

Language: English

Book: 1 Corinthians

Introduction to 1 Corinthians

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Book of 1 Corinthians

1. Divisions in the church (1:10-4:21)
2. Moral sins and irregularities (5:1-13)
3. Christians taking other Christians to court (6:1-20)
4. Marriage and related matters (7:1-40)
5. Misuse of Christian liberty; food sacrificed to idols; fleeing idolatry; women's head coverings (8:1-13; 10:1-11:16)
6. Paul's rights as an apostle (9:1-27)
7. The Lord's Supper (11:17-34)
8. The gifts of the Holy Spirit (12:1-31)
9. Love (13:1-13)
10. The gifts of the Holy Spirit: prophecy and languages (14:1-40)
11. The resurrection of believers and the resurrection of Christ (15:1-58)
12. Closing: the contribution for Christians in Jerusalem, requests, and personal greetings (16:1-24)

Who wrote the Book of 1 Corinthians?

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians. Paul 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 that met in Corinth. He was staying in the city of Ephesus when he wrote this letter.

What is the Book of 1 Corinthians about?

1 Corinthians is a letter that Paul wrote to the believers who were in the city of Corinth. Paul had heard that there were problems among the believers there. They were arguing with each other. Some of them did not understand some of the Christian teachings. And some of them were behaving badly. In this letter, Paul responded to them and encouraged them to live in a way that pleased God.

How should the title of this book be translated?

Translators may choose to call this book by its traditional title, "First Corinthians." Or they may choose a clearer title, such as "Paul's First 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 was the problem with meat sacrificed to idols?

Many animals were slaughtered and sacrificed to the false gods in Corinth. Priests and worshipers kept some of the meat. Much of the meat was sold in markets. Many Christians disagreed with each other over

whether it was right for them to eat this meat, because it had been dedicated to a false god. Paul writes about this problem in 1 Corinthians.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How are the ideas of "holy" and "sanctify" represented in 1 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, 1 Corinthians 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." (See: 1:2; 3:17)
- Sometimes the meaning in a passage indicates a simple reference to Christians without implying any particular role filled by them. In these cases, the ULB uses "believer" or "believers." (See: 6:1, 2; 14:33; 16:1, 15)
- 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." (See: 1:2; 6:11; 7:14, 34)

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

What is the meaning of "flesh?"

Paul frequently used the terms "flesh" or "fleshly" to refer to Christians who did sinful things. However, it is not the physical world that is evil. Paul also described Christians who lived in a righteous way as "spiritual." This is because they did what the Holy Spirit taught them to do. (See: flesh and righteous and spirit)

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

This kind of expression occurs in 1:2, 30, 31; 3:1; 4:10, 15, 17; 6:11, 19; 7:22; 9:1, 2; 11:11, 25; 12:3, 9, 13, 18, 25; 14:16; 15:18, 19, 22, 31, 58; 16:19, 24. 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." 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 are the major issues in the text of the Book of 1 Corinthians?

For the following verses, modern versions of the Bible differ from older versions. Translators are advised to follow the modern versions of the Bible. However, if in the translators' region there are Bibles that read according to older versions of the Bible, the translators can follow those. If so, these verses should be put inside square brackets ([]) to indicate that they were probably not original to 1 Corinthians.

- "Therefore glorify God with your body." Some older translations read "Therefore glorify God with your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (6:20)
- "I did this even though I myself was not under the law" (9:20). Some older versions leave this passage out.
- "for the sake of conscience—the conscience of the other man." Some older translations read "for the sake of conscience: for the earth and everything in it belong to the Lord: the conscience of the other man." (10:28)
- "and that I give my body to be burned" (13:3). Some older translations read, "and that I give my body so that I might boast."
- "But if anyone does not recognize this, let him not be recognized" (14:38). Some older translations read, "But if anyone is ignorant of this, let him be ignorant."

1 Corinthians

Chapter 1

¹ Paul, called by Christ Jesus to be an apostle by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,

² to the church of God at Corinth, those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy people, together with all those in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is their Lord and ours.

³ May grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ I always give thanks to my God for you because of the grace of God that Christ Jesus gave to you. ⁵ He has made you rich in every way, in all speech and with all knowledge, ⁶ just as the testimony about Christ has been confirmed as true among you. ⁷ Therefore you lack no spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸ He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ God is faithful, who called you into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹⁰ Now I urge you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and that there be no divisions among you. I urge that you be joined together with the same mind and by the same purpose. ¹¹ For I have been informed concerning you, my brothers, by Chloe's people that there are factions among you. ¹² I mean this: Each one of you says, "I am with Paul," or "I am with Apollos," or "I am with Cephas," or "I am with Christ." ¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul? ¹⁴ I thank God that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius. ¹⁵ This was so that no one would say that you were baptized into my name. ¹⁶ (I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know if I baptized any others.) ¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel—not with clever speech, in order that the cross of Christ would not be emptied of its power.

¹⁸ For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing. But among those who are being saved, it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise.
I will set aside the understanding of the intelligent."

²⁰ Where is the wise person? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this world? Has not God turned the wisdom of the world into foolishness? ²¹ Since the world in its wisdom did not know God, God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching. ²² For Jews ask for miraculous signs and Greeks seek wisdom. ²³ But we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. ²⁴ But to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, we preach Christ as the power and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than people, and the weakness of God is stronger than people.

²⁶ Look at your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise according to the flesh. Not many of you were powerful. Not many of you were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame what is strong. ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world. He even chose things that are regarded as nothing, to bring to nothing things that are held as valuable. ²⁹ He did this so that no flesh would have a reason to boast before him. ³⁰ Because of what God did, now you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God. He became our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. ³¹ As a result, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

1 Corinthians 1 General Notes

Structure and formatting

The first three verses are a greeting. In the ancient Near East, this was a common way of starting a letter.

