "who causes the dead to live again"

2 Corinthians 1:10

He rescued us from such a deadly peril

"He saved us from such a dangerous situation where we could have died"

On him we have set our hope that he will rescue us

Paul and those with him hoped firmly in God. Alternate translation: "We trust in him to rescue us" or "We confidently expect that he will rescue us"

2 Corinthians 1:11

He will do this as you also help us

"God will rescue us from danger as you, the people of the church of Corinth, also help us"

the favor given to us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the favor that God has given to us"

2 Corinthians 1:12

General Information:

In this verse Paul uses the words "we," "our," and "ourselves" to refer to himself and Timothy and possibly others who served with them. These words do not include the people he was writing to.

Our boast is this

Paul uses the word "boast" ironically here. Boasting is usually a bad thing, but Paul is confident that he has lived "with integrity and godly sincerity," and he is telling the Corinthians so.

Our conscience testifies

Paul speaks of not being guilty as if his conscience were a person that could speak. Alternate translation: "We know by our conscience"

not relying on fleshly wisdom but on the grace of God

Here "fleshly" represents human. Alternate translation: "not relying on human wisdom but on the grace of God"

2 Corinthians 1:13

We write to you nothing that you cannot read and understand

The double negative here emphasizes the positive. This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "Everything we write to you is something you can read and understand" or "You can read and understand everything we write to you"

I hope that you will fully understand

Paul wanted them to understand, and he expected that they should be able to understand, but he didn't know for sure if they would. Alternate translation: "I expect that you will fully understand" or "I trust you will fully understand"

2 Corinthians 1:14

General Information:

In this vers Paul uses the word "us" to refer to himself and Timothy and possibly others who served with them. This word does not include the people he was writing to.

you can boast

The word "boast" here is used in the positive sense of feeling great satisfaction and joy in something.

2 Corinthians 1:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains his sincere expectation with pure motives to come see the believers in Corinth after his first letter.

Because I was confident about this

The word "this" refers to Paul's previous comments about the Corinthians.

so that you might receive a second favor

Paul hoped to visit the Corinthians two times. Each visit would be a favor to the people. Alternate translation: "so that you might benefit from me visiting you twice"

2 Corinthians 1:16

send me on my way to Judea

"assist me on my way to Judea"

2 Corinthians 1:17

was I hesitating?

Paul uses this question to emphasize he was sure about his decision to visit the Corinthians. The expected answer to the question is no. Alternate translation: "I was not hesitating." or "I was confident in my decision."

Do I plan things according to the flesh ... at the same time?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that his plans to visit the Corinthians were sincere. Alternate translation: "I do not plan things according to the flesh ... at the same time"

the flesh

This phrase is a metonym for the way mortal people do things. Alternate translation: "human standards" or "the way most people act"

Do I plan things ... so that I say "Yes, yes" and "No, no" at the same time?

This means that Paul did not say both that he would visit and that he would not visit at the same time. The words "yes" and "no" are repeated for emphasis. Alternate translation: "I do not plan things ... so that I say 'Yes, I will certainly visit' and 'No, I will definitely not visit' at the same time!"

2 Corinthians 1:18

our word to you

"what we say to you"

2 Corinthians 1:19

For the Son of God ... is not "Yes" and "No." Instead, he is always "Yes."

Jesus says "Yes" concerning the promises of God, which means that he guarantees that they are true. Alternate translation: "For the Son of God ... does not say 'Yes' and 'No' concerning God's promises. Instead, he always says 'Yes.'"

the Son of God

This is an important title for Jesus that describes his relationship to God.

2 Corinthians 1:20

all the promises of God are "Yes" in him

This means that Jesus guarantees all of God's promises. Alternate translation: "all the promises of God are guaranteed in Jesus Christ"

"Yes" in him ... through him we say

The word "him" refers to Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:21

God who confirms us with you

Possible meanings are 1) "God who confirms our relationship with each other because we are in Christ" or 2) "God who confirms both our and your relationship with Christ."

he anointed us

Possible meanings are 1) "he sent us to preach the gospel" or 2) "he chose us to be his people."

2 Corinthians 1:22

he set his seal on us

Paul speaks of God showing that we belong to him as if God had put a mark on us as a sign that we belong to him. Alternate translation: "he has put his mark of ownership on us" or "he has shown that we belong to him"

gave us the Spirit in our hearts

The word "heart" is often used to refer to the innermost part of a person. Alternate translation: "gave us the Spirit to live within each of us"

the Spirit ... as a guarantee

The Spirit is spoken of as if he were a partial downpayment toward eternal life.

2 Corinthians 1:23

as witness to my soul

The word "soul" here is a metonym for the whole person. Alternate translation: "as witness for me" or "to testify for me"

so that I might spare you

"so that I might not cause you more suffering"

2 Corinthians 1:24

be lords over your faith

"control what your faith should be" or "control what you believe"

we are fellow laborers with you for your joy

"we are working with you so that you may have joy"

stand firm in your faith

The word "stand" can refer to not changing. Alternate translation: "remain firm in your faith"

² ¹So I decided for my own part that I would not again come to you in sorrow.²If I caused you sorrow, who could make me glad but the very one who was made sorrowful by me?

³I wrote as I did in order that, when I came to you, I might not be hurt by those who should have made me rejoice. I have confidence about all of you that my joy is the same joy you all have.⁴For I wrote to you from great tribulation, with anguish of heart, and with many tears. I did not write you so that you would be made sorrowful. Instead, I wanted you to know the depth of the love that I have for you.

⁵If anyone has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not only to me, but in some measure—not to burden you—to all of you.⁶This punishment of that person by the majority is enough.⁷So now rather than punish him, you should forgive and comfort him. Do this so that he is not overwhelmed by too much sorrow.

⁸So I exhort you to confirm your love for him.⁹This was the reason I wrote, so that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything.

¹⁰If you forgive anyone, I forgive that person as well. What I have forgiven—if I have forgiven anything—it is forgiven for your sake in the presence of Christ.¹¹This is so that Satan will not trick us. For we are not ignorant of his schemes.

¹²A door was opened to me by the Lord when I came to the city of Troas to preach the gospel of Christ there.¹³I had no relief in my spirit because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I left them and went on to Macedonia.

¹⁴But may thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph. Through us he reveals the sweet aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.¹⁵For we are to God the sweet aroma of Christ, both among those who are saved and among those who are perishing.

¹⁶To the people who are perishing, it is an aroma from death to death. To the ones being saved, it is an aroma from life to life. Who is worthy of these things?¹⁷For we are not like so many people who sell the word of God for profit. Instead, with purity of motives, we speak in Christ, as we are sent from God, in the sight of God.

2 Corinthians 2 General Notes

Special Concepts

Harsh writing

In this chapter, Paul refers to a letter he previously wrote to the Corinthians. Some scholars believe this refers to the letter known as First Corinthians. Other scholars believe this refers to a letter Paul wrote after the letter known as First Corinthians and before this letter. In either case, Paul had told the church to rebuke an erring member. Paul is now encouraging them to be gracious to that person.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Aroma

A sweet aroma is a pleasing smell. Scripture often describes things that are pleasing to God as having a pleasing aroma.

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 2:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Because of his great love for them, Paul makes it clear that his rebuke in a previous letter to them caused him pain as well as pain to the church people in Corinth and the immoral man.

I decided for my own part

"I made the decision"

in sorrow

Possible meanings are 1) this is a metonym that refers to causing the Corinthians sorrow. Alternate translation: "in a way that would cause you sorrow" or 2) this refers to Paul's own sorrow. Alternate translation: "while I am sorrowful"

sorrow

great sadness

2 Corinthians 2:2

If I caused you sorrow, who could make me glad but the very one who was made sorrowful by me?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to emphasize that neither he nor they would benefit if his coming to them would cause them pain. Alternate translation: "If I caused you sorrow, the only ones who could make me glad would be the very ones whom I had made sorrowful."

sorrow ... sorrowful

See how you translated "sorrow" in 2 Corinthians 2:1.

the very one who was made sorrowful by me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the very one whom I had hurt"

2 Corinthians 2:3

I wrote as I did

Paul is referring to a letter he wrote previously to the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "I wrote as I did in my previous letter"

I might not be hurt by those who should have made me rejoice

Paul is speaking about the behavior of certain Corinthian believers who caused him emotional pain. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those who should have made me rejoice might not hurt me"

my joy is the same joy you all have

"what gives me joy is what gives you joy, too"

2 Corinthians 2:4

from great tribulation

Here the word "tribulation" refers to emotional pain.

with anguish of heart

Here the word "heart" refers to the location of the emotions. Alternate translation: "with extreme sorrow"

with many tears

"with much crying"

2 Corinthians 2:5

not to burden you

The "burden" here is the message. Possible meanings are 1) Paul does not want to say words that will make the Corinthians sad. Alternate translation: "not to say this too harshly" Or 2) Paul does not want to say more than is true. Alternate translation: "not to exaggerate"

2 Corinthians 2:6

This punishment of that person by the majority is enough

This can be stated in active form. The word "punishment" can be translated using a verb. Alternate translation: "The way that the majority has punished that person is enough"

is enough

"is sufficient"

2 Corinthians 2:7

he is not overwhelmed by too much sorrow

This means to have a strong emotional response of too much sorrow. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "too much sorrow does not overwhelm him"

2 Corinthians 2:8

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages the church in Corinth to show love and to forgive the person they have punished. He writes that he, also, has forgiven him.

confirm your love for him

"show him that you truly love him"

2 Corinthians 2:9

you are obedient in everything

Possible meanings are 1) "you are obedient to God in everything" or 2) "you are obedient in everything that I have taught you"

2 Corinthians 2:10

it is forgiven for your sake

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I have forgiven it for your sake"

forgiven for your sake

Possible meanings are 1) "forgiven out of my love for you" or 2) "forgiven for your benefit."

2 Corinthians 2:11

For we are not ignorant of his schemes

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "For we know his schemes well"

2 Corinthians 2:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages the believers in Corinth by telling them of the opportunities he has had to preach the gospel in Troas and Macedonia.

A door was opened to me by the Lord ... to preach the gospel

Paul speaks of his opportunity to preach the gospel as if it were a door through which he was allowed to walk. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord opened a door to me ... to preach the gospel" or "The Lord gave me the opportunity ... to preach the gospel"

2 Corinthians 2:13

I had no relief in my spirit

"My mind was troubled" or "I was worried"

my brother Titus

Paul speaks of Titus as his spiritual brother.

So I left them

"So I left the people of Troas"

2 Corinthians 2:14

God, who in Christ always leads us in triumph

Paul speaks of God as if he were a victorious general leading a victory parade, and of himself and his coworkers as those who take part in that parade. Possible meanings are 1) Paul and his coworkers are being led as prisoners in the parade. Alternate translation: "God, who leads us as prisoners in Christ's victory parade" or 2) Paul and his coworkers are led as victorious soldiers in the parade. Alternate translation: "God, who leads us as victorious soldiers in Christ's triumphal parade"

Through us he reveals the sweet aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere

Paul speaks of people learning about Christ from Paul and his companions as if they were smoke from incense that has a pleasing smell spreading around so people could smell it. He mixes his metaphor by saying that God "reveals" that pleasing smell. Alternate translation: "He causes the knowledge of Christ to spread to everyone who hears us, just as the sweet smell of burning incense spreads to everyone near it"

everywhere

"everywhere we go"

2 Corinthians 2:15

we are to God the sweet aroma of Christ

Paul speaks of his ministry as if it were an offering or incense that was being burned, creating a pleasant smell to God.

the sweet aroma of Christ

Possible meanings are 1) "the sweet aroma which is the knowledge of Christ" or 2) "the sweet aroma that Christ offers."

those who are saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "those whom God has saved"

2 Corinthians 2:16

it is an aroma

"the knowledge of Christ is an aroma." This refers back to [2 Corinthians 2:14]

an aroma from death to death

Possible meanings are 1) that the word "death" is repeated for emphasis and the phrase means "an aroma that causes death" or 2) "an aroma of death that causes people to die"

the ones being saved

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the ones whom God is saving"

aroma from life to life

Possible meanings are 1) that the word "life" is repeated for emphasis and the phrase means "an

aroma that gives life" or 2) "an aroma of life that gives people life"

Who is worthy of these things?

"Who is qualified to do these things?" The phrase "these things" refers to preaching God's message about Christ. Paul uses a rhetorical question to express amazement that anyone could be worthy of doing this. Alternate translation: "Who is worthy to spread the knowledge of Christ?" or "It is amazing that anyone is worthy of these things!"

2 Corinthians 2:17

who sell the word of God

"Word" here is a metonym for "message." Alternate translation: "who sell God's message"

purity of motives

"pure motives"

we speak in Christ

"we speak as people who are joined to Christ" or "we speak with the authority of Christ"

as we are sent from God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as people whom God has sent"

in the sight of God

This represents the presence of God. Paul and his coworkers preach the gospel with the awareness that God is watching them. Alternate translation: "speaking in the presence of God"

3¹ Are we beginning to praise ourselves again? We do not need letters of recommendation to you or from you, like some people, do we?² You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, known and read by all people.³ You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry. It was written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God. It was not written on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.

⁴ And this is the confidence that we have through Christ before God.⁵ We are not competent in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us. Rather, our competence is from God.⁶ It is God who made us able to be servants of a new covenant. This is a covenant not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

⁷ Now the ministry of death—engraved in letters on stones—came in such glory that the sons of Israel could not look directly at Moses' face. This is because of the glory of his face, a glory that was fading.⁸ How much more glorious will the ministry of the Spirit be?

⁹ For if the ministry of condemnation had glory, how much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory!¹⁰ For indeed, that which was once made glorious is no longer glorious in this respect, because of the glory that exceeds it.¹¹ For if that which was passing away had glory, how much more will what is permanent have glory!

¹² Since we have such a hope, we are very bold.¹³ We are not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel were not able to look directly at the ending of a glory that was passing away.

¹⁴ But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.¹⁵ But even today, whenever Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.¹⁶ But when a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.¹⁸ Now all of us, with unveiled faces, see the glory of the Lord. We are being transformed into the same glorious likeness from one degree of glory into another, just as from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul continues his defense. Paul views the Corinthian Christians as the proof of his work.