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 19, which is from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Disunity

In this chapter, Paul scolds the church for being divided and for following different apostles. (See: apostle)

Spiritual gifts

Spiritual gifts are specific supernatural abilities to help the church. The Holy Spirit gives these gifts to Christians after they come to believe in Jesus. Paul lists spiritual gifts in Chapter 12. Some scholars believe the Holy Spirit gave some of these gifts only in the early church to help establish the developing church. Other scholars believe all the gifts of the Spirit are still available to help all Christians throughout the church history. (See: faith)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Idioms

In this chapter, Paul refers to the return of Christ using two different phrases: "the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions to scold the Corinthians for dividing into factions and for relying on human wisdom.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Stumbling block

A stumbling block is a rock people stumble over. Here it represents the difficulty Jews have in believing that God allowed his Messiah to be crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:1

Paul

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the author of a letter. Alternate translation: "I, Paul"

Sosthenes our brother

This indicates that both Paul and the Corinthians knew Sosthenes. Alternate translation: "Sosthenes, the brother you and I know"

1 Corinthians 1:2

to the church of God at Corinth

Your language may have a particular way of introducing the intended audience. Alternate translation: "am writing this letter to you in Corinth who believe in God"

those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus

Here "sanctified" refers to people who have been set apart as God's people. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to those whom Christ Jesus has set apart for God" or "to those

whom God has set apart for himself because they belong to Christ Jesus"

called to be holy people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "whom God has called to be holy people"

together with all those in every place who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

Possible meanings are 1) this phrase tells who else is called to be holy, or 2) this phrase tells who else this letter is written to.

who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

The word "name" here is a metonym for person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "who call on the Lord Jesus Christ"

their Lord and ours

The word "ours" includes Paul's audience. Jesus is the Lord of Paul and the Corinthians and all the churches.

1 Corinthians 1:3

General Information:

Paul and Sosthenes wrote this letter to the Christians who belonged to the church in Corinth. Unless otherwise noted, such words as "you" and "your" refer to Paul's audience and so are plural.

1 Corinthians 1:4

Connecting Statement:

Paul describes the believers' position and fellowship in Christ as they wait for his coming.

because of the grace of God that Christ Jesus gave to you

Paul speaks of grace as though it were a physical object that Jesus gives Christians as a gift. Alternate translation: "because Christ Jesus has made it possible for God to be kind to you"

1 Corinthians 1:5

He has made you rich

Possible meanings are 1) "Christ has made you rich" or 2) "God has made you rich."

made you rich in every way

Paul is speaking in general terms. Alternate translation: "made you rich with all kinds of spiritual blessings"

in all speech

God has enabled you to tell others about God's message in many ways.

all knowledge

God has enabled you to understand God's message in many ways.

1 Corinthians 1:6

the testimony about Christ has been confirmed as true among you

Possible meanings are 1) "you saw for yourselves that what we had said about Christ was true" or 2) "other people learned from seeing how you now live that what we and you say about Christ is true."

1 Corinthians 1:7

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true,"

you lack no spiritual gift

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "you have every spiritual gift"

the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ

Possible meanings are 1) "the time when God will reveal the Lord Jesus Christ" or 2) "the time when our Lord Jesus Christ will reveal himself."

1 Corinthians 1:8

you will be blameless

There will be no reason for God to condemn you.

1 Corinthians 1:9

God is faithful, who called ... our Lord

"God, who called ... our Lord, will do everything he has said he will do"

his Son

This is an important title for Jesus, the Son of God.

1 Corinthians 1:10

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that they are to live in unity with each other and that the message of the cross of Christ, not baptism by people, is what saves.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

"Name" here is a metonym for the person of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "by means of our Lord Jesus Christ"

that you all agree

"that you live in harmony with one another"

that there be no divisions among you

"that you do not divide into separate groups among yourselves"

be joined together with the same mind and by the same purpose

"live in unity, agree with other, and work together to accomplish the same things"

1 Corinthians 1:11

Chloe's people

This refers to family members, servants, and others who are part of the household of which Chloe, a woman, is the head.

there are factions among you

"you are in groups that quarrel one with another"

1 Corinthians 1:12

Each one of you says

Paul is expressing a general attitude of division.

1 Corinthians 1:13

Is Christ divided?

Paul used a question to emphasize that there is only Christ, so it does not make sense for Christians to be divided among themselves. Alternate translation: "Christ is certainly not divided!" or "There is only one Christ!"

Was Paul crucified for you?

Paul used a question to emphasize that it was Christ, not Paul or Apollos, who was crucified. This can also be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "It certainly was not Paul whom they put to death on the cross for your salvation!"

Were you baptized into the name of Paul?

Paul used a question to emphasize that we all are baptized into the name of Christ. This can also be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "It was not into the name of Paul that people baptized you!"

into the name of Paul

"In the name of" here is a metonym for "by the authority of." Alternate translation: "by Paul's authority"

1 Corinthians 1:14

I baptized none of you, except
"among you I baptized only"

Crispus

He was a synagogue ruler who became a Christian.

Gaius

He traveled with the Apostle Paul.

1 Corinthians 1:15

This was so that no one would say that you were baptized into my name

Here "name" represents "authority." This means Paul did not baptize others because they may claim that they became Paul's disciples. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For some of you might have claimed that I baptized you to make you my disciples"

1 Corinthians 1:16

the household of Stephanas

This refers to the family members and slaves in the house where Stephanas, a man, was the head.

1 Corinthians 1:17

Christ did not send me to baptize

This means that baptism was not the primary goal of Paul's ministry.

not with clever speech, in order that the cross of Christ would not be emptied of its power

The phrase "in order ... would not" can be stated in positive form, and "be emptied" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "not with clever speech, because clever speech would empty the cross of its power" or "not with clever speech, because this would cause the cross of Christ to lose its power"

in order that the cross of Christ would not be emptied of its power

Paul speaks of God's power to save people who trust in Christ as if the cross on which Christ died had power. The cross being emptied of its power represents people not recognizing God's power to save them through Christ's death. If Paul were to use clever speech, people might pay more attention to his clever speech than to Christ's death. Alternate translation: "in order that people might recognize God's power to save them through Jesus's death on the cross" or "because clever speech would distract people from God's power as shown in the cross"

1 Corinthians 1:18

Connecting Statement:

Paul emphasizes God's wisdom rather than man's wisdom.

the message about the cross

"the preaching about the crucifixion" or "the message of Christ's dying on the cross"

is foolishness

"is senseless" or "is silly"

to those who are perishing

"dying." This refers to dying in rebellion against God.

it is the power of God

"it is God working powerfully in us"

1 Corinthians 1:19

I will set aside the understanding of the intelligent

"I will confuse intelligent people" or "I will make the plans that intelligent people make completely fail"

1 Corinthians 1:20

Where is the wise person? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this world?