Special concepts in this chapter

Law of Moses

Paul alludes to God giving the Ten Commandments on stone tablets. This represents the law of Moses. The law was good because it came from God. But God punished the Israelites because they disobeyed it. This chapter may be difficult for translators to understand if the Old Testament has not yet been translated. (See: lawofmoses and covenant and reveal)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Paul uses many metaphors in this chapter to explain complex spiritual truths. It is unclear whether this makes Paul's teachings easier or more difficult to understand.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"This is a covenant not of the letter but of the Spirit."

Paul contrasts the old and new covenants. The new covenant is not a system of rules and regulations. Here "Spirit" probably refers to the Holy Spirit. It may also refer to the new covenant being "spiritual" in nature. (See: spirit)

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 3:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 3:1	translation: "You yourselves are like our letter of recommendation"
Connecting Statement:	written on our hearts
Paul reminds the Corinthians that he is not boasting as he tells them about what he has done through Christ.	Here the word "hearts" refers to their thoughts and emotions. Possible meanings are 1) Paul and his coworkers are sure about the Corinthians being their letter of recommendation or 2) Paul and his coworkers care very deeply for the Corinthians.
Are we beginning to praise ourselves again?	
Paul uses this question to emphasize that they are not bragging about themselves. Alternate translation: "We are not beginning to praise ourselves again."	written on our hearts
We do not need letters of recommendation to you or from you, like some people, do we?	This can be stated in active form with "Christ" as the implied subject. Alternate translation: "which Christ has written on our hearts"
Paul says this to express that the Corinthians already know about Paul and Timothy's good reputation. The question prompts a negative answer. Alternate translation: "We certainly do not need letters of recommendation to you or from you, like some people do."	known and read by all people
letters of recommendation	This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that all people can know and read"
This is a letter that a person writes to introduce and give their approval of someone else.	2 Corinthians 3:3
2 Corinthians 3:2	General Information:
General Information:	Paul continues the extended metaphor that he began in [2 Corinthians 3:2]
Paul begins an extended metaphor that speaks of the way that the Corinthians have been obeying Christ as if it were a letter that Christ had written first to Paul and his companions and then to all the people in the world.	you are a letter from Christ
You yourselves are our letter of recommendation	Paul clarifies that Christ is the one who has written the letter. Alternate translation: "you are a letter that Christ has written"
Paul speaks of the Corinthians as if they are a letter of recommendation. That they have become believers serves to validate Paul's ministry to others. Alternate	the result of our ministry
	Because of the work Paul and his companions had done, the world could look at the Corinthians and see how Christ blesses people in this life. Some modern translations read, "delivered by us."

It was written not with ink ... on tablets of human hearts

Paul clarifies that the Corinthians are like a spiritual letter, not like a letter that humans write with physical objects.

It was written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It was written not with ink but it was written by the Spirit of the living God" or "It is not a letter that people wrote with ink but a letter that the Spirit of the living God wrote"

It was not written on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It is not a letter that people engraved on stone tablets but a letter that the Spirit of the living God wrote on tablets of human hearts"

tablets of human hearts

Paul speaks of their hearts as if they are flat pieces of stone or clay upon which people engraved letters.

2 Corinthians 3:4

this is the confidence

This refers to what Paul has just said. His confidence comes from knowing that the Corinthians are the validation of his ministry before God.

2 Corinthians 3:5

competent in ourselves

"qualified in ourselves" or "sufficient in ourselves"

to claim anything as coming from us

Here the word "anything" refers to anything pertaining to Paul's apostolic ministry. Alternate translation: "to claim that anything we have done in ministry comes from our own efforts"

our competence is from God

"God gives us our sufficiency"

2 Corinthians 3:6

a covenant not of the letter

Here the word "letter" means letters of the alphabet and refers to words that people write down. The phrase alludes to the Old Testament law. Alternate translation: "a covenant not based on commands that men have written"

but of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the one who establishes God's covenant with people. Alternate translation: "but a covenant of the Spirit" or "but a covenant based on what the Spirit does"

the letter kills

Paul speaks of the Old Testament law as a person who kills. Following that law leads to spiritual death. Alternate translation: "the written law leads to death"

2 Corinthians 3:7

Connecting Statement:

Paul contrasts the fading glory of the old covenant with the superiority and freedom of the new covenant. He contrasts the veil of Moses with the clarity of present revelation. During the time of Moses there was a less clear picture of what is now revealed.

Now the ministry of death ... came in such glory

Paul emphasizes that although the law leads to death, it was still very glorious.

the ministry of death

This refers to the Old Testament law that God gave through Moses. Alternate translation: "the ministry that causes people to die because it is based on the law"

engraved in letters on stones

"carved in letters on stone." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God carved in letters on stone"

in such glory

"in so much glory"

This is because

"They could not look because"

2 Corinthians 3:8

How much more glorious will the ministry of the Spirit be?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that "the service that the ministry of the Spirit" must be more glorious than "the ministry of death" [2 Corinthians 3:7]

the ministry of the Spirit

This refers to the new covenant, of which Paul is a minister. Alternate translation: "the ministry that gives life because it is based on the Spirit"

2 Corinthians 3:9

the ministry of condemnation

"the ministry of condemnation." This refers to the Old Testament law. Alternate translation: "the ministry that condemns people because it is based on the law"

how much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory!

Here the word "how" marks this phrase as an exclamation, not as a question. Alternate translation: "then the ministry of righteousness must abound in so much more glory!"

the ministry of righteousness abound in glory

Paul speaks of "the ministry of righteousness" as if it were an object that could produce or multiply another object. He means that "the ministry of righteousness" is far more glorious than the law, which also had glory.

the ministry of righteousness

This refers to the new covenant, of which Paul is a minister. Alternate translation: "the ministry that makes people righteous because it is based on the Spirit"

2 Corinthians 3:10

that which was once made glorious is no longer glorious ... because of the glory that exceeds it

The Old Testament law no longer appears glorious when compared with the new covenant, which is much more glorious.

that which was once made glorious

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the law which God once made glorious"

in this respect

"in this way"

2 Corinthians 3:11

that which was passing away

This refers to "the service of condemnation," which Paul speaks of as if it were an object capable of disappearing. Alternate translation: "that which was becoming useless"

2 Corinthians 3:12

Since we have such a hope

This hope is a confident hope. It refers to what Paul has just said. His hope comes from knowing that the new covenant leads to an eternal glory. Alternate translation: "Since we confidently expect this" or "Since we confidently wait to receive this glory"

such a hope

"such confidence"

2 Corinthians 3:13

the ending of a glory that was passing away

The refers to the glory that shined on Moses's face. Alternate translation: "the glory on Moses's face as it faded away completely"

2 Corinthians 3:14

But their minds were hardened

Paul speaks of the minds of the Israelite people as objects that could be made hard. This expression

means that they were unable to understand what they saw. Alternate translation: "But the Israelites could not understand what they saw"

For to this day

to the time at which Paul was writing to the Corinthians

when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains

Just as the Israelites could not see the glory on Moses's face because he covered his face with a veil, there is a spiritual veil that prevents people from understanding when they read the old covenant.

when they read the old covenant

"when they hear someone read the old covenant"

It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away

Here both occurrences of the word "it" refer to "the same veil." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "No one removes the veil, because only in Christ does God remove it"

2 Corinthians 3:15

But even today

This phrase refers to the time at which Paul was writing to the Corinthians.

whenever Moses is read

Here the word "Moses" refers to the Old Testament law. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whenever someone reads the Mosaic law"

a veil covers their hearts

Here the word "hearts" represents what people think, and the people being unable to understand the old covenant is spoken of as if they have a veil that covers their hearts the way a physical veil would cover their eyes. Alternate translation: "they are unable to understand what they are hearing"

2 Corinthians 3:16

when a person turns to the Lord

Here "turns to" is a metaphor that means to become loyal to someone. Alternate translation: "when a person starts to worship the Lord" or "when a person starts to trust in the Lord"

the veil is taken away

God gives them the ability to understand. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God lifts the veil away" or "God gives them the ability to understand"

2 Corinthians 3:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Corinthians 3:18

Now all of us

Here the word "us" refers to all believers, including Paul and the Corinthians.

with unveiled faces, see the glory of the Lord

Unlike the Israelites who could not see God's glory reflected on Moses's face because he had covered it with a veil, there is nothing to prevent believers from seeing and understanding God's glory.

We are being transformed into the same glorious likeness

The Spirit is changing believers to be glorious like him. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The Lord is transforming us into his same glorious likeness"

from one degree of glory into another

"from one amount of glory to another amount of glory." This means that the Spirit is constantly increasing the glory of believers.

just as from the Lord

"just as this comes from the Lord"

⁴Therefore, because we have this ministry, and just as we have received mercy, we do not become discouraged.
²Instead, we have rejected secret and shameful ways. We do not walk in craftiness, and we do not mishandle the word of God, but by presenting the truth, we recommend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

³But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing.⁴In their case, the god of this world has blinded their unbelieving minds. As a result, they are not able to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

⁵For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.⁶For God is the one who said, "Light will shine out of darkness." He has shone in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the presence of Jesus Christ.

⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay, so that it is clear that the exceedingly great power belongs to God and not to us.⁸We are afflicted in every way, but not overwhelmed. We are perplexed but not filled with despair.⁹We are persecuted but not abandoned; struck down but not destroyed;¹⁰always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.

¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal flesh.¹²So death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

¹³But we have the same spirit of faith according to that which was written: "I believed, and so I spoke." We also believe, and so we also speak,¹⁴because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.¹⁵For everything is for your sake, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to increase to the glory of God.

¹⁶So we do not become discouraged. Even though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day.¹⁷For this momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal burden of glory that exceeds all measurement.¹⁸For we are not watching for things that are seen, but for things that are unseen. The things that we can see are temporary, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This chapter begins with the word "therefore." This connects it to what the previous chapter teaches. How these chapters are divided may be confusing to the reader.

Special concepts in this chapter

Ministry

Paul ministers to people by telling them about Christ. He does not try to trick people into believing. If they do not understand the gospel, it is because the problem is ultimately spiritual. (See: spirit)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Life and death

Paul does not refer here to physical life and death. Life represents the new life a Christian has in Jesus. Death represents the old way of living before believing in Jesus. (See: life and death and faith)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Hope

Paul uses a repeated pattern in a purposeful way. He makes a statement. Then he denies a seemingly opposite or contradictory statement or gives an exception. Together these give the reader hope in difficult circumstances. (See: hope)

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 4:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul writes that he is honest in his ministry by preaching Christ, not praising himself. He shows the death and the life of Jesus in how he lives so that life can work in the Corinthian believers.

we have this ministry

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and his coworker, but not to the Corinthians.

and just as we have received mercy

This phrase explains how Paul and his coworkers "have this ministry." It is a gift that God has given to them through his mercy. Alternate translation: "because God has shown us mercy"

2 Corinthians 4:2

we have rejected secret and shameful ways

This means that Paul and his coworkers refuse to do "secret and shameful" things. It does not mean that they had done these things in the past.

secret and shameful ways

The word "secret" describes the things that people do secretly. Things that are shameful should cause people who do them to feel ashamed. Alternate translation: "the things that people do secretly because they cause shame"

walk in craftiness

The word "walk" is a metaphor for the way a person lives his life. Alternate translation: "live by deceiving people"

we do not mishandle the word of God

The phrase "word of God" here is a metonym for the message from God. The words "we do not mishandle" use two negative thoughts to express a positive thought. Alternate translation: "we handle God's message correctly" or "we use the word of God properly"

we recommend ourselves to everyone's conscience

This means that they provide enough evidence for each person who hears them to decide whether they are right or wrong.

in the sight of God

This refers to God's presence. God's understanding and approval of Paul's truthfulness is referred to as God being able to see them. Alternate translation: "before God" or "with God as witness"

2 Corinthians 4:3

But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing

This refers back to what Paul said starting in [2 Corinthians 3:14]

if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if a veil covers our gospel, that veil covers it"

our gospel

"the gospel that we preach"

2 Corinthians 4:4

the god of this world has blinded their unbelieving minds

Paul speaks of their minds as if they had eyes, and their inability to understand as their minds being unable to see. Alternate translation: "the god of this world has prevented unbelievers from understanding"

the god of this world

"the god who rules this world." This phrase refers to Satan.

they are not able to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ

As the Israelites could not see God's glory that shined on Moses's face because he covered it with a veil (2 Corinthians 3:13), unbelievers are not able to see Christ's glory that shines in the gospel. This means that they are unable to understand "the gospel of the glory of Christ"

the light of the gospel

"the light that comes from the gospel"

the gospel of the glory of Christ

"the gospel about Christ's glory"

2 Corinthians 4:5

but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants

You can supply the verb for these phrases. Alternate translation: "but we proclaim Christ Jesus as Lord, and we proclaim ourselves as your servants"

for Jesus' sake

"because of Jesus"

2 Corinthians 4:6

Light will shine out of darkness

With this sentence, Paul refers to God creating light, as described in the book of Genesis.

He has shone ... to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God

Here the word "light" refers to the ability to understand. Just as God created light, he also creates understanding for believers. Alternate translation: "He has shone ... to enable us to understand the glory of God"

in our hearts

Here the word "hearts" refers to the mind and thoughts. Alternate translation: "in our minds"

the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the presence

"the light, which is the knowledge of the glory of God, in the presence"

the glory of God in the presence of Jesus Christ

"the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Just as God's glory shone upon Moses's face (2 Corinthians 3:7), it also shines upon Jesus's face. This means that when Paul preaches the gospel, people are able to see and understand the message about God's glory.

2 Corinthians 4:7

But we have

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and his coworkers, but not to the Corinthians.

we have this treasure in jars of clay

Paul speaks of the gospel as if it were a treasure and their bodies as if they were breakable jars made out of clay. This emphasizes that they are of little value compared to the worth of the gospel that they preach.

so that it is clear

"so that it is clear to people" or "so that people clearly know"

2 Corinthians 4:8

We are afflicted in every way

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People afflict us in every way"

2 Corinthians 4:9

We are persecuted but not abandoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "People persecute us, but God does not abandon us" or "People persecute us, but God does not stop caring for us"

abandoned; struck down but not destroyed

This can be stated in active form and as a new sentence. Alternate translation: "abandoned. People strike us down but do not destroy us"

struck down

"hurt badly"

2 Corinthians 4:10

always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus

Paul speaks of his sufferings as if they are an experience of the death of Jesus. Alternate translation: "often in danger of dying, as Jesus died" or "always suffering in such a way that we experience the death of Jesus"

the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body

This can be stated in active form. Possible meanings are 1) "people can see that we will live in bodies again because Jesus is alive" or 2) "we can show other people in our bodies the spiritual life that Jesus gives."

2 Corinthians 4:11

we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake

Carrying the death of Jesus represents being in danger of dying because of being loyal to Jesus. Alternate translation: "God is always leading those of us who are alive to face death because we are joined to Jesus" or "People are always causing us who are alive to be in danger of dying because we are joined to Jesus"

so that the life of Jesus may be revealed in our mortal flesh

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God may reveal the life of Jesus in our mortal flesh"

the life of Jesus may be revealed

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is referring to the life that Jesus lives. Alternate translation: "God may reveal that Jesus is alive" 2) Paul is referring to the life that Jesus gives to his people. Alternate translation: "God may reveal the life that Jesus gives to his people"

our mortal flesh

Paul is referring to our physical bodies, which will die someday.

2 Corinthians 4:12

death is at work in us, but life is at work in you

Paul speaks of death and life as if they are persons who can work. This means that they are always in danger of physical death so that the Corinthians can have spiritual life.

2 Corinthians 4:13

the same spirit of faith

"the same attitude of faith." Here the word "spirit" refers a person's attitude and temperament.

according to that which was written

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as the one who wrote these words"

I believed, and so I spoke

This is a quote from the Psalms.

2 Corinthians 4:14

that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will

Here to raise up is an idiom for causing someone who has died to become alive again. Alternate translation: "that the one who caused the Lord Jesus to live again will" or "God, who raised the Lord Jesus, will"

2 Corinthians 4:15

For everything is for your sake

Here the word "everything" refers to all of the sufferings that Paul has described in previous verses.

the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to increase to the glory of God

Paul speaks of more and more people experiencing God's grace as if grace were "reaching" people. And, Paul speaks of more and more people giving thanks to God as if thanksgiving were an object that could become larger by itself. Alternate translation: "God may show his grace to many people, causing more and more people to give thanks, to the glory of God"

2 Corinthians 4:16

Connecting Statement:

Paul writes that the Corinthian difficulties are minor and do not last long when compared to the unseen eternal things.

So we do not become discouraged

This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: "So we remain confident"

outwardly we are wasting away

This refers to their physical bodies decaying and dying. Alternate translation: "our physical bodies are getting weak and dying"

inwardly we are being renewed day by day

This refers to their inward, spiritual lives getting stronger. Alternate translation: "our spiritual beings are being strengthened day by day"

inwardly we are being renewed day by day

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God is renewing our inward being more each day"

2 Corinthians 4:17

this momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal burden of glory

Paul speaks of his sufferings and the glory that God will give him as if they were objects that can be weighed. He uses irony to call affliction, which people usually think of as if it were a heavy burden, a light burden and glory, which people usually think of as relief from suffering, as if it were a heavy burden. Through this metaphor he is saying that the glory to come will be much greater than the affliction.

that exceeds all measurement

The glory that Paul will experience is so great that no one can measure it. The abstract noun "measurement" can be translated as the verb "measure." Alternate translation: "that no one can measure"

2 Corinthians 4:18

things that are seen ... things that are unseen ... things that are unseen

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "things that we can see ... things that we cannot see ... things that we cannot see"

but for things that are unseen

You can supply the verb for this phrase. Alternate translation: "but we are watching for things that are unseen"

5 ¹We know that if our earthly house—the tent—is destroyed, we have a building from God. It is a house not made by human hands, but an eternal house, in heaven.²For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly residence.³We long for this because by putting it on we will not be found to be naked.

⁴For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened. We do not want to be unclothed. Instead, we want to be clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.⁵The one who prepared us for this very thing is God, who gave us the Spirit as a guarantee of what is to come.

⁶Therefore always be confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord.⁷For we walk by faith, not by sight.⁸So we have confidence. We would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

⁹So we make it our goal, whether we are at home or away, to please him.¹⁰For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for the things done in the body, whether for good or for bad.

¹¹Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade people. What we are is clearly seen by God, and I hope that it is also clear to your conscience.¹²We are not commending ourselves to you again, but we are giving you a reason to be proud of us, so you may have an answer for those who boast about appearances but not about what is in the heart.

¹³For if we are out of our minds, it is for God; and if we are in our right minds, it is for your sake.¹⁴For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: That one person died for all, and that therefore all have died.

¹⁵He died for all, so that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

¹⁶For this reason, from now on we do not regard anyone according to the flesh, even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh. But now we no longer regard him that way.¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. See, they have become new.

¹⁸All these things are from God. He reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.¹⁹That is, in Christ God is reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them. He is entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

²⁰So we are appointed as representatives of Christ, as though God were making his appeal through us. We plead with you, for the sake of Christ: "Be reconciled to God!"²¹He made him who knew no sin to become sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

2 Corinthians 5 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

New bodies in heaven

Paul knows that when he dies he will receive a much better body. Because of this, he is not afraid of being killed for preaching the gospel. So he tells others that they too can be reconciled to God. Christ will take away their sin and give them his righteousness. (See: goodnews, reconcile, sin, and righteous)

New creation

The old and new creation probably refer to how Paul illustrates the old and new self. These concepts are also the same as the old and new man. The term "old" probably does not refer to the sinful nature with which a person is born. It refers to the old way of living or the Christian formerly being bound to sin. The "new creation" is the new nature or new life that God gives a person after they come to believe in Christ. (See: faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Home

The Christian's home is no longer in the world. A Christian's real home is in heaven. By using this metaphor, Paul emphasizes that the Christian's circumstances in this world are temporary. It gives hope to those who are suffering. (See: heaven and and hope)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"The message of reconciliation"

This refers to the gospel. Paul calls for people who are hostile to God to repent and be reconciled to him. (See: repent and reconcile)

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 5:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues by contrasting believers' earthly bodies to the heavenly ones God will give.

if our earthly house—the tent—is destroyed, we have a building from God

Here a temporary "house" or "tent" is a metaphor for a person's physical body and a permanent "building from God" is a metaphor for the new body that God will give believers after they die.

if our earthly house—the tent—is destroyed, we have

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if people destroy our earthly house—the tent—we have" or "if people kill our bodies, we have"

if our earthly house—the tent—is destroyed

"if the tent that is our home on earth is destroyed"

It is a house not made by human hands

Here "house" means the same thing as "building from God." Here "hands" is a synecdoche that represents the human as a whole. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It is a house that humans did not make"

2 Corinthians 5:2

in this tent we groan

Here "this tent" means the same thing as "the earthly dwelling that we live in." A groan is a sound that a person makes when they eagerly desire to have something that is good.

longing to be clothed with our heavenly residence

The words "our heavenly residence" means the same thing as "the place God will give us to live in." Paul speaks of the new body that believers receive after they die as if it were both a house to live in and a piece of clothing that a person can put on.

2 Corinthians 5:3

by putting it on

"by putting on our heavenly dwelling"

we will not be found to be naked

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we will not be naked" or "God will not find us naked"

2 Corinthians 5:4

while we are in this tent

Paul speaks of the physical body as if it were a "tent."

in this tent, we groan

The word "tent" refers to "the earthly dwelling that we live in." The word groan is a sound that a person makes when they eagerly desire to have something that is good. See how you translated this in 2 Corinthians 5:2.

being burdened

Paul refers to the difficulties that the physical body experiences as if they were heavy objects that are difficult to carry.

We do not want to be unclothed ... we want to be clothed

Paul speaks of the body as if it were clothing. Here "to be unclothed" refers to the death of the physical body; "to be clothed" refers to having the resurrection body that God will give.

to be unclothed

"to be without clothes" or "to be naked"

so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life

Paul speaks of life as if it were an animal that eats "what is mortal." The physical body that will die will be replaced by a resurrection body that will live forever.

so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that life may swallow up what is mortal"

2 Corinthians 5:5

who gave us the Spirit as a guarantee of what is to come

The Spirit is spoken of as if he were a down payment toward eternal life. See how you translated a similar phrase in [2 Corinthians 1:22]

2 Corinthians 5:6

Connecting Statement:

Because believers will have a new body and have the Holy Spirit as a pledge, Paul reminds them to live by faith so that they may please the Lord.

while we are at home in the body

Paul speaks of the physical body as if it were a place where a person dwells. Alternate translation: "while we are living in this earthly body"

we are away from the Lord

"we are not at home with the Lord" or "we are not in heaven with the Lord"

2 Corinthians 5:7

we walk by faith, not by sight

Here "walk" is a metaphor for "live" or "behave." Alternate translation: "we live according to faith, not according to what we see"

2 Corinthians 5:8

We would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord

You may need to make explicit that they do not prefer to remain alive in this present world. Alternate translation: "We would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord than to remain in the body and away from the Lord"

We would prefer to be away from the body

Here the word "body" refers to the physical body.

at home with the Lord

"at home with the Lord in heaven"

2 Corinthians 5:9

whether we are at home or away

Possible meanings are 1) "whether we are at home in the body or away from it" or 2) "whether we are at home with the Lord or away from him." Either way, Paul means that, whether in this life or in the next life, believers should try to please the Lord.

to please him

"to please the Lord"

2 Corinthians 5:10

we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ

Here "judgment seat of Christ" represents Christ himself, who will judge all people. Alternate translation: "we all must stand in the presence of Christ to be judged" or "Christ will judge all of us"

appear

"go" or "be present" or "stand"

each one may receive what is due

"each person may receive what he deserves"

the things done in the body

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the things he has done in the physical body"

whether for good or for bad

"whether those things were good or bad"

2 Corinthians 5:11

knowing the fear of the Lord

"knowing what it means to fear the Lord"

we persuade people

Possible meanings are 1) "we persuade people of the truth of the gospel" or 2) "we persuade people that we are legitimate apostles."

What we are is clearly seen by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God clearly sees what kind of people we are"

I hope that it is also clear to your conscience

Paul wanted the the Corinthians to know what kind of people he and those with him were. "I expect that it is also clear to your conscience" or "I trust that it is also clear to your conscience"

that it is also clear to your conscience

"that you are also convinced of it"

2 Corinthians 5:12

We are not commending ourselves to you again

"We are not recommending ourselves to you again" or "We are not trying to show you again that we are worthy"

so you may have an answer for those

"so you may have something to say to those"

those who boast about appearances but not about what is in the heart

Here the word "appearances" refers to outward expressions of things like ability and status. The word "heart" refers to the inward character of a person. Alternate translation: "those who praise their own actions, but do not care about what they really are in their inner being"

2 Corinthians 5:13

if we are out of our minds ... if we are in our right minds

Paul is speaking about the way others think of him and his coworkers. Alternate translation: "if people think we are crazy ... if people think we are sane"

2 Corinthians 5:14

the love of Christ

Possible meanings are 1) "our love for Christ" or 2) "Christ's love for us."

died for all

"died for all people"

2 Corinthians 5:15

him who for their sake died and was raised

"him who for their sake died and whom God caused to live again" or "Christ, who died for their sake and whom God raised"

for their sake

Possible meanings are 1) these words refer only to "died" or 2) these words refer to both "died" and "was raised."

2 Corinthians 5:16

Connecting Statement:

Because of Christ's love and death, we are not to judge by human standards. We are appointed to teach others how to be united with and have peace with God through Christ's death and to receive God's righteousness through Christ.

For this reason

This refers to what Paul has just said about living for Christ instead of living for self.

regard anyone

"judge anyone" or "think about anyone"

the flesh

This phrase is a metonym for the way mortal people do things. See how you translated it in [2 Corinthians 1:17]

2 Corinthians 5:17

he is a new creation

Paul speaks of the person who believes in Christ as if that person were a new person that God had created. Alternate translation: "he is a new person"

The old things have passed away

Here "the old things" refers to the things that characterized a person before he trusted in Christ.

See

The word "See" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

2 Corinthians 5:18

All these things are from God

"God has done all these things." This refers to what Paul has just said in the previous verse about new things replacing old things.

the ministry of reconciliation

This can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "the ministry of reconciling people to him"

2 Corinthians 5:19

That is, in Christ

"This means that in Christ"

in Christ God is reconciling the world to himself

Here the word "world" refers to people in the world. Alternate translation: "in Christ, God is reconciling mankind to himself"

He is entrusting to us the message of reconciliation

God has given Paul the responsibility to spread the message that God is reconciling people to himself.

the message of reconciliation

"the message about reconciliation"

2 Corinthians 5:20

we are appointed as representatives of Christ

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has appointed us as Christ's representatives"

representatives of Christ

"those who speak for Christ"

Be reconciled to God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Let God reconcile you to himself"

2 Corinthians 5:21

General Information:

The words "us" and "we" refer to Paul and his readers and so are inclusive.

He made him who knew no sin to become sin for us

"Christ new no sin, but God made him to become sin for us"

knew no sin

"never sinned"

to become sin for us

The word "sin" is a metonym for the sacrifice that is offered so that God will forgive sin. Alternate translation: "to become the sacrifice for which God will forgive our sins"

us, so that

"us. He did this so that"

so that we might become the righteousness of God in him

The phrase "the righteousness of God" refers to the righteousness that God requires and that comes from God. Alternate translation: "so that through Christ we might have the righteousness that God requires"

6 ¹Working together with him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain.²For he says,

"In a favorable time I paid attention to you,
and in the day of salvation I helped you."

Look, now is the favorable time. Look, now is the day of salvation.

³We do not place a stumbling block in front of anyone, for we do not wish our ministry to be discredited.

⁴Instead, in every way we commend ourselves as God's servants in much endurance, in affliction, in distress, in hardship,⁵in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in hard labor, in sleepless nights, in hunger,⁶in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in sincere love,⁷in the word of truth, in the power of God; with the armor of righteousness for the right hand and the left.