Paul emphasizes that truly wise people are nowhere to be found. Alternate translation: "Compared with the wisdom of the gospel, there are no wise people, no scholars, no debaters!"

the scholar

a person who is recognized as someone who has studied a great deal

the debater

a person who argues about what he knows or who is skilled in such arguments

Has not God turned the wisdom of the world into foolishness?

Paul uses this question to emphasize what God has done to the wisdom of this world. Alternate translation: "God has shown that everything they call wisdom is really foolishness"

1 Corinthians 1:21

those who believe

Possible meanings are 1) "all who believe the message" or 2) "all who believe in Christ."

1 Corinthians 1:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 1:23

General Information:

Here the word "we" refers to Paul and other Bible teachers.

Christ crucified

"about Christ, who died on a cross"

a stumbling block

Just as a person can stumble over a block on a road, so the message of salvation through the crucifixion of the Christ keeps Jews from believing in Jesus. Alternate translation: "not acceptable" or "very offensive"

1 Corinthians 1:24

to those whom God has called

"to the people God calls"

we preach Christ

"we teach about Christ" or "we tell all people about Christ"

we preach Christ as the power and the wisdom of God

Possible meanings are 1) "we preach that God acted powerfully and wisely by sending Christ to die for us" or "we preach that through Christ God has shown how strong and wise he is."

the power ... of God

Another possible meaning is that Christ is powerful and it is through Christ that God saves us.

the wisdom of God

Another possible meaning is that God shows the content of his wisdom through Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:25

the foolishness of God is wiser than people, and the weakness of God is stronger than people

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is speaking ironically about God's foolishness and weakness. Paul knows God is not foolish or weak. Alternate translation: "what seems to be the foolishness of God is wiser than people's wisdom, and what seems to be the weakness of God is stronger than the people's strength" or 2) Paul is speaking from the point of view of the Greek people who may think God is foolish or weak. Alternate translation: "what people call God's foolishness is really wiser than what people call wisdom, and what people call God's weakness is really stronger than people's strength"

1 Corinthians 1:26

Connecting Statement:

Paul emphasizes the believer's position before God.

Not many of you

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "Very few of you"

wise according to the flesh

"wise according to human standards" or "what most people would call wise"

of noble birth

"special because your family is important"

1 Corinthians 1:27

God chose ... wise. God chose ... strong

Paul repeats many of the same words in two sentences that mean almost the same thing to emphasize the difference between God's way of doing things and how people think God should do them.

God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise

"God chose to use the things that the world thinks are foolish to shame those whom the world thinks are wise"

God chose what is weak in the world to shame what is strong

"God chose to use things that the world thinks are weak to shame the things that the world thinks are strong"

1 Corinthians 1:28

what is low and despised

"the things that are humble and hated"

things that are regarded as nothing

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that which people usually regard as without value"

nothing, to bring to nothing things that are held as valuable

"nothing. He did this so he could show that the things that are held as valuable are really worthless"

things that are held as valuable

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "things that people think are worth money" or "things that people think are worth respect"

1 Corinthians 1:29

He did this

"God did this"

no flesh

The word "flesh" here is a metonym for people, who are made of flesh. Alternate translation: "no people"

1 Corinthians 1:30

Because of what God did

This refers to the work of Christ on the cross.

us ... our

These words refer to Paul, those with him, and the Corinthians.

Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God

Possible meanings are 1) "Christ Jesus, who has made clear to us how wise God is" or 2) "Christ Jesus, who has given us God's wisdom."

1 Corinthians 1:31

Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord

"If a person boasts, he should boast about how great the Lord is"

Chapter 2

¹ When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence of speech or wisdom as I proclaimed hidden truths about God. ^[1]² For I decided to know nothing when I was among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴ And my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ so that your faith might not be in the wisdom of humans, but in the power of God.

⁶ Now we do speak wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this world, or of the rulers of this age, who are passing away. ⁷ Instead, we speak God's wisdom in hidden truth, the hidden wisdom that God predestined before the ages for our glory. ⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹ But as it is written,

"No eye has seen,
no ear has heard,
no human heart has imagined
what God has prepared for those who love him"—

¹⁰ For God has revealed these things to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything out, even the deep things of God. ^[2]¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of the person in him? So also, no one knows the deep things of God except the Spirit of God. ¹² But we did not receive the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, so that we might know the things freely given to us by God. ¹³ We speak about these things in words not taught by human wisdom but by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to spiritual people. ¹⁴ The unspiritual person does not receive the things that belong to the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. He cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ The one who is spiritual judges all things, but he is not judged by others.

¹⁶ "For who can know the mind of the Lord,
that he can instruct him?"

But we have the mind of Christ.

Footnotes

2:1 ^[1]A few important and ancient Greek copies read,

2:10 ^[2]Some ancient Greek copies say

1 Corinthians 2 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 9 and 16. These poetic lines are from the Old Testament.

Special concepts in this chapter

Wisdom

Paul continues the discussion from the first chapter that contrasts human wisdom and God's wisdom. For Paul, human wisdom can be foolish. He says the wisdom from the Holy Spirit is the only true wisdom. Paul uses the phrase "hidden wisdom" when he refers to previously unknown truths. (See: wise and foolish)

1 Corinthians 2:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul contrasts human wisdom and God's wisdom. He emphasizes that spiritual wisdom comes from God.

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

1 Corinthians 2:2

I decided to know nothing ... except Jesus Christ

When Paul said that he "decided to know nothing" he exaggerated to emphasize that he decided to focus on and teach about nothing other than Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "I decided to teach nothing ... except Jesus Christ" or "I decided not to teach anything ... except Jesus Christ"

to know nothing when I was among you except Jesus Christ

The double negative here emphasizes that Jesus Christ was the only thing Paul wanted to think about. Alternate translation: "when I was among you to know only Jesus Christ"

1 Corinthians 2:3

I was with you

"I was visiting with you"

in weakness

Possible meanings are: 1) "physically weak" or 2) "feeling like I could not do what I needed to do."

1 Corinthians 2:4

my message and my proclamation were not with persuasive words of wisdom

The ideas in the nouns "message" and "proclamation" can be expressed with the verbs "speak" and "preach." Alternate translation: "I did not speak and preach with persuasive words of wisdom"

persuasive words of wisdom

These are words that sound wise and with which the speaker hopes to cause people to do or believe something. Alternate translation: "wise and persuasive words"

1 Corinthians 2:5

so that your faith might not be in the wisdom of humans
"so that you will not trust in human wisdom"

but in the power of God

"but your faith will be in the power of God" or "but you will trust in the power of God"

1 Corinthians 2:6

General Information:

Paul interrupts his main argument to explain what he means by "wisdom" and to whom he desires to speak.

Now we do speak

The word "Now" is used here to mark a break in the main teaching. Paul begins to explain that true wisdom is God's wisdom.

speak wisdom

The abstract noun "wisdom" can be stated as the adjective "wise." Alternate translation: "speak wise words" or "speak a wise message"

the mature

"mature believers"

1 Corinthians 2:7

before the ages

"before God created anything"

for our glory

"in order to ensure our future glory"

1 Corinthians 2:8

the Lord of glory

"Jesus, the glorious Lord"

1 Corinthians 2:9

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart has imagined

This is a triplet referring to all parts of a person to emphasize that no man has ever been aware of the things that God has prepared.

what God has prepared for those who love him

The Lord has created in heaven wonderful surprises for those who love him.

1 Corinthians 2:10

these things

the truths about Jesus and his death on the cross

the Spirit searches everything out

"the Spirit studies everything accurately" or "the Spirit investigates everything." This implies that the Spirit knows everything.

1 Corinthians 2:11

For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of the person in him?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that no one knows what a person is thinking except the person

himself. Alternate translation: "No one knows what a person is thinking except that person's spirit"

spirit of the person

This refers to a person's inner being, his own spiritual nature.

no one knows the deep things of God except the Spirit of God

"only the Spirit of God knows the deep things of God"

1 Corinthians 2:12

General Information:

Here the word "we" includes both Paul and his audience.

freely given to us by God

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that God freely gave to us" or "that God has kindly given us"

1 Corinthians 2:13

interpreting spiritual things to spiritual people

The meaning of the original language here is uncertain. Other translations of the Bible translate this as "interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words."

to spiritual people

Here "spiritual people" refers to those who are led by the Holy Spirit to obey God.

1 Corinthians 2:14

General Information:

Here the word "we" includes both Paul and his audience.

unspiritual person

the non-Christian person, who has not received the Holy Spirit

because they are spiritually discerned

"because understanding these things requires the aid of the Spirit"

1 Corinthians 2:15

The one who is spiritual

"The believer who has received the Spirit"

he is not judged by others

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "others cannot judge him" or "no one can judge him"

1 Corinthians 2:16

For who can know the mind of the Lord, that he can instruct him?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that no one knows the mind of the Lord. No one is as wise as the Lord. Alternate translation: "No one can know the mind of the Lord, so no one can teach him anything he does not already know"

Chapter 3

¹ And I, brothers, could not speak to you as spiritual people, but instead as to fleshly people, as to little children in Christ. ² I fed you milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it; and even now you are not yet ready. ³ For you are still fleshly. For where jealousy and strife exist among you, are you not living according to the flesh, and are you not walking by human standards? ⁴ For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another says, "I follow Apollos," are you not merely human beings? ⁵ Who then is Apollos? Who is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, just as the Lord gave tasks to each. ⁶ I planted and Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ So then, neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything. But it is God who gives the growth. ⁸ Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his own wages according to his own labor. ⁹ For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's garden, God's building.

¹⁰ According to the grace of God that was given to me as a skilled master builder, I laid a foundation and another is building on it. But let each man be careful how he builds on it. ¹¹ For no one can lay a foundation other than the one that has been laid, that is, Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw, ¹³ his work will be revealed, for the day will reveal it. For it will be revealed in fire. The fire will test the quality of what each one has done. ¹⁴ If anyone's work remains, he will receive a reward; ¹⁵ but if anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, as though escaping through fire.

¹⁶ Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you? ¹⁷ If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and so are you.

¹⁸ Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks he is wise in this age, let him become a "fool" that he may become wise. ¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written,

"He catches the wise in their craftiness."

²⁰ And again,

"The Lord knows that the reasoning of the wise is futile."

²¹ For this reason, let no one boast in men. All things are yours, ²² whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come. All things are yours, ²³ and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

1 Corinthians 3 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page to make them easier to read. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verses 19 and 20.

Special concepts in this chapter

Fleshly people

The Corinthian believers were immature because of their unrighteous actions. He calls them "fleshly," meaning acting as nonbelievers. This term is used in opposition to those who are "spiritual." Christians following their "flesh" are acting foolishly. They are following the wisdom of the world. (See: righteous, flesh, spirit and foolish and wise)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

There are many metaphors in this chapter. Paul uses "little children" and "milk" to illustrate spiritual immaturity. He uses the metaphors of planting and watering to describe the roles he and Apollos played in growing the church in Corinth. Paul uses other metaphors to help teach spiritual truths to the Corinthians and to help them to understand his teachings.