⁸We are God's servants in glory and dishonor, in slander and praise; regarded as deceivers and yet truthful;⁹as unknown, yet well known; as dying, yet, look—we live; as being disciplined, yet not killed;¹⁰as sorrowful, yet rejoicing; as poor, yet many are enriched; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.

¹¹We have spoken the whole truth to you, Corinthians, and our heart is wide open.¹²You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own hearts.¹³Now in fair exchange—I speak as to children—open yourselves wide also.

¹⁴Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what association does righteousness have with lawlessness? For what fellowship does light have with darkness?¹⁵What agreement can Christ have with Belial? Or what share does a believer have together with an unbeliever?¹⁶And what agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God, just as God said:

"I will dwell among them
and walk among them.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people."

¹⁷Therefore,

"Come out from among them,
and be set apart," says the Lord.
"Touch no unclean thing,
and I will welcome you.

¹⁸ I will be a Father to you,
and you will be my sons and daughters,"
says the Lord Almighty.

2 Corinthians 6 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verses 2 and 16-18, which are words from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Servants

Paul refers to Christians as servants of God. God calls Christians to serve him in all circumstances. Paul describes some of the difficult circumstances in which he and his companions served God.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Contrasts

Paul uses four pairs of contrasts: righteousness versus lawlessness, light versus darkness, Christ versus Satan, and the temple of God versus idols. These contrasts show a difference between Christians and non-Christians. (See: righteous and light and darkness)

Light and darkness

The Bible often speaks of unrighteous people, people who do not do what pleases God, as if they were walking around in darkness. It speaks of light as if it were what enables those sinful people to become righteous, to understand what they are doing wrong and begin to obey God. (See: righteous)

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses a series of rhetorical questions to teach his readers. All of these questions make essentially the same point: Christians should not intimately fellowship with those who live in sin. Paul repeats these questions for emphasis. (See: and sin)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul likely uses the pronoun "we" to represent at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 6:1](#)

2 Corinthians 6:1

For he says

Connecting Statement:

"For God says." This introduces a quotation from the prophet Isaiah. Alternate translation: "For God says in scripture"

Paul summarizes how working together for God is supposed to be.

Look

Working together with him

The word "Look" here alerts us to pay attention to the surprising information that follows.

Paul is implying that he and Timothy are working with God. Alternate translation: "Working together with God"

2 Corinthians 6:3

we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain

We do not place a stumbling block in front of anyone

"we beg you to make use of the grace that you have received from God"

Paul speaks of anything that would prevent a person from trusting in Christ as if it were a physical object over which that person trips and falls. Alternate translation: "We do not want to do anything that will prevent people from believing our message"

2 Corinthians 6:2

General Information:

In this verse, Paul quotes a portion from the prophet Isaiah.

we do not wish our ministry to be discredited

The word "discredited" refers to people speaking badly about Paul's ministry, and working against the message he proclaims. This can be stated in active form.
Alternate translation: "we do not want anyone to be able to speak badly about our ministry"

2 Corinthians 6:4

General Information:

When Paul uses "we" here, he is referring to himself and Timothy.

in every way we commend ourselves as God's servants

Possible meanings are 1) "Because we are God's servants we recommend ourselves to you in every way" or 2) "in every way we show that we are God's servants"

in every way

This tells how they commend themselves. Alternate translation: "in everything we do"

in much endurance, in affliction, in distress, in hardship

Paul mentions various difficult situations in which they commend themselves as God's servants.

2 Corinthians 6:5

in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in hard labor, in sleepless nights, in hunger

Paul continues to mention various difficult situations in which they commend themselves as God's servants.

2 Corinthians 6:6

in purity ... in sincere love

Paul lists several moral virtues that they maintained in difficult situations, commending themselves as God's servants.

2 Corinthians 6:7

in the word of truth

"by speaking God's message about truth" or "by speaking God's true message"

in the power of God

"by showing God's power to people"

with the armor of righteousness for the right hand and the left

Paul speaks of their righteousness as if it were weapons that they use to fight spiritual battles.

the armor of righteousness

"righteousness as our armor" or "righteousness as our weapons"

for the right hand and the left

Possible meanings are 1) that there is a weapon in one hand and a shield in the other or 2) that they are completely equipped for battle, able to fend off attacks from any direction.

2 Corinthians 6:8

regarded as deceivers

"people regard us as deceivers" or "people say that we are liars"

and yet truthful

You may need to fill in the words left out of the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "but we are truthful"

2 Corinthians 6:9

as if we were unknown, yet we are well known

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if people did not know us, and yet people know us well"

as if we were being punished for our actions, yet we are not killed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as if people were punishing us for our actions, yet they have not killed us"

2 Corinthians 6:10

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Corinthians 6:11

spoken the whole truth to you

"spoken honestly to you"

our heart is wide open

Paul speaks of his great affection for the Corinthians as having a heart that is open. Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions. Alternate translation: "we love you very much"

2 Corinthians 6:12

You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own hearts

Paul speaks of the Corinthians' lack of love for him as if their hearts were squeezed into a tight space. Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's emotions.

You are not restrained by us

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "We have not restrained you" or "We have not given you any reason to stop loving us"

you are restrained in your own hearts

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "your own hearts are restraining you" or "you have stopped loving us for your own reasons"

2 Corinthians 6:13

open yourselves wide also

Paul urges the Corinthians to love him as he has loved them. Alternate translation: "love us back" or "love us much as we have loved you"

2 Corinthians 6:14

Connecting Statement:

Paul encourages the believers at Corinth to be separated from idols and live clean lives for God.

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers

This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "Only be yoked together with believers"

be yoked together with unbelievers

Paul speaks of working together toward a common purpose as if it were two animals tied together to pull a plow or cart. Alternate translation: "team up with" or "have a close relationship with"

For what association does righteousness have with lawlessness?

This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "For righteousness can have no association with lawlessness."

For what fellowship does light have with darkness?

Paul asks this question to emphasize that light and darkness cannot coexist since light dispels darkness. The words "light" and "darkness" refer to the moral and spiritual qualities of believers and unbelievers. Alternate translation: "Light can have no fellowship with darkness."

2 Corinthians 6:15

What agreement can Christ have with Belial?

This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "There is no agreement between Christ and Belial."

Belial

This is another name for the devil.

Or what share does a believer have together with an unbeliever?

This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "A believer shares nothing in common with an unbeliever."

2 Corinthians 6:16

General Information:

Paul paraphrases portions from several Old Testament prophets: Moses, Zechariah, Amos, and possibly others.

And what agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?

This is a rhetorical question that anticipates a negative answer. Alternate translation: "There is no agreement between the temple of God and idols."

we are the temple of the living God

Paul refers to all Christians as forming a temple for God to dwell in. Alternate translation: "we are like a temple where the living God dwells"

I will dwell among them and walk among them.

This is an Old Testament quotation that speaks of God being with the people in two different ways. The words "dwell among" speak of living where others live, while the words "walk among" speak of being with them as they go about their lives. Alternate translation: "I will be with them and help them"

2 Corinthians 6:17

General Information:

Paul quotes portions from the Old Testament prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel.

be set apart

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "set yourselves apart" or "allow me to set you apart"

Touch no unclean thing

This can be stated in positive terms. Alternate translation: "Touch only things that are clean" or "Stay away from things that are unclean"

2 Corinthians 6:18

General Information:

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7 ¹Beloved, since we have these promises, let us cleanse ourselves of all defilement of flesh and spirit. Let us perfect holiness in the fear of God.

²Make room for us! We have not wronged anyone. We have not corrupted anyone or taken advantage of anyone.

³It is not to condemn you that I say this. For I have already said that you are in our hearts, for us to die together and to live together.⁴I have great confidence in you, and great is my boast about you. I am filled with comfort. I overflow with joy even in all our tribulation.

⁵When we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest. Instead, we were troubled in every way by conflicts on the outside and fears on the inside.⁶But God, who comforts the lowly, comforted us by the arrival of Titus.⁷It was not only by his arrival that God comforted us. It was also by the comfort that Titus had received from you. He told us of your great affection, your sorrow, and your zeal for me. So I rejoiced even more.

⁸Even though my letter made you sorrowful, I do not regret it. But I did regret it when I saw that my letter made you sorrowful, though only for a little while.⁹Now I rejoice, not because you were sorrowful, but because your sorrow brought you to repentance. You experienced a godly sorrow, so you suffered no loss because of us.¹⁰For godly sorrow brings about repentance that accomplishes salvation without regret. Worldly sorrow, however, brings about death.

¹¹See what great diligence this godly sorrow produced in you. How great was the determination in you to prove you were innocent. How great was your indignation, your fear, your longing, your zeal, and your desire to see that justice should be done! In everything you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.¹²Although I wrote to you, I did not write for the sake of the wrongdoer, nor for the one who suffered the wrong, but so that your earnestness toward us should be made known to you in the sight of God.

¹³It is by this that we are encouraged.

In addition to our own comfort, we also rejoiced even more because of Titus' joy, because his spirit was refreshed by all of you.

¹⁴For if I boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame. On the contrary, just as everything we said to you was true, our boasting about you to Titus proved to be true.

¹⁵His affection for you is even greater as he remembers the obedience of all of you, how you welcomed him with fear and trembling.¹⁶I rejoice because I have complete confidence in you.

2 Corinthians 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In verses 2-4, Paul finishes his defense. He then writes about Titus's return and the comfort it brought.

Special concepts in this chapter

Clean and unclean

Christians are "clean" in the sense that God has cleansed them from sin. They do not need to be concerned with being clean according to the law of Moses. Ungodly living can still make a Christian unclean. (See: clean and lawofmoses)

Sadness and sorrow

The words "sad" and "sorrow" in this chapter indicate that the Corinthians were upset to the point of repenting. (See: repent)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul likely uses the pronoun "we" to represent at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Original situation

This chapter discusses in detail a previous situation. We can figure out some aspects of this situation from the information in this chapter. But it is best not to include this type of implicit information in a translation.

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 7:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 7:1

Make room for us

Connecting Statement:

This refers back to what Paul said starting in [2 Corinthians 6:11]

Paul continues to remind the Corinthians to be separated from sin and to seek holiness purposefully.

2 Corinthians 7:3

Beloved

It is not to condemn you that I say this

"You whom I love" or "Dear friends"

"I do not say this to accuse you of having done wrong." The word "this" refers to what Paul just said about not having wronged anyone.

let us cleanse ourselves of all defilement of flesh and spirit

Here Paul is saying to stay away from any form of sin that would affect one's relationship with God.

you are in our hearts

of all defilement of flesh and spirit

Paul speaks of his and his associates' great love for the Corinthians as if they held them in their hearts. Alternate translation: "you are very dear to us"

"of all things that defile our body and spirit" or "of all things in our body and spirit that make us unacceptable to God"

for us to die together and to live together

Let us perfect holiness

This means that Paul and his associates will continue to love the Corinthians no matter what happens. Alternate translation: "whether we live or whether we die"

"Let us do all we can to be perfectly holy"

for us to die

in the fear of God

"us" includes the Corinthian believers.

"out of deep respect for God" or "because we fear God"

2 Corinthians 7:4

2 Corinthians 7:2

great is my boast about you

Connecting Statement:

"I boast much about you" or "I am very proud of you"

Having already warned the people of Corinth about other leaders who were striving to get these Corinthian believers to follow them, Paul reminds the people of the way he feels about them.

I am filled with comfort

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "You fill me with comfort"

I overflow with joy

Paul speaks of joy as if it is a liquid that fills him until he overflows. Alternate translation: "I am extremely joyful"

even in all our tribulation

"even though we suffer greatly"

2 Corinthians 7:5

When we came to Macedonia

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and Timothy but not to the Corinthians or Titus.

our bodies had no rest

The word "body" often refers to the whole person. Alternate translation: "we had no rest" or "we were very tired"

we were troubled in every way

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "we experienced trouble in every way"

by conflicts on the outside and fears on the inside

Possible meanings for "outside" are 1) "outside of our bodies" or 2) "outside of the church." The word "inside" refers to their inward emotions. Alternate translation: "by conflicts with other people and by fears within ourselves"

2 Corinthians 7:6

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Corinthians 7:7

by the comfort that Titus had received from you

Paul received comfort from knowing that the Corinthians had comforted Titus. Alternate translation: "by learning about the comfort that Titus had received from you"

2 Corinthians 7:8

General Information:

This refers to Paul's previous letter to these Corinthian believers where he rebuked them for their acceptance of a believer's sexual immorality with his father's wife.

Connecting Statement:

Paul praises them for their godly sorrow, their zeal to do right, and the joy that it brought him and Titus.

when I saw that my letter

"when I learned that my letter"

2 Corinthians 7:9

not because you were sorrowful

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not because what I said in my letter made you sorrowful"

sorrowful ... sorrow ... sorrow

or "distressed ... distress ... distress"

so you suffered no loss because of us

"so you suffered no loss because we rebuked you." This means that although the letter caused them sorrow, they eventually benefited from the letter because it led them to repentance. Alternate translation: "so that we did not harm you in any way"

2 Corinthians 7:10

For godly sorrow brings about repentance that accomplishes salvation

The word "repentance" may be repeated to clarify its relationship to what precedes it and what follows it. "For godly sorrow produces repentance, and repentance leads to salvation"

without regret

Possible meanings are 1) Paul has no regret that he caused them sorrow because that sorrow led to their repentance and salvation or 2) the Corinthians will not regret experiencing sorrow because it led to their repentance and salvation.

Worldly sorrow, however, brings about death

This kind of sorrow leads to death instead of salvation because it does not produce repentance. Alternate translation: "Worldly sorrow, however, leads to spiritual death"

2 Corinthians 7:11

See what great diligence

"Look and see for yourselves what great diligence"

How great was the determination in you to prove you were innocent.