1 Corinthians 3:1

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

spiritual people

people who obey the Spirit

fleshly people

people who follow their own desires

as to little children in Christ

The Corinthians are compared to children very young in age and understanding. Alternate translation: "as to very young believers in Christ"

1 Corinthians 3:2

I fed you milk, not solid food

Babies can only drink milk because they have not grown enough to eat solid food. Paul uses this image as a metaphor to mean that the Corinthians can only understand easy truths. They are not mature enough to understand greater truths.

you are not yet ready

It is implied that they are not ready to understand more difficult teachings. Alternate translation: "you still are not ready to understand the harder teachings about following Christ"

1 Corinthians 3:3

still fleshly

still behaving according to sinful or worldly desires

are you not living according to the flesh, and are you not walking by human standards?

Paul uses questions to rebuke the Corinthians for their sinful behavior. Here "walking" is a metaphor for how a person lives or behaves. Alternate translation: "you should be ashamed because you are behaving according to your sinful desires and you are living according to human standards!"

1 Corinthians 3:4

are you not merely human beings?

Paul uses a question to rebuke the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "you should be ashamed because you are living the same way that people who do not have the Spirit live."

1 Corinthians 3:5

Who then is Apollos? Who is Paul?

Paul is emphasizing that he and Apollos are not the original source of the gospel, and therefore the Corinthians should not follow them. Alternate translation: "It is wrong to form groups to follow Apollos or Paul!" or

Who is Paul?

Paul is speaking of himself as though he were speaking of someone else. Alternate translation: "I am not important!" or "Who am I?"

Servants through whom you believed

Paul answers his own question by saying that he and Apollos are God's servants. Alternate translation: "Paul and Apollos are servants of Christ, and you believed in Christ because we served him"

Servants through whom you believed, just as the Lord gave tasks to each

This can be stated with the understood information. Alternate translation: "We are servants through whom you believed, and to each of us the Lord gave different tasks"

1 Corinthians 3:6

I planted

The knowledge of God is compared to a seed which must be planted in order to grow. Alternate translation: "When I preached God's word to you, I was like one who plants seeds in a garden"

Apollos watered

As seeds need water, faith needs further teaching in order for it to grow. Alternate translation: "and when Apollos continued to teach you God's word, he was like one who waters a garden"

but God gave the growth

As plants grow and develop, so faith and knowledge in God also grow and become deeper and stronger. Alternate translation: "but God caused you to grow" or "but just as God causes plants to grow, he caused you to grow spiritually"

1 Corinthians 3:7

neither he who plants ... is anything. But it is God who gives the growth

Paul stresses that neither he nor Apollos is responsible for the believers' spiritual growth, but it is God's doing.

it is God who gives the growth

Here to give growth means to cause growth. The abstract noun "growth" can be translated with a verbal phrase. Alternate translation: "it is God who causes you to grow"

1 Corinthians 3:8

he who plants and he who waters are one

Paul speaks of telling people the good news and teaching those who have accepted it as if they were planting and watering plants.

are one

Possible meanings are "one" are 1) "united in purpose" or 2) "equal in importance."

wages

an amount of money that a worker receives for his work

1 Corinthians 3:9

we

This refers to Paul and Apollos but not the Corinthian church.

God's fellow workers

Paul considers himself and Apollos as working together.

You are God's garden

Possible meanings are 1) being God's garden represents belonging to God. Alternate translation: "You are like a garden that belongs to God" or 2) being God's garden represents God causing us to grow. Alternate translation: "You are like a garden that God makes grow"

God's building

Possible meanings are 1) being God's building represents belonging to God. Alternate translation: "and you are like a building that belongs to God" or 2) being God's building represents God causing us to become what he wants. Alternate translation: "and you are like a building that God is constructing"

1 Corinthians 3:10

According to the grace of God that was given to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "According to the task that God freely gave me to do"

I laid a foundation

Paul equates his teaching of faith and salvation in Jesus Christ to laying a foundation for a building.

another is building on it

Paul is referring to the person or people who are teaching the Corinthians at that time as if they are carpenters who are constructing the building above the foundation.

let each man

This refers to God's workers in general. Alternate translation: "let each person who serves God"

1 Corinthians 3:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues his metaphor about a foundation.

no one can lay a foundation other than the one that has been laid

The phrase "has been laid" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "no one can lay a foundation other than the one and only foundation"

1 Corinthians 3:12

General Information:

Paul speaks of what builders usually do when constructing a building to describe what the teachers in Corinth are actually doing. Builders usually only use gold, silver, or precious stones as decorations on buildings.

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or straw

The building materials used to build a new building are being compared to the spiritual values used to build a person's behavior and activities during his lifetime. Alternate translation: "Whether a person builds with valuable materials that will last or with cheap materials that burn easily"

precious stones

"expensive stones"

1 Corinthians 3:13

his work will be revealed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will show everyone what the builder has done"

for the day will reveal it

The "day" refers to the time when God will judge everyone. When God shows everyone what these teachers have done, it will be like the sun has come up to reveal what happened during the night.

For it will be revealed in fire. The fire will test the quality of what each one has done

Just as fire will reveal the strengths or destroy the weaknesses of a building, God's fire will judge man's efforts and activities. Alternate translation: "God will use fire to show the quality of his work"

1 Corinthians 3:14

work remains

"work lasts" or "work survives"

1 Corinthians 3:15

if anyone's work is burned up

This is a metaphor for a person's work being shown to have no value. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "if the fire destroys anyone's work" or "if the judgement shows that a person's work has no value"

he will suffer loss

The abstract noun "loss" can be expressed with the verb "lose." Alternate translation: "he will lose his reward"

but he himself will be saved, as though escaping through fire

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "but God will save him as though through fire"

as though escaping through fire

This is a simile showing the danger that such a person is in if his works have no value. (See:

1 Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that the Spirit of God lives in you?

Paul uses a question to rebuke the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "You act as though you do not know that you are God's temple and the Spirit of God lives in you!"

Do you ... you are ... in you

All instances of "you" in this verse are plural.

1 Corinthians 3:17

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 3:18

Let no one deceive himself

Nobody should believe the lie that he himself is wise in this world.

in this age

according to the way people who do not believe decide what is wise

let him become a "fool"

"that person should be willing to have people who do not believe call him a fool"

1 Corinthians 3:19

He catches the wise in their craftiness

God traps the people who think they are clever and uses their own schemes to trap them.

1 Corinthians 3:20

The Lord knows that the reasoning of the wise is futile

"The Lord knows that what people who think they are wise plan to do is futile"

futile

useless

1 Corinthians 3:21

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 3:22

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 3:23

you are Christ's, and Christ is God's

"you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God"

Chapter 4

¹ This is how a person should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the hidden truths of God. ² Now what is required of stewards is that they are found to be trustworthy. ³ But for me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. For I do not even judge myself. ⁴ I am not aware of any charge being made against me, but that does not justify me. The one who judges me is the Lord. ⁵ Therefore do not pronounce judgment about anything before the time, before the Lord comes. He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his praise from God.

⁶ Now, brothers, I applied these principles to myself and Apollos for your sakes, so that from us you might learn the meaning of the saying,

"Do not go beyond what is written."

This is so that none of you may be puffed up in favor of one against the other. ⁷ For who sees any difference between you and others? What do you have that you did not receive? If you have received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? ⁸ Already you have all you could want! Already you have become rich! You began to reign—and that quite apart from us! Indeed, I wish you did reign, so that we could reign with you. ⁹ For I think God has put us apostles on display as the last in line, in a procession and like men sentenced to death. We have become a spectacle to the world—to angels, and to human beings. ¹⁰ We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we are held in dishonor. ¹¹ Up to this present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed, we are beaten, and we are homeless. ¹² We labor hard, working with our own hands. When we are slandered, we bless. When we are persecuted, we endure. ¹³ When we are slandered, we speak with kindness. We have become as the refuse of the world and the filthiest of all things, even till now.

¹⁴ I do not write these things to shame you, but to warn you as my beloved children. ¹⁵ For even if you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ¹⁶ So I urge you to be imitators of me. ¹⁷ That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of my ways in Christ, just as I teach them everywhere and in every church. ¹⁸ Now some of you have become puffed up, acting as though I were not coming to you. ¹⁹ But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills. Then I will know not merely the words of these who are so puffed up, but I will see their power. ²⁰ For the kingdom of God does not consist in words but in power. ²¹ What do you want? Should I come to you with a rod or with love and in a spirit of gentleness?

1 Corinthians 4 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Pride

Paul contrasts the Corinthians' pride with the apostles' humility. The Corinthian believers had no reason to be proud. All that they had, and all they were, was a gift from God. (See: apostle)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphors

Paul uses many metaphors in this chapter. He describes the apostles as servants. Paul speaks of a victory parade where the apostles are the prisoners who will be killed. He uses a rod to stand for punishment. He calls himself their father because he is their "spiritual father." (See: and spirit)

Irony

Paul uses irony to shame the Corinthians for being proud. The Corinthian believers are reigning but the apostles are suffering.

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 4:1

Connecting Statement:

Having just reminded the people not to be proud concerning who had taught them about the Lord and who had baptized them, Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that all believers are to be humble servants.

1 Corinthians 4:2

of stewards is that they

Paul is speaking of himself as if he were speaking about other people. Alternate translation: "of us stewards is that we"

1 Corinthians 4:3

it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you
Paul is comparing the difference between human judgment and God's judgment. Man's judgment is not important compared to God's true judgment upon man.

1 Corinthians 4:4

I am not aware of any charge being made against me
"I have not heard anyone accuse me of doing wrong"

that does not justify me

It would still be possible for Paul to be guilty even if there were no charge against him. This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "that does not mean that God has declared me innocent"

The one who judges me is the Lord

"It is the Lord who will decide if I am innocent or guilty"

1 Corinthians 4:5

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true,"

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the purposes of the heart

Here "bring to light the hidden things of darkness" is a metaphor for making known to everyone things that were done in secret. Here "heart" is a metonym for people's thoughts and intentions. Alternate translation: "Like a light that shines on things in darkness, God will show what people have secretly done and what they secretly planned"

1 Corinthians 4:6

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

for your sakes

"for your welfare"

1 Corinthians 4:7

between you ... do you have that you did not receive ... you have received ... do you boast ... you did not
Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so all instances of "you" here are singular.

For who sees any difference between you and others?

Paul is rebuking the Corinthians who think they are better than those who heard the gospel from someone else. Alternate translation: "For there is no difference between you and others." or "For you are not superior to other people."

What do you have that you did not receive?

Paul uses this question to emphasize that they did not earn the things they have. Alternate translation: "Everything that you have is what you have received." or "God gave to you everything that you have!"

why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

Paul was rebuking them for boasting in what they had. Alternate translation: "you should not boast as if you had not received it." or "you have no right to boast!"

1 Corinthians 4:8

General Information:

Paul uses irony here to shame the Corinthians and make them realize that they are sinning when they are proud of themselves and their teachers.

1 Corinthians 4:9

God has put us apostles on display

Paul expresses two ways that God has put his apostles on display for the world to see.

has put us apostles on display

God has displayed the apostles just like prisoners who are at the end of a Roman military parade and who are humiliated before their execution.

like men sentenced to death

God put the apostles on display like men who are about to be executed.

to the world—to angels, and to human beings

Possible meanings are 1) "the world" consists of both supernatural

1 Corinthians 4:10

We are fools ... in dishonor

Paul uses irony to shame the Corinthians so they will think about what he is saying.

You are held in honor

"People treat you Corinthians as though you were important people"

we are held in dishonor

"people shame us apostles"

1 Corinthians 4:11

Up to this present hour

"Until now" or "Up to now"

we are beaten

This refers to hitting with the hand, not with whips or clubs. This can be stated in active form.

Alternate translation: "people beat us"

we are homeless

Paul means that they have to move around from place to place. Although they have places to stay, they have no permanent home.

1 Corinthians 4:12

When we are slandered, we bless

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When people slander us, we bless them" or "When people scorn us, we bless them"

When we are persecuted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When people persecute us"

1 Corinthians 4:13

When we are slandered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "When people slander us"

We have become as the refuse of the world

"People began to consider us—and they still consider us—to be the garbage of the world"

the refuse of the world

"the worst kind of garbage in the world"

1 Corinthians 4:14

I do not write these things to shame you, but to warn you

"I do not intend to shame you, but I want to correct you"

my beloved children

Because Paul had led the Corinthians to Christ, they are like his spiritual children.