Here the word "How" makes this statement an exclamation. Alternate translation: "Your determination to prove you were innocent was very great!"

your indignation

"your anger"

that justice should be done

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that someone should carry out justice"

2 Corinthians 7:12

the wrongdoer

"the one who did wrong"

your earnestness toward us should be made known to you in the sight of God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that you would know in the sight of God your earnestness toward us"

earnestness

sincere, serious desire for what is good

in the sight of God

This represents God's presence. See how you translated this in [2 Corinthians 4:2]

2 Corinthians 7:13

It is by this that we are encouraged

Here the word "this" refers to the way the Corinthians responded to Paul's previous letter, as he described in the previous verse. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is what encourages us"

his spirit was refreshed by all of you

Here the word "spirit" refers to a person's temperament and disposition. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "all of you refreshed his spirit" or "all of you made him stop worrying"

2 Corinthians 7:14

For if I boasted to him about you

"For although I boasted to him about you"

I was not put to shame

"you did not disappoint me"

our boasting about you to Titus proved to be true

"you proved that our boasting about you to Titus was true"

2 Corinthians 7:15

the obedience of all of you

This noun "obedience" can be stated with a verb, "obey." Alternate translation: "how all of you obeyed"

you welcomed him with fear and trembling

Here "fear" and "trembling" share similar meanings and emphasize the intensity of fear. Alternate translation: "you welcomed him with great reverence"

with fear and trembling

Possible meanings are 1) "with great reverence for God" or 2) "with great reverence for Titus."

2 Corinthians 7:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

8 ¹We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia.

²During a great test of tribulation, the abundance of their joy and the extremity of their poverty have produced great riches of generosity.

³For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond what they were able, and of their own free will⁴they begged us with much earnestness for the privilege of sharing in this service to God's holy people.

⁵This did not happen as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and then to us by the will of God.

⁶So we urged Titus, who had already begun this task, to complete among you this act of grace.⁷But you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us. So also make sure that you excel in this act of grace. ¹

⁸I say this not as a command but to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it to the eagerness of other people.

⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Even though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich.

¹⁰In this matter I will give you advice that will help you. One year ago, you not only started to do something, but you desired to do it.¹¹Now finish it. Just as there was an eagerness and desire to do it then, may you also bring it to completion, as much as you can.¹²For if you are eager to do this deed, it is a good and acceptable thing. It must be based on what a person has, not on what he does not have.

¹³For this is not to cause relief for others and tribulation for you, but for fairness.¹⁴Your abundance at the present time will supply what they need. This is also so that their abundance may supply your need, and so that there may be fairness.¹⁵It is as it is written:

"The one with much did not have anything left over,
and the one who had little did not have any lack."

¹⁶But thanks be to God, who put into Titus' heart the same earnest care that I have for you.¹⁷For he not only accepted our appeal, but he was also very earnest about it. He came to you of his own free will.

¹⁸We have sent with him the brother who is praised among all of the churches for his work in proclaiming the gospel.¹⁹Not only this, but he also was chosen by the churches to be our traveling companion with this act of grace, which is being administered by us for the glory of the Lord himself and our good will.

²⁰We are avoiding the possibility that anyone should complain about this act of generosity that we are carrying out.²¹We take care to do what is good, not only before the Lord, but also before people.

²²We are also sending another brother with them. We have tested him in many ways and found him diligent for many tasks. He is even more eager now because of the great confidence he has in you.²³As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for you. As for our brothers, they are messengers from the churches. They are a glory to Christ.²⁴So show them the proof of your love, and show to the churches the reason for our boasting about you.

¹There is evidence that corrections were made to verse 7 by later copyists who were referring to other ancient texts. Most modern translations follow those corrections, and they now read, and in your love for us . But there are some important and ancient Greek copies that read, and in our love for you .

2 Corinthians 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapters 8 and 9 begin a new section. Paul writes about how churches in Greece helped needy believers in Jerusalem.

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verse 15.

Special concepts in this chapter

Gift to the church in Jerusalem

The church in Corinth started preparing to give money to the poor believers in Jerusalem. The churches in Macedonia also had given generously. Paul sends Titus and two other believers to Corinth to encourage the Corinthians to give generously. Paul and the others will carry the money to Jerusalem. They want people to know it is being done honestly.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

We

Paul likely uses the pronoun "we" to represent at least Timothy and himself. It may also include other people.

Paradox

A "paradox" is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. These words in verse 2 are a paradox: "the abundance of their joy and the extremity of their poverty have produced great riches of generosity." In verse 3 Paul explains how their poverty produced riches. Paul also uses riches and poverty in other paradoxes. ([2 Corinthians 8:2](#))

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 8:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 8:1	extremity of their poverty ... riches of generosity
Connecting Statement:	Though the churches of Macedonia have suffered testings of affliction and poverty, by God's grace they have been able to collect money for the believers in Jerusalem.
Having explained his changed plans and his ministry direction, Paul talks about giving.	
the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia	great riches of generosity
This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the grace that God has given to the churches of Macedonia"	"a very great generosity." The words "great riches" emphasize the greatness of their generosity.
2 Corinthians 8:2	2 Corinthians 8:3
the abundance of their joy and the extremity of their poverty have produced great riches of generosity	they gave
Paul speaks of "joy" and "poverty" as if they were living things that can produce generosity. Alternate translation: "because of the people's great joy and extreme poverty, they have become very generous"	This refers to the churches in Macedonia.
	of their own free will
	"voluntarily"
the abundance of their joy	
Paul speaks of joy as if it were a physical object that could increase in size or quantity.	

2 Corinthians 8:4

this service to God's holy people

Paul is referring to providing money to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "this ministry of providing for the believers in Jerusalem"

2 Corinthians 8:5

This did not happen as we had hoped

The Macedonians did even more than Paul and those with him had hoped for. Alternate translation: "This did not happen merely as we had thought it might" or "But even more than we had expected"

2 Corinthians 8:6

who had already begun this task

Paul is referring to the collection of money from the Corinthians for the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "who had encouraged your giving in the first place"

to complete among you this act of grace

Titus was to help the Corinthians to complete the collection of money. Alternate translation: "to encourage you to finish collecting and giving your generous gift"

2 Corinthians 8:7

make sure that you excel in this act of grace

Here "this act of grace" refers the gift that the Corinthians were to give. Alternate translation: "make sure that you are very generous in your giving"

2 Corinthians 8:8

by comparing it to the eagerness of other people

Paul is encouraging the Corinthians to give generously by comparing their generosity with the generosity of the Macedonian churches.

2 Corinthians 8:9

the grace of our Lord

In this context, the word "grace" emphasizes the generosity with which Jesus had blessed the Corinthians.

Even though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor

Paul speaks of Jesus before his incarnation as being rich, and of his becoming human as becoming poor.

through his poverty you might become rich

Paul speaks of the Corinthians becoming spiritually rich as a result of Jesus becoming human.

2 Corinthians 8:10

In this matter

This refers to their collecting money to give to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "With regard to the collection"

2 Corinthians 8:11

there was an eagerness and desire to do it

This can be stated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "you were eager and desired to do it"

bring it to completion

"complete it" or "finish it"

2 Corinthians 8:12

a good and acceptable thing

Here the words "good" and "acceptable" share similar meanings and emphasize the goodness of the thing. Alternate translation: "a very good thing"

It must be based on what a person has

"Giving must be based on what a person has"

2 Corinthians 8:13

For this is not to cause relief for others and tribulation for you

The word "this" refers to collecting money for the believers in Jerusalem. The abstract nouns "relief" and

"tribulation" can be stated as verbs. Alternate translation: "We are not asking you to give money to relieve others and make yourselves suffer"

but for fairness

"but so that there should be equality" or "but so that there might be equality between others and you." Paul is explaining why he is asking the Corinthians to give money to the believers in Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 8:14

This is also so that their abundance may supply your need

Since the Corinthians are acting in the present time, it is implied that the believers in Jerusalem will also help them at some time in the future. Alternate translation: "This is also so that in the future their abundance may supply your need"

2 Corinthians 8:15

as it is written

Here Paul quotes from Exodus. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "as Moses wrote"

did not have any lack

"had all he needed"

2 Corinthians 8:16

who put into Titus' heart the same earnest care that I have for you

Here the word "heart" refers to the emotions. This means that God caused Titus to love them. Alternate translation: "who made Titus care for you as much as I do"

same earnest care

"the same enthusiasm" or "same deep concern"

2 Corinthians 8:17

For he not only accepted our appeal

Paul is referring to his asking Titus to return to Corinth and complete the collection. Alternate translation: "For he not only agreed to our request that he help you with the collection"

2 Corinthians 8:18

with him

"with Titus"

the brother who is praised among all of the churches

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the brother whom believers among all of the churches praise"

2 Corinthians 8:19

Not only this

"Not only do believers among all of the churches praise him"

he also was chosen by the churches

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the churches also chose him"

our traveling companion with this act of grace

"to travel with us as we carry out this act of generosity." This refers to taking the offering to Jerusalem.

which is being administered by us

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "which we are taking care of"

for the glory of the Lord himself and our good will

You may need to fill in the ideas missing in the ellipsis. Alternate translation: "so that people will praise the Lord and so that they will see how eager we are to help"

2 Corinthians 8:20

about this act of generosity that we are carrying out

This refers to taking the offering to Jerusalem. The abstract noun "generosity" can be translated with an adjective. Alternate translation: "concerning the way we are handling this generous gift"

2 Corinthians 8:21

We take care to do what is good, not only before the Lord, but also before people.

"We are careful to do not only what the Lord thinks is good but also what people think is good"

before the Lord ... before people

"in the Lord's opinion ... in people's opinion"

2 Corinthians 8:22

with them

The word "them" refers to Titus and the previously mentioned brother.

2 Corinthians 8:23

he is my partner and fellow worker for you

"he is my partner, who works with me to help you"

As for our brothers

This refers to the two other men who will accompany Titus.

they are messengers from the churches

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the churches have sent them as their messengers"

They are a glory to Christ

This can be stated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "They will cause people to see Christ's glory" or "They will cause people to honor Christ"

2 Corinthians 8:24

General Information:

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⁹ ¹Concerning the service for God's holy people, it is not necessary for me to write to you.² I know about your desire, which I boasted about to the people of Macedonia. I told them that Achaia has been getting ready since last year. Your eagerness has motivated most of them to action.

³Now I have sent the brothers so that our boasting about you may not be futile, and so that you would be ready, as I said you would be.⁴ Otherwise, if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we would be ashamed—I say nothing about you—for being so confident in you.⁵ So I thought it was necessary to urge the brothers to come to you and to make arrangements in advance for the gift you have promised. This is so that it might be ready as a blessing, and not as something extorted.

⁶The point is this: The one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows for the purpose of a blessing will also reap a blessing.⁷ Let each one give as he has planned in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

⁸And God is able to make all grace overflow for you, so that always, in all things, you may have all you need. This will be so that you may multiply every good deed.⁹ It is as it is written:

"He has distributed his riches and given them to the poor.
His righteousness lasts forever."

¹⁰He who supplies seed to the farmer who sows and bread for food will also supply and multiply your seed for sowing. He will increase the harvest of your righteousness.¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so you can be generous. This will bring about thanksgiving to God through us.

¹²For carrying out this service not only meets the needs of God's holy people, but it also is overflowing into many acts of thanksgiving to God.¹³ Because of your being tested and proved by this service, you will also glorify God by obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ. You will also glorify God by the generosity of your contribution to them and to everyone.¹⁴ They long for you, and they are praying for you. They do this because of the very great grace of God that is on you.¹⁵ May thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!

2 Corinthians 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set poetry farther to the right than the rest of the text to show that it is poetry. The ULB does this with the poetry in verse 9, which is quoted from the Old Testament.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Paul uses three agricultural metaphors. He uses them to teach about giving to needy believers. The metaphors help Paul explain that God will reward those who give generously. Paul does not say how or when God will reward them. (See: and reward)

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 9:1 Notes](#)
-

2 Corinthians 9:1

General Information:

When Paul refers to Achaia, he is talking about a Roman province located in southern Greece where Corinth is located.

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues on the subject of giving. He wants to make sure that the collection of their offering for the needy believers in Jerusalem takes place before he comes so that it does not seem as though he takes advantage of them. He talks about how giving blesses the giver and glorifies God.

the service for God's holy people

This refers to the collection of money to give to the believers in Jerusalem. The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "the ministry for the believers in Jerusalem"

2 Corinthians 9:2

Achaia has been getting ready

Here the word "Achaia" refers to the people who live in this province, and specifically to the people of the church in Corinth. Alternate translation: "the people of Achaia have been preparing"

2 Corinthians 9:3

the brothers

This refers to Titus and the two men who accompany him.

our boasting about you may not be futile

Paul does not want others to think that the things that he had boasted about the Corinthians were false.

2 Corinthians 9:4

find you unprepared

"find you unprepared to give"

2 Corinthians 9:5

the brothers to come to you

From Paul's perspective, the brothers are going. Alternate translation: "the brothers to go to you"

not as something extorted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not as something that we have extorted from you" or "not as something that you gave us because we forced you to give it to us"

2 Corinthians 9:6

the one who sows ... reap a blessing

Paul uses the image of a farmer sowing seeds to describe the results of giving. As a farmer's harvest is based on how much he sows, so will God's blessings be little or much, based on how generously the Corinthians give.

2 Corinthians 9:7

give as he has planned in his heart

Here the word "heart" refers to the thoughts and emotions. Alternate translation: "give as he has determined"

not reluctantly or under compulsion

This can be translated with verbal phrases. Alternate translation: "not because he feels guilty or because someone is forcing him to give"

for God loves a cheerful giver

God wants people to give gladly to help provide for fellow believers.

2 Corinthians 9:8

God is able to make all grace overflow for you

Grace is spoken of as if it were a physical object of which a person can have more than he can use. As a person gives financially to other believers, God also gives to the giver everything he needs. Alternate translation: "God is able to give you many things" or "God is able to give you very much"

grace

This refers here to the physical things a Christian needs, not to the need for God to save him from his sins.

so that you may multiply every good deed

"so that you may be able to do more and more good deeds"

2 Corinthians 9:9

It is as it is written

"This is just as it is written." This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "This is just as the writer wrote"

2 Corinthians 9:10

He who supplies

"God who supplies"

bread for food

Here the word "bread" refers to food in general. Alternate translation: "food to eat"

will also supply and multiply your seed for sowing

Paul speaks of the Corinthians' possessions as if they were seeds and of giving to others as if they were sowing seeds. Alternate translation: "will also supply and multiply your possessions so that you can sow them by giving them to others"

He will increase the harvest of your righteousness

Paul compares the benefits that the Corinthians will receive from their generosity to that of a harvest. Alternate translation: "God will bless you even more for your righteousness"

the harvest of your righteousness

"the harvest that comes from your righteous actions." Here the word "righteousness" refers to the righteous actions of the Corinthians in giving their resources to the believers in Jerusalem.

2 Corinthians 9:11

You will be enriched

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will enrich you"

This will bring about thanksgiving to God through us

The word this refers to the Corinthian's generosity. Alternate translation: "Because of your generosity, those who receive the gifts we bring them will thank God" or "When we give your gifts to those who need them, they will give thanks to God"

2 Corinthians 9:12

For carrying out this service

Here the word "service" refers to Paul and his companions bringing the contribution to the believers in Jerusalem. Alternate translation: "For our carrying out this service for the believers in Jerusalem"

but it also is overflowing into many acts of thanksgiving to God

Paul speaks of the Corinthian believers' act of service as if it were a liquid of which there is more than a container can hold. Alternate translation: "It also causes people to do many deeds for which people will thank God"

2 Corinthians 9:13

Because of your being tested and proved by this service

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Because this service has tested and proven you"

you will also glorify God by obedience ... by the generosity of your contribution to them and to everyone

Paul says that the Corinthians will glorify God both by being faithful to Jesus and by giving generously to other believers who have need.

the generosity of your contribution

The abstract nouns "generosity" and "contribution" can be stated respectively as an adverb and a verb. Alternate translation: "what you have contributed generously" (

contribution

This word refers here to a gift that is part of a larger gift that many people are giving.

2 Corinthians 9:14

General Information:

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2 Corinthians 9:15

for his inexpressible gift

"for his gift, which words cannot describe." Possible meanings are 1) that this gift refers to "the very great grace" that God has given to the Corinthians, which has led them to be so generous or 2) that this gift refers to Jesus Christ, whom God gave to all believers.

10 ¹I, Paul, myself urge you, by the humility and gentleness of Christ. I am meek when I am in your presence, but I am bold toward you when I am away.²I beg of you that, when I am present with you, I will not need to be bold with the confidence that I think I will need to be bold when I oppose those who think that we are walking according to the flesh.

³For even though we walk in the flesh, we do not make war according to the flesh.⁴For the weapons we fight with are not fleshly. Rather, they have divine power to destroy strongholds. They bring misleading arguments to nothing.

⁵We also destroy every high thing that rises up against the knowledge of God. We take every thought captive into obedience to Christ.⁶And we are getting ready to punish every act of disobedience, as soon as your obedience is complete.

⁷Look at what is clearly in front of you. If anyone is convinced that he is Christ's, let him remind himself that just as he is Christ's, so also are we.⁸For even if I boast a little too much about our authority, which the Lord gave for us to build you up and not to destroy you, I will not be ashamed.

⁹I do not want it to appear that I am terrifying you by my letters.¹⁰For some people say, "His letters are serious and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak. His words are not worth listening to."

¹¹Let such people be aware that what we are in the words of our letters when we are absent is what we will be in our actions when we are there.¹²We are not so bold as to group ourselves or compare ourselves with those who praise themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with each other, they have no insight.

¹³We, however, will not boast beyond limits. Instead, we will do so only within the limits of what God has assigned to us, limits that reach even as far as you.¹⁴For we are not overextending ourselves as though we did not reach you. We were the first to reach as far as you with the gospel of Christ.

¹⁵We have not boasted beyond limits about the labors of others. Rather, our hope is that as your faith continues to grow, our work among you will greatly expand,¹⁶so that we may preach the gospel even in regions beyond you, without boasting of work already done in another's area.

¹⁷ "But let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

¹⁸For it is not the one who recommends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord recommends.

2 Corinthians 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verse 17.

In this chapter, Paul returns to defending his authority. He also compares the way he speaks and the way he writes.

Special concepts in this chapter

Boasting

"Boasting" is often thought of as bragging, which is not good. But in this letter "boasting" means confidently exulting or rejoicing.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

In verses 3-6, Paul uses many metaphors from war. He probably uses them as part of a larger metaphor about Christians being spiritually at war.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Flesh

"Flesh" is possibly a metaphor for a person's sinful nature. Paul is not teaching that our physical bodies are sinful. Paul appears to be teaching that as long as Christians are alive ("in the flesh"), we will continue to sin. But our new nature will be fighting against our old nature. (See: flesh)

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 10:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 10:1

we do not make war

Connecting Statement:

Paul speaks of his trying to persuade the Corinthians to believe him and not the false teachers as if he were fighting a physical war. These words should be translated literally.

Paul shifts the subject from giving to affirming his authority to teach as he does.

by the humility and gentleness of Christ

make war according to the flesh

The word "humility" and "gentleness" are abstract nouns, and can be expressed in another way. Alternate translation: "by Christ, who is humble and gentle"

Possible meanings are 1) the word "flesh" is a metonym for physical life. Alternate translation: "fight against our enemies using physical weapons" or 2) the word "flesh" is a metonym for sinful human nature. Alternate translation: "make war in sinful ways"

2 Corinthians 10:2

we are walking

2 Corinthians 10:4

The word "walking" is a metaphor for the way a person lives his life. "we are acting"

the weapons we fight with ... bring misleading arguments to nothing

according to the flesh

Paul speaks of godly wisdom that shows human wisdom to be false as if it were a weapon with which he is destroying an enemy stronghold. Alternate translation: "the weapons we fight with ... show people that what our enemies say is completely wrong"

The word "flesh" is a metonym for the mortal body, which in turn is a metaphor for the person himself. See how you translated it in [2 Corinthians 1:17]

2 Corinthians 10:3

we fight

we walk in the flesh

Paul speaks of his trying to persuade the Corinthians to believe him and not the false teachers as if he were fighting a physical war. These words should be translated literally.

Here "walk" is an metaphor for "live" and "flesh" is a metonym for physical life. Alternate translation: "we live our lives in physical bodies"

are not fleshly

the flesh

Possible meanings are 1) the word "fleshly" is a metonym for merely physical. Alternate translation: "are not physical" or 2) the word "fleshly" is a metonym for sinful human nature. Alternate translation: "are not sinful" or "do not enable us to do wrong"

This phrase is a metonym for the way mortal people do things. See how you translated it in [2 Corinthians 1:17]

2 Corinthians 10:5

every high thing that rises up

Paul is still speaking with the metaphor of a war, as if "the knowledge of God" were an army and "every high thing" were a wall that people had made to keep the army out. Alternate translation: "every false argument that proud people think of to protect themselves"

every high thing

"everything that proud people do"

rises up against the knowledge of God

Paul speaks of arguments as if they were a wall standing high against an army. The words "rises up" mean "stands tall," not that the "high thing" is floating up into the air. Alternate translation: "people use so they will not have to know who God is"

We take every thought captive into obedience to Christ

Paul speaks of people's thoughts as if they were enemy soldiers whom he captures in battle. Alternate translation: "We show how all the false ideas those people have are wrong and teach the people to obey Christ"

2 Corinthians 10:6

punish every act of disobedience

The words "act of disobedience" are a metonym for the people who commit those acts. Alternate translation: "punish every one of you who disobeys us"

2 Corinthians 10:7

Look at what is clearly in front of you.

Possible meanings are 1) this is a command or 2) this is a statement, "You are looking only at what you can see with your eyes." Some think this is a rhetorical question that may also be written as a statement. Alternate translation: "Are you looking at what is clearly in front of you?" or "You seem unable to see what is clearly in front of you."

let him remind himself

"he needs to remember"

that just as he is Christ's, so also are we

"that we belong to Christ just as much as he does"

2 Corinthians 10:8

to build you up and not to destroy you

Paul speaks of helping the Corinthians to know Christ better as if he were constructing a building. Alternate translation: "to help you become better followers of Christ and not to discourage you so you stop following him"

2 Corinthians 10:9

I am terrifying you

"I am trying to frighten you"

2 Corinthians 10:10

serious and powerful

"demanding and forceful"

his bodily presence is weak

"when he is here physically, he is not impressive"

2 Corinthians 10:11

Let such people be aware

"I want such people to be aware"

what we are in the words of our letters when we are absent is what we will be in our actions when we are there

"we will do the same things when we are there with you that we have written about in our letters while we have been away from you"

we ... our

All instances of these words refer to Paul's ministry team but not the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 10:12

We are not so bold as to group ourselves ... praise ourselves

"Bold people would group themselves ... praise themselves, but we are not that bold, so we do not." Paul is using irony here: most people think of boldness

as a good thing, but Paul is saying that those who have the boldness to praise themselves are doing wrong.

2 Corinthians 10:14

to group ourselves or compare ourselves with those

we are not overextending ourselves

"to say we are as good as those"

"we are not doing more than we should." Possible meanings are 1) "we are not boasting more than we should" or 2) "we are not claiming to have more authority than we do."

they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with each other

Paul is saying much the same thing twice.

2 Corinthians 10:15

they measure themselves by one another

We have not boasted beyond limits about the labors of others

Paul is speaking of goodness as though it were something whose length people could measure. Alternate translation: "they look at each other and try to see who is better"

This is an idiom. See how similar words were translated in [2 Corinthians 10:13]

our hope is that

have no insight

"we hope that" or "we desire that" or "we trust that"

"show everyone that they do not know anything"

2 Corinthians 10:16

2 Corinthians 10:13

another's area

General Information:

"an area God has assigned to someone else"

Paul speaks of the authority he has as if it were a land over which he rules, those things over which he has authority as being within the borders or "limits" of his land, and those things not under his authority as being beyond the "limits."

2 Corinthians 10:17

boast in the Lord

"boast about what the Lord has done"

will not boast beyond limits. Instead

2 Corinthians 10:18

This is an idiom. Alternate translation: "will not boast about things over which we have no authority. Instead" or "will boast only about things over which we have authority. And"

recommends himself

This means that he provides enough evidence for each person who hears him to decide whether he is right or wrong. See how "recommend ourselves" is translated in 2 Corinthians 4:2.

within the limits of what God

"about things under the authority that God"

who is approved

limits that reach even as far as you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom the Lord approves"

Paul speaks of the authority he has as if it were a land over which he rules. Alternate translation: "and you are within the border of our authority"

but the one whom the Lord recommends

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "but it is the one whom the Lord recommends who is approved"

11 ¹I wish that you could put up with me in some foolishness. But you are indeed putting up with me!²For I am jealous about you. I have a godly jealousy for you, since I promised you in marriage to one husband. I promised to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

³But I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts might be led astray, away from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.⁴For suppose that someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we preached. Or suppose that you receive a different spirit than what you received. Or suppose that you receive a different gospel than the one you received. You put up with these things well enough!

⁵For I think that I am not in the least inferior to those so-called super-apostles.⁶But even if I am untrained in speech, I am not untrained in knowledge. In every way and in all things we have made this known to you.

⁷Did I sin by humbling myself so you might be exalted? For I freely preached the gospel of God to you.⁸I robbed other churches by accepting support from them so that I could serve you.⁹When I was with you and I was in need, I did not burden anyone. For my needs were met by the brothers who came from Macedonia. In everything I have kept myself from being a burden to you, and I will continue to do that.

¹⁰As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the parts of Achaia.¹¹Why? Because I do not love you? God knows.

¹²And what I do I will keep doing, so that I may cut off the opportunity of those who want an opportunity to be found to be like us in the things they boast about.¹³For such people are false apostles and deceitful workers. They disguise themselves as apostles of Christ.

¹⁴And this is no surprise, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.¹⁵It is no great surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their fate will be what their deeds deserve.

¹⁶I say again: Let no one think I am a fool. But if you do, receive me as a fool so I may boast a little.¹⁷What I am saying with this boastful confidence—I am not talking the way the Lord would—I am saying as a fool.¹⁸Since many people boast according to the flesh, I will also boast.

¹⁹For you gladly put up with fools. You are wise yourselves!²⁰For you put up with someone if he enslaves you, if he devours you, if he takes advantage of you, if he exalts himself, or if he slaps you in the face.²¹I will say to our shame that we were too weak to do that. Yet if anyone is bold—I am speaking like a fool—I too will be bold.

²²Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I.²³Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as though I were insane.) I am more: in harder labor, in more prisons, in beatings beyond measure, in facing many deadly dangers.

²⁴From Jews I received five times the "forty lashes minus one."²⁵Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. I have spent a night and a day on the open sea.²⁶I have been on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, in danger from robbers, in danger from my own people, in danger from the Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the wilderness, in danger at sea, in danger from false brothers.

²⁷I have served in labor and toil, in many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often in fasting, in cold and nakedness.²⁸Apart from everything else, there is the daily pressure of my concern for all the churches.²⁹Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who has been caused to stumble, and I do not burn?

³⁰If I must boast, I will boast about what shows my weaknesses.³¹The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, the one who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying!

³²At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus to arrest me.³³But I was lowered in a basket through a window in the wall, and I escaped from his hands.

2 Corinthians 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul continues defending his authority.

Special concepts in this chapter

False teaching

The Corinthians were quick to accept false teachers who taught things about Jesus and the gospel that were different from what Paul taught and that were not true. Unlike these false teachers, Paul sacrificially served the Corinthians. (See: goodnews)

Light

Light is commonly used in the New Testament as a metaphor. Paul here uses light to indicate the revealing of God and his righteousness. Darkness describes sin. Sin seeks to remain hidden from God. (See: light, righteous and darkness and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Paul begins this chapter with an extended metaphor. He compares himself to a father who is giving his daughter, a pure virgin, as a bride to her bridegroom. Wedding practices change depending on the cultural background. But the idea of helping to present someone as a grown and holy child is explicitly pictured in this passage.

Irony

This chapter is full of irony. Paul is hoping to shame the Corinthian believers with his irony.

"You tolerate these things well enough!" Paul thinks that they should not tolerate the way the false apostles treated them. Paul does not think they are really apostles at all.

The statement, "For you gladly put up with fools. You are wise yourselves!" means that the Corinthian believers think they were very wise but Paul does not agree.

"I will say to our shame that we were too weak to do that." Paul is speaking about behavior he thinks is very wrong in order to avoid it. He is speaking as if he thinks he is wrong for not doing it. He uses a rhetorical question also as irony. "Did I sin by humbling myself so you might be exalted?"

Rhetorical questions

In refuting the false apostles, who claim to be superior, Paul uses a series of rhetorical questions. Each question is coupled with an answer: "Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as though I were out of my mind.) I am more."

He also uses a series of rhetorical questions to empathize with his converts: "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who has been caused to stumble, and I do not burn?"

"Are they servants of Christ?"

This is sarcasm, a special type of irony used to mock or insult. Paul does not believe these false teachers actually serve Christ, only that they pretend to do so.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A "paradox" is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This sentence in verse 30 is a paradox: "If I must boast, I will boast about what shows my weaknesses." Paul does not explain why he would boast in his weakness until 2 Corinthians 12:9. ([2 Corinthians 11:30](#))

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 11:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 11:1	translation: "someone might cause you to believe lies and not keep"
Connecting Statement:	2 Corinthians 11:4
Paul continues to affirm his apostleship.	For suppose that ... preached. Or suppose that ... received. Or suppose that ... received. You put
put up with me in some foolishness	
"allow me to act like a fool"	Paul lists three situations that are likely to happen or may have actually happened. These sentences can be combined into one sentence. Alternate translation: "For when ... preached, or when ... received, or when ... received, you put"
2 Corinthians 11:2	
jealous ... jealousy	a different spirit than what you received. Or suppose that you receive a different gospel than the one you received
These words speak of a good, strong desire that the Corinthians be faithful to Christ, and that no one should persuade them to leave him.	"a different spirit than the Holy Spirit, or a different gospel than you received from us"
I promised you in marriage to one husband. I promised to present you as a pure virgin to Christ	put up with these things
Paul speaks of his care for the Corinthian believers as if he had promised another man that he would prepare his daughter to marry him and he is most concerned that he be able to keep his promise to the man. Alternate translation: "I was like a father who promised to present his daughter to one husband. I promised to keep you as a pure virgin so I could give you to Christ"	"deal with these things." See how these words were translated in 2 Corinthians 11:1.
2 Corinthians 11:3	2 Corinthians 11:5
But I am afraid that somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts might be led astray, away from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ	those so-called super-apostles
"But I am afraid that somehow your thoughts might be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ just as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness"	Paul uses irony here to show that those teachers are less important than people say there are. Alternate translation: "those teachers whom some think are better than anyone else"
your thoughts might be led astray, away from	2 Corinthians 11:6
Paul speaks of thoughts as if they were animals that people could lead along the wrong path. Alternate	I am not untrained in knowledge
	This negative phrase emphasizes the positive truth that he is trained in knowledge. The abstract noun "knowledge" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "I am certainly trained in knowledge" or "I am trained to know what they know"

2 Corinthians 11:7

Did I sin by humbling myself so you might be exalted?

Paul is beginning to claim that he treated the Corinthians well. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement, if necessary. Alternate translation: "I think we agree that I did not sin by humbling myself so you might be exalted"

freely preached the gospel of God to you

"preached the gospel of God to you without expecting anything from you in return"

2 Corinthians 11:8

I robbed other churches

This is an exaggeration to emphasize that Paul received money from churches who were not obligated to give to him. Alternate translation: "In a way, I robbed other churches" or "It was as if I robbed other churches"

I could serve you

The full meaning of this can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I could serve you at no cost"

2 Corinthians 11:9

In everything I have kept myself from being a burden to you

"I have never in any way been a financial burden to you." Paul speaks of someone for whom one has to spend money as if they were heavy items that people have to carry. The full meaning of this can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "I have done all I can to make sure you do not have to spend money so that I can be with you"

the brothers who came

These "brothers" were probably all male.

I will continue to do that

"I never will be a burden to you"

2 Corinthians 11:10

As the truth of Christ is in me, this

Paul is emphasizing that because his readers know that he tells the truth about Christ, they can know that he is

telling the truth here. "As surely as you know that I truly know and proclaim the truth about Christ, you can know that what I am about to say is true. This"

this boasting of mine will not be silenced

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one will be able to make me stop boasting and stay silent"

this boasting of mine

This refers to what Paul spoke about starting in (2 Corinthians 11:7).

parts of Achaia

"regions of Achaia." The word "parts" speaks of areas of land, not political divisions.

2 Corinthians 11:11

Why? Because I do not love you?

Paul uses rhetorical questions to emphasize love for the Corinthians. These questions can be combined or made into a statement. Alternate translation: "Is it because I do not love you that I do not want to be a burden to you?" or "I will continue to keep you from paying for my needs because this shows others that I love you"

God knows

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "God knows I love you"

2 Corinthians 11:12

Connecting Statement:

As Paul continues to affirm his apostleship, he talks about false apostles.

so that I may cut off the opportunity of those who want an opportunity to be found to be like us in the things they boast about

Paul speaks of a false claim that his enemies state as if it were something that he can cut off. Alternate translation: "so that they have no reason to boast that they are doing the same work that we are doing"

to be found to be like us

"to appear to be like us" or "to appear to be doing the same work we are doing"

us in the things they boast about

"us, as they are boasting that they are"

2 Corinthians 11:13

For such people

"I do what I do because people like them"

deceitful workers

"dishonest workers"

disguise themselves as apostles

"are not apostles, but they try to make themselves look like apostles"

2 Corinthians 11:14

this is no surprise

By stating this in a negative form Paul is emphasizing that the Corinthians should expect to meet many "false apostles"

Satan disguises himself as an angel of light

"Satan is not an angel of light, but he tries to make himself look like an angel of light"

an angel of light

Here "light" is a metaphor for righteousness. Alternate translation: "an angel of righteousness"

2 Corinthians 11:15

It is no great surprise if

By stating this in a negative form Paul is emphasizing that the Corinthians should expect to meet many "false apostles"

his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness

"his servants are not servants of righteousness, but they try to make themselves look like servants of righteousness"

2 Corinthians 11:16

receive me as a fool so I may boast a little

"receive me as you would receive a fool: let me talk, and consider my boasting the words of a fool"

2 Corinthians 11:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

2 Corinthians 11:18

many people boast according to the flesh

These people "boast" in the bad sense of claiming to be better people than they really are.

according to the flesh

Here the metonym "flesh" refers to man in his sinful nature and his achievements. Alternate translation: "about their own human achievements"

I will also boast

Paul uses the word "boast" ironically. See how you translated "boasting" in [2 Corinthians 1:12]

2 Corinthians 11:19

put up with fools

"accept fools." See how a similar phrase was translated in 2 Corinthians 11:1.

You are wise yourselves!

Paul is shaming the Corinthians by using irony. Alternate translation: "You think you are wise, but you are not!"

2 Corinthians 11:20

enslaves you

Paul uses exaggeration when he speaks of someone forcing others to obey rules as if he were forcing them to be slaves. Alternate translation: "makes you follow rules he has thought of"

he devours you

Paul speaks of the super-apostles' taking people's material resources as if they were eating the people themselves. Alternate translation: "he takes all your property"

takes advantage of you

A person takes advantage of another person by knowing things that the other person does not and using that knowledge to help himself and harm the other person.

2 Corinthians 11:21

I will say to our shame that we were too weak to do that

"I shamefully admit that we were not bold enough to treat you like that." Paul is using irony to tell the Corinthians that it was not because he was weak that he treated them well. Alternate translation: "I am not ashamed to say that we had the power to harm you, but we treated you well"

Yet if anyone is bold ... I too will be bold

"Whatever anyone boasts about ... I will dare to boast about it also." Paul's boldness here is the boldness to boast.

2 Corinthians 11:22

Are they Hebrews? ... Are they Israelites? ... Are they descendants of Abraham?

Paul is asking questions the Corinthians might be asking and then answering them to emphasize that he is as much a Jew as the super-apostles are. You should keep the question-and-answer form if possible. Alternate translation: "They want you to think they are important and to believe what they say because they are Hebrews and Israelites and descendants of Abraham. Well, so am I."

2 Corinthians 11:23

Connecting Statement:

As Paul continues to confirm his apostleship, he states specific things that have happened to him since he became a believer.

Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as though I were insane.) I am more

Paul is asking questions the Corinthians might be asking and then answering them to emphasize that he is as much a Jew as the super-apostles are. You should keep the question-and-answer form if possible. Alternate translation: "They say they are servants of Christ—I speak as though I were insane—but I am more"

as though I were insane

"as though I were unable to think well"

I am more

You can make clear the understood information. Alternate translation: "I am more a servant of Christ than they are"

in harder labor

"I have worked harder than they have"

in more prisons

"I have been in prison more often"

in beatings beyond measure, in facing

This is an idiom, and is exaggerated to emphasize that he had been beaten many, many times. Alternate translation: "I have been beaten very many times, and I have faced" or "I have been beaten too many times to bother counting, and I have faced"

in facing many deadly dangers

"and I have almost died many times"

2 Corinthians 11:24

forty lashes minus one

This was a common expression for being whipped 39 times. In Jewish law the most they were allowed to whip a person at one time was forty lashes. So they commonly whipped a person thirty-nine times so that they would not be guilty of whipping someone too many times if they accidentally counted wrong.

2 Corinthians 11:25

I was beaten with rods

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people beat me with wooden rods"

I was stoned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "people threw stones at me until they thought I was dead"

I have spent a night and a day on the open sea

Paul was referring to floating in the water after the ship he was on sank.

2 Corinthians 11:26

in danger from false brothers

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "and in danger from people who claimed to be brothers in Christ, but who betrayed us"

2 Corinthians 11:27

I have served in labor

The words "I have served" have been added to shorten the sentence that begins in [2 Corinthians 11:24](#). You can end [2 Corinthians 11:26](#) with a comma and begin this verse with the words "in labor."

labor and toil

This hendiadys emphasizes how hard Paul worked. Alternate translation: "extremely hard work"

nakedness

Here Paul exaggerates to show his need of clothing. Alternate translation: "without enough clothing to keep me warm"

2 Corinthians 11:28

there is the daily pressure of my concern for all the churches

Here Paul's concern for the churches is spoken of as if it were a heavy object weighing him down. Alternate translation: "I am so concerned everyday for all the

churches that I feel like I have a heavy object weighing me down"

2 Corinthians 11:29

Who is weak, and I am not weak?

The word "weak" may refer to a spiritual condition or to a physical condition. No one is sure what Paul is speaking of, so it is best to use the same word here. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Whenever anyone is weak, I feel that weakness also." or "I am weak whenever anyone else is weak."

Who has been caused to stumble, and I do not burn?

Paul uses this question to express his anger when a fellow believer is caused to sin. Here his anger is spoken of as a burning inside him. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Whenever anyone causes a brother to sin, I am angry."

has been caused to stumble

Paul speaks of sin as if it were tripping over something and then falling. Alternate translation: "has been led to sin" or "has thought that God would permit him to sin because of something that someone else did"

I do not burn

Paul speaks of being angry about sin as if he had a fire inside his body. Alternate translation: "I am not angry about it"

2 Corinthians 11:30

what shows my weaknesses

"what shows how weak I am"

2 Corinthians 11:31

I am not lying

Paul is using litotes to emphasize that he is telling the truth. Alternate translation: "I am telling the absolute truth"

2 Corinthians 11:32

the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city

"the governor whom King Aretas had appointed had told men to guard the city"

to arrest me

"so that they might catch and arrest me"

2 Corinthians 11:33

I was lowered in a basket

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "some people put me in a basket and lowered me to the ground"

from his hands

Paul uses the governor's hands as metonymy for the governor. Alternate translation: "from the governor"

12 ¹I must boast, even if it is unprofitable. But I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord.²I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know, God knows—was caught up into the third heaven.

³And I know that this man—whether in the body, or out of the body, I do not know, God knows—⁴was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words that people are not permitted to speak.⁵On behalf of such a person I will boast. But on behalf of myself I will not boast, except about my weaknesses.

⁶If I should choose to boast, I will not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I will keep from boasting, so that no one will think more of me than what he sees in me or hears from me.⁷To keep me from exalting myself because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger from Satan to afflict me—so I would not exalt myself.

⁸Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, for him to take it away from me.⁹But he said to me, "My grace is enough for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So I would much rather boast about my weakness, so that the power of Christ might reside on me.¹⁰Therefore I am content for Christ's sake in weaknesses, in insults, in troubles, in persecutions and distressing situations. For whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

¹¹I have become a fool! You forced me to this, for I should have been praised by you. For I was not at all inferior to the so-called super-apostles, even though I am nothing.¹²The true signs of an apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, signs and wonders and miracles.¹³For how were you less important than the rest of the churches, except that I was not a burden to you? Forgive me for this wrong!

¹⁴Look! I am ready to come to you a third time. I will not be a burden to you, for I do not seek what is yours. I want you. For children should not save up for the parents. Instead, the parents should save up for the children.¹⁵I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

¹⁶But as it is, I did not burden you. But since I am so crafty, I am the one who caught you by deceit.¹⁷Did I take advantage of you by anyone I sent to you?¹⁸I urged Titus to go to you, and I sent the other brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did we not walk in the same steps?

¹⁹Do you think all of this time we have been defending ourselves to you? It is in the sight of God that we speak in Christ, and all for your strengthening, beloved.

²⁰For I fear that when I come, I may not find you as I wish. I fear that you might not find me as you wish. I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, rivalries, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder.²¹I fear that when I come back, my God might humble me before you. I fear that I might be grieved by many of those who have sinned before now and who did not repent of the uncleanness and sexual immorality and lustful indulgence that they practiced.

2 Corinthians 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul continues defending his authority in this chapter.

When Paul was with the Corinthians, he proved himself to be an apostle by his powerful deeds. He had not ever taken anything from them. Now that he is coming for the third time, he will still not take anything. He hopes that when he visits, he will not need to be harsh with them. (See: apostle)

Special concepts in this chapter

Paul's vision

Paul now defends his authority by telling about a wonderful vision of heaven. Although he speaks in the third person in verses 2-5, verse 7 indicates that he was the person who experienced the vision. It was so great a vision that God gave him a physical handicap to keep him humble. (See: heaven)

Third heaven

Many scholars believe the "third" heaven is the dwelling place of God. This is because Scripture also uses "heaven" to refer to the sky (the "first" heaven) and the universe (the "second" heaven).

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses many rhetorical questions as he defends himself against his enemies who accused him: "For how were you less important than the rest of the churches, except that I was not a burden to you?" "Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same way? Did we not walk in the same steps?" and "Do you think all of this time we have been defending ourselves to you?"

Sarcasm

Paul uses sarcasm, a special type of irony, when he reminds them how he had helped them at no cost. He says, "Forgive me for this wrong!" He also uses regular irony when he says: "But, since I am so crafty, I am the one who caught you by deceit." He uses it to introduce his defense against this accusation by showing how impossible it was to be true.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Paradox

A "paradox" is a true statement that appears to describe something impossible. This sentence in verse 5 is a paradox: "I will not boast, except about my weaknesses." Most people do not boast about being weak. This sentence in verse 10 is also a paradox: "For whenever I am weak, then I am strong." In verse 9, Paul explains why both of these statements are true. ([2 Corinthians 12:5](#))

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 12:1 Notes](#)

2 Corinthians 12:1

Connecting Statement:

In defending the apostleship that God gave him, Paul continues to state specific things that have happened to him since he became a believer.

even if it is unprofitable

"even if boasting is does not do any good"

I will go on to

"I will continue talking, but now about"

visions and revelations from the Lord

Possible meanings are 1) Paul uses the words "visions" and "revelations" to mean the same thing in hendiadys

for emphasis. Alternate translation: "things that the Lord has allowed only me to see" or 2) Paul is speaking of two different things. Alternate translation: "secret things that the Lord has let me see with my eyes and other secrets that he has told me about"

2 Corinthians 12:2

I know a man in Christ

Paul is actually speaking of himself as if he were speaking of someone else, but this should be translated literally if possible.

whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know

Paul continues to describe himself as if this happened to another person. "I do not know if this man was in his physical body or in his spiritual body"

the third heaven

This refers to the dwelling place of God rather than the sky or outer space (the planets, stars, and the universe).

2 Corinthians 12:3

General Information:

Paul continues to speak of himself as though he were speaking of someone else.

2 Corinthians 12:4

was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words

This continues Paul's account of what happened to "this man"

caught up

suddenly and forcefully held and taken

paradise

Possible meanings are 1) heaven or 2) the third heaven or 3) a special place in heaven.

inexpressible words

Possible meanings of "inexpressible" are that 1) Paul means something other than "it is unlawful for people to speak" these words, and so people are unable to communicate the ideas expressed in the words or 2) Paul means the same thing as "it is unlawful for people to speak" these words, emphasizing that God does not permit people to speak the words.

2 Corinthians 12:5

of such a person

"of that person"

I will not boast, except about my weaknesses

This double negative emphasizes that Paul will boast only about his weaknesses. It can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "I will boast only of my weaknesses"

2 Corinthians 12:6

no one will think more of me than what he sees in me or hears from me

"no one will give me more credit than what he sees in me or hears from me"

2 Corinthians 12:7

General Information:

This verse reveals that Paul was speaking about himself beginning in 2 Corinthians 12:2.

Connecting Statement:

As Paul defends his apostleship, he tells of the weakness that God gave him to keep him humble.

because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations

"because those revelations were so much greater than anything anyone else had ever seen"

a thorn in the flesh was given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave me a thorn in the flesh" or "God allowed me to have a thorn in the flesh"

a thorn in the flesh

Here Paul's physical problems are compared to a thorn piercing his flesh. Alternate translation: "an affliction" or "a physical problem"

a messenger from Satan

"a servant of Satan"

2 Corinthians 12:8

Three times

Paul put these words at the beginning of the sentence to emphasize that he had prayed many times about his "thorn" (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Lord about this

"Lord about this thorn in the flesh," or "Lord about this affliction"

2 Corinthians 12:9

My grace is enough for you

"I will be kind to you, and that is all you need"

for power is made perfect in weakness

"for my power works best when you are weak"

the power of Christ might reside on me

Paul speaks of Christ's power as if it were a tent built over him. Possible meanings are 1) "people might see that I have the power of Christ" or 2) "I might truly have the power of Christ."

2 Corinthians 12:10

I am content for Christ's sake in weaknesses ... situations

Possible meanings are 1) "I am content in weakness ... situations if these things come because I belong to Christ" or 2) "I am content in weakness ... if these things cause more people to know Christ."

in weaknesses

"when I am weak"

in insults

"when people try to make me angry by saying that I am a bad person"

in troubles

"when I am suffering"

distressing situations

"when there is trouble"

For whenever I am weak, then I am strong

Paul is saying that when he is no longer strong enough to do what needs to be done, Christ, who is more powerful than Paul could ever be, will work through Paul to do what needs to be done. However, it would be best to translate these words literally, if your language allows.

2 Corinthians 12:11

Connecting Statement:

To strengthen them, Paul reminds the believers in Corinth of the true signs of an apostle and of his humility while before them.

I have become a fool

"I am acting like a fool"

You forced me to this

"You forced me to talk this way"

I should have been praised by you

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "it is praise that you should have given me"

praised

"commended"

For I was not at all inferior to

By using the negative form, Paul is saying strongly that those Corinthians who think that he is inferior are wrong. Alternate translation: "For I am just as good as"

super-apostles

Paul uses irony here to show that those teachers are less important than people say they are. See how this is translated in [2 Corinthians 11:5]

2 Corinthians 12:12

The true signs of an apostle were performed

This can be stated in active form, with emphasis on the "signs." Alternate translation: "It is the true signs of an apostle that I performed"

signs ... signs

Use the same word both times.

with all perseverance

"with as much perseverance as we had" or "with great perseverance"

signs and wonders and miracles

These are the "true signs of an apostle" that Paul performed "with complete perseverance."

2 Corinthians 12:13

how were you less important than the rest of the churches, except that ... you?

Paul is emphasizing that the Corinthians are wrong to accuse him of wanting to do them harm. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "I treated you the same way I treated all the other churches, except that ... you."

I was not a burden to you

"I did not ask you for money or other things I needed"

Forgive me for this wrong!

Paul is being ironic to shame the Corinthians. Both he and they know that he has done them no wrong, but they have been treating him as though he has wronged them.

this wrong

not asking them for money and other things he needed

2 Corinthians 12:14

I want you

The full meaning of this statement can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "What I want is that you love and accept me"

children should not save up for the parents

Young children are not responsible for saving money or other goods to give to their healthy parents.

2 Corinthians 12:15

I will most gladly spend and be spent

Paul speaks of his work and his physical life as if they were money that he or God could spend. Alternate translation: "I will gladly do any work and gladly allow God to permit people to kill me"

for your souls

The word "souls" is a metonym for the people themselves. Alternate translation: "for you" or "so you will live well"

If I love you more, am I to be loved less?

This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "If I love you so much, you should not love me so little." or "If I love you so much, you should love me more than you do."

more

It is not clear what it is that Paul's love is "more" than. It is probably best to use "very much" or a "so much" that can be compared to "so little" later in the sentence.

2 Corinthians 12:16

But since I am so crafty, I am the one who caught you by deceit

Paul uses irony to shame the Corinthians who think he lied to them even if he did not ask them for money. Alternate translation: "But others think I was deceptive and used trickery"

2 Corinthians 12:17

Did I take advantage of you by anyone I sent to you?

Both Paul and the Corinthians know the answer is no. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "No one that I sent to you has taken advantage of you!"

2 Corinthians 12:18

Did Titus take advantage of you?

Both Paul and the Corinthians know the answer is no. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "Titus did not take advantage of you."

Did we not walk in the same spirit?

Paul speaks of living as if it were walking on a road. Possible meanings of "spirit" are 1) Paul and his companions acted rightly with the Corinthians, as had Titus. Alternate translation: "We all had the same attitude and acted the same way" Or 2) Paul, his companions, and Titus all obeyed the Holy Spirit as they served the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "We

all lived in obedience to the same Spirit" This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement.

Did we not walk in the same steps?

Paul speaks of living as if it were walking on a road. Both Paul and the Corinthians know the answer to the question is yes. This rhetorical question can be translated as a statement. Alternate translation: "We all did things the same way."

2 Corinthians 12:19

Do you think all of this time we have been defending ourselves to you?

Paul uses this question to acknowledge something that the people may have been thinking. He does this so that he can assure them that it is not true. Alternate translation: "Perhaps you think that all of this time we have been defending ourselves to you."

in the sight of God

This represents the presence of God. Paul and his coworkers are aware that God is watching them while they teach the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "before God" or "with God as witness" or "in the presence of God"

and all for your strengthening

The reason Paul and his coworkers speak in Christ is so that the Corinthians might be strengthened. Paul speaks of knowing how to obey God and desiring to obey him as if it were physical growth. Alternate translation: "and we do all this in order to strengthen you" or "and we do all this so that you may know God and obey him better"

2 Corinthians 12:20

I may not find you as I wish

"I may not like what I find" or "I may not like what I see you doing"

you might not find me as you wish

"you might not like what you see in me"

there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, rivalries, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder

The abstract nouns "quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, rivalries, slander, gossip, arrogance, and disorder" can be translated using verbs. Possible meanings are 1) "some of you will be arguing with us, jealous of us, suddenly becoming very angry with us, trying to take our places as leaders, speaking falsely about us, telling about our private lives, being proud, and opposing us as we try to lead you" or 2) "some of you will be arguing with each other, jealous of each other, suddenly becoming very angry with each other, quarreling with each other over who will be the leader, speaking falsely about each other, telling about each other's private lives, being proud, and opposing those whom God has chosen to lead you"

2 Corinthians 12:21

I might be grieved by many of those who have sinned before now and who did not repent ... that they practiced

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will grieve because many of you have sinned before now and have not repented ... that you have practiced"

did not repent of the uncleanness and sexual immorality and lustful indulgence

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is saying almost the same thing three times for emphasis. Alternate translation: "did not stop committing the sexual sins that they practiced" or 2) Paul is speaking of three different sins.

of the uncleanness

The abstract noun uncleanness can be translated as "things that do not please God." Alternate translation: "of secretly thinking about and desiring things that do not please God"

of the ... sexual immorality

The abstract noun "immorality" can be translated as "immoral deeds." Alternate translation: "of doing sexually immoral deeds"

of the ... lustful indulgence

The abstract noun "indulgence" can be translated using a verb phrase. Alternate translation: "of ... doing things that satisfy immoral sexual desire"

13 ¹This is the third time that I am coming to you. "Every matter must be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses."²I have already said to those who sinned before and to all the rest when I was there the second time, and I say it again: When I come again, I will not spare them.

³I tell you this because you are looking for proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak toward you. Rather, he is powerful in you.⁴For he was crucified in weakness, but he is alive by God's power. For we also are weak in him, but we will live with him by the power of God among you.

⁵Examine yourselves, to see if you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, of course, you have failed the test.⁶And I hope that you will recognize that we have not failed the test.

⁷Now we pray to God that you may not do any wrong. I do not pray this so that we may appear to have passed the test. Rather, I pray that you may do what is proper, although we may seem to have failed the test.⁸For we are not able to do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.

⁹For we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. We also pray that you may be made complete.¹⁰I write these things while I am away from you so, that when I am with you I do not have to deal harshly with you in the use of my authority—which the Lord gave to me so that I may build you up, and not tear you down.

¹¹Finally, brothers, rejoice! Work for restoration, be encouraged, think alike, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.¹²Greet each other with a holy kiss. All God's holy people greet you. ¹

¹³The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. ²

¹Some copies number this sentence as verse 13.

²Some translations number this sentence as verse 14.

2 Corinthians 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul finishes defending his authority. He then concludes the letter with a final greeting and blessing.

Special concepts in this chapter

Preparation

Paul instructs the Corinthians as he prepares to visit them. He is hoping to avoid needing to discipline anyone in the church so he can visit them joyfully. (See: disciple)

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Power and weakness

Paul repeatedly uses the contrasting words "power" and "weakness" in this chapter. The translator should use words that are understood to be opposites of each other.

"Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Test yourselves."

Scholars are divided over what these sentences mean. Some scholars say that Christians are to test themselves to see whether their actions align with their Christian faith. The context favors this understanding. Others say these sentences mean that Christians should look at their actions and question whether they are genuinely saved. (See: faith and save)

Links:

- [2 Corinthians 13:1 Notes](#)
-

2 Corinthians 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul establishes that Christ is speaking through him and that Paul is wanting to restore them, encourage them, and unify them.

Every matter must be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses

Here a "matter" is an accusation and "mouth" is a metonym for the testimony a person gives through his mouth. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Believe that someone has done something wrong only after two or three people have given the same testimony"

2 Corinthians 13:2

all the rest

"all you other people"

2 Corinthians 13:3

General Information:

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2 Corinthians 13:4

he was crucified

This can be made active. Alternate translation: "they crucified him"

but we will live with him by the power of God

God gives us the power and ability to live life in and with him.

2 Corinthians 13:5

in you

Possible meanings are 1) living inside each individual or 2) "among you," part of and the most important member of the group.

you have failed the test

"you have examined and tested yourself and found that you are not in the faith and Jesus Christ is not in you"

2 Corinthians 13:6

I hope that

"I desire that" or "I trust that"

2 Corinthians 13:7

that you may not do any wrong

"that you will not sin at all" or "that you will not refuse to listen to us when we correct you." Paul is emphasizing the opposite with his statement. Alternate translation: "that you will do everything right"

to have passed the test

"to be great teachers and live the truth"

2 Corinthians 13:8

we are not able to do anything against the truth

"we are not able to keep people from learning the truth"

truth, but only for the truth

"truth; everything we do will enable people to learn the truth"

2 Corinthians 13:9

may be made complete

"may become spiritually mature"

2 Corinthians 13:10

so that I may build you up, and not tear you down

Paul speaks of helping the Corinthians to know Christ better as if he were constructing a building. See how you translated a similar phrase in [2 Corinthians 10:8]

2 Corinthians 13:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul closes his letter to the Corinthian believers.

Work for restoration

"Work toward maturity"

think alike

"agree with one another" or "live in harmony with one another"

2 Corinthians 13:12

with a holy kiss

"with Christian love"

God's holy people

"those whom God has set apart for himself"

2 Corinthians 13:13

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