1 Corinthians 4:15

ten thousand guardians

This is an exaggeration of the number of people guiding them, to emphasize the importance of the

one spiritual father. Alternate translation: "very many guardians" or "a large crowd of guardians"

I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel

Paul is emphasizing firstly that his relationship with the Corinthians is most importantly "in Christ," secondly that it came because he told them the good news, and thirdly that he is the one who is like a father to them. Alternate translation: "it was because God joined you to Christ when I told you the good news that I was the one who became your father"

I became your father

Because Paul had led the Corinthians to Christ, he is like a father to them.

1 Corinthians 4:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 4:17

my beloved and faithful child in the Lord

"whom I love and whom I teach about the Lord as if he were my own child"

1 Corinthians 4:18

Now

This word indicates that Paul is shifting his topic. Here he begins to rebuke the arrogant behavior of the Corinthian believers.

1 Corinthians 4:19

I will come to you

"I will visit you"

1 Corinthians 4:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 4:21

What do you want?

Paul was making a last appeal to the Corinthians, as he has been rebuking them for the errors they had made. Alternate translation: "Tell me what you want to happen now."

Should I come to you with a rod or with love and in a spirit of gentleness?

Paul is offering the Corinthians two opposing attitudes he could use when approaching them. Alternate translation: "If you want, I can come to punish you, or I can come to show you how much I love you by being gentle with you."

of gentleness

"of kindness" or "of tenderness"

Chapter 5

¹ We heard a report that there is sexual immorality among you, a kind of immorality that is not even permitted among the pagans: A man has his father's wife. ² You are puffed up! Should you not mourn instead, so that the one who did this deed might be removed from among you? ³ For even though I am absent in body, I am present in spirit. I have already passed judgment on the one who did this, just as though I were there. ⁴ When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, ⁵ deliver this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. ⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole loaf? ⁷ Cleanse yourselves of the old yeast so that you may be a new batch of dough, unleavened, just as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. ⁸ So let us then celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of bad behavior and wickedness. Instead, let us celebrate with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

⁹ I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. ¹⁰ In no way did I mean the immoral people of this world, or the greedy, or swindlers, or idolaters, since to stay away from them you would need to go out of the world. ¹¹ But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who is called a brother but who is living in sexual immorality, or who is greedy, or is an idolater, or is verbally abusive, or is a drunkard, or a swindler. Do not even eat a meal with such a person. ¹² For how am I involved with judging those who are outside the church? Instead, are you not to judge those who are inside the church? ¹³ But God judges those who are on the outside.

"Remove the evil person from among you."

1 Corinthians 5 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Some translations set quotations from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page to make them easier to read. The ULB does this with the quoted words of verse 13.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Euphemisms

Paul uses euphemisms to describe sensitive topics. This chapter deals with sexual immorality of one church member. (See: and fornication)

Metaphor

Paul uses an extended comparison that contains many metaphors. Yeast represents evil. The loaf probably represents the whole congregation. The unleavened bread represents living purely. So the whole passage means: Don't you know that a little evil will affect the whole congregation? So get rid of the evil so you can live purely. Christ has been sacrificed for us. So let us be sincere and truthful and not wicked and behaving badly. (See: evil, unleavenedbread, purify, and passover)

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 5:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul now specifically states about what sin of theirs he has heard, and how the Corinthian believers are proud of their acceptance of that man and his sin.

that is not even permitted among the pagans

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that not even the Gentiles permit"

A man has his father's wife

"A man among you is committing adultery with his father's wife"

father's wife

the wife of his father, but probably not his own mother

1 Corinthians 5:2

Should you not mourn instead ... among you?

This rhetorical question is used to scold the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "You should mourn over this instead ... among you!"

the one who did this deed might be removed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you can remove from among you the one who did this deed"

1 Corinthians 5:3

I am present in spirit

"I am with you in spirit." Being with them in spirit represents caring about them or wanting to be with them. Alternate translation: "I care about you" or "I want to be with you"

I have already passed judgment on the one who did this

Possible meanings are 1) "I have decided what you should do with the one who did this" or 2) "I have found the person who did this guilty"

1 Corinthians 5:4

When you are assembled

"When you are together" or "When you meet together"

in the name of our Lord Jesus

Possible meanings are 1) the name of the Lord Jesus is a metonym that represents his authority. Alternate translation: "with the authority of our Lord Jesus" or 2) being assembled in the Lord's name implies meeting together to worship him. Alternate translation: "to worship our Lord Jesus"

1 Corinthians 5:5

deliver this man over to Satan

This means make the man leave the Christian community so that he will no longer be protected from Satan. Alternate translation: "hand this man over to Satan by sending him away from the Christian community"

for the destruction of the flesh

Possible meanings are 1) "flesh" refers to his physical body. Alternate translation: "so that Satan may harm his body" or 2) "flesh" is a metaphor for the sinful nature. Alternate translation: "so that his sinful nature will be destroyed" or "so that he will not continue to live according to his sinful nature"

so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so that God may save his spirit on the day of the Lord"

1 Corinthians 5:6

Your boasting is not good

"Your boasting is bad"

Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole loaf?

Paul uses this proverb to mean that a small part of something affects the whole thing. In this case, one person who is sinning can harm the entire Christian community.

Do you not know that a little yeast ... loaf?

Here Paul uses a rhetorical question to teach his audience. Alternate translation: "You know that a little yeast ... loaf." or "A little yeast ... loaf."

1 Corinthians 5:7

Cleanse yourselves of the old yeast so that you may be a new batch of dough, unleavened

Paul uses the proverb from 5:6 to teach his audience. Here "old yeast" is a metaphor for the sins that the people were committing. "Unleavened dough" is the type of bread that God told the Israelites was acceptable to eat when celebrating Passover. Paul is telling his audience to stop sinning so that they may be acceptable to God.

Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed

As the Passover lamb covered the sins of Israel by faith each year, so did Christ's death cover the sins of all who trust in Christ by faith for eternity. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord has sacrificed Christ, our Passover lamb"

1 Corinthians 5:8

not with the old yeast, the yeast of bad behavior and wickedness ... the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth

Paul continues using the proverb from 5:6 to teach his audience. Here "yeast" is a metaphor for sin, and "unleavened bread" is metaphor for behaviors acceptable to God.

1 Corinthians 5:9

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 5:10

the immoral people of this world

This means unbelievers who have chosen to live immoral lives.

the greedy

"those who are greedy" or "those who are willing to be dishonest to get what others have"

swindlers

This means people who cheat to get others' property.

you would need to go out of the world

"you would need to avoid all people"

1 Corinthians 5:11

Connecting Statement:

Paul tells them how to treat believers in the church who refuse to be corrected for their involvement in sexual immorality or other obvious sins.

anyone who is called

"anyone who calls himself"

brother

Here this means a fellow Christian, either a man or a woman.

1 Corinthians 5:12

how am I involved with judging those who are outside the church?

Paul uses a question to emphasize that he is not the one to judge people outside the church. This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I am not the one who should judge people who do not belong to the church."

are you not to judge those who are inside the church?

Paul is using a question to scold the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "you should know that you are the ones who should judge those who are inside the church."

1 Corinthians 5:13

General Information:

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Chapter 6

¹ When one of you has a dispute against another, does he dare to bring a lawsuit before the unrighteous rather than before God's holy people? ² Do you not know that God's holy people will judge the world? If then you will judge the world, are you not able to settle matters of little importance? ³ Do you not know that we will judge the angels? How much more, then, can we judge matters of this life? ⁴ If then you have to make judgments that pertain to daily life, why do you lay such cases as these before those who have no standing in the church? ⁵ I say this to your shame. Is there no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between brothers? ⁶ But one brother brings a lawsuit against another brother—and this before unbelievers! ⁷ The fact that you have lawsuits with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer the wrong? Why not rather allow yourselves to be cheated? ⁸ But you yourselves do wrong and you cheat, and you do this to your own brothers! ⁹ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who submit to homosexual acts, nor men who perform homosexual acts, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ That is what some of you were like. But you have been cleansed, you have been sanctified, you have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

¹² "Everything is lawful for me," but not everything is profitable. "Everything is lawful for me," but I will not be mastered by any of them. ¹³ "Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," but God will do away with both of them. The body is not intended for sexual immorality. Instead, the body is for the Lord, and the Lord will provide for the body. ¹⁴ God both raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I then take the members of Christ and join them to a prostitute? May it not be! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? As scripture says, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸ Run away from sexual immorality! Every other sin that a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives within you, whom you have from God? Do you not know that you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God with your body and in your spirit, which belong to God.

1 Corinthians 6 General Notes

Special concepts in this chapter

Lawsuits

Paul teaches that a Christian should not take another Christian to court before a non-Christian judge. It is better to be cheated. Christians will judge the angels. So they should be able to solve problems among themselves. (See: judge)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

The temple of the Holy Spirit is an important metaphor. It refers to the place where the Holy Spirit stays and is worshiped.

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses several rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 6:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how believers are to settle disagreements with other believers.

dispute

in this case a legal complaint, argument, or disagreement

does he dare ... holy people?

Paul is angry because the Corinthians are doing a great wrong by taking their disputes with each other to the civil court. Alternate translation: "it is

wrong for him to dare ... holy people." or "he should fear God and not ... God's holy people."

to bring a lawsuit before the unrighteous rather than before God's holy people
to ask unrighteous people, rather than God's holy people, to judge who is right and who is wrong

1 Corinthians 6:2

Do you not know that God's holy people will judge the world?

Paul uses a question to shame the Corinthians for their behavior. Alternate translation: "You act like you do not know that God's holy people will judge the world."

If then you will judge the world, are you not able to settle matters of little importance?

Because they will be given greater responsibility later, they should be responsible for lesser things now. Alternate translation: "You will judge the world in the future, so you should be able to settle this small matter now."

1 Corinthians 6:3

judge matters of this life

"stop arguments about things that have to do with this life"

Do you not know that we will judge the angels?

Paul is surprised that they do not seem to know. Alternate translation: "You know that we will judge the angels."

we

Paul includes himself and the Corinthians.

How much more, then, can we judge matters of this life?

Because they will be given greater responsibility later, they should be responsible for lesser things now. Alternate translation: "Because we know we will judge the angels, we can also be sure that God will enable us to judge matters in this life."

1 Corinthians 6:4

If then you have to make judgments that pertain to daily life

"If you are called upon to make decisions about daily life" or "If you must settle matters that are important in this life"

do you lay such cases as these before those who have no standing in the church?

Possible meanings are that 1) this is a rhetorical question and Paul is rebuking the Corinthians for laying their cases before people of no standing in the church. Alternate translation: "you should not lay such cases as these before those who have no standing in the church." or 2) this is a command to lay their cases before even people of no standing in the church, rather than to people outside of the

church. Alternate translation: "lay cases such as these even before people in the church who have no standing, not before people outside of the church."

1 Corinthians 6:5

to your shame

"to your dishonor" or "to show how you have failed in this matter"

Is there no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between brothers?

Paul is shaming the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "You should be ashamed that you cannot find a wise believer to settle arguments between brothers"

brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

dispute

argument or disagreement

1 Corinthians 6:6

But one brother brings a lawsuit against another brother—and this before unbelievers

"But brothers who have disputes with each other ask judges who do not believe in Christ to make decisions for them" or "It is bad that brothers have such bad disputes with each other that they go to court; it is even worse that those courts are run by unbelievers"

brother brings a lawsuit against another brother

Here "brother" means fellow Christian, including both men and women.

brings a lawsuit

asks the civil court to judge the matter

and this before unbelievers

Possible meanings are 1) "and the brothers have unbelieving judges make decisions for them" or 2) "and unbelievers in the community see brothers disputing with one another"

1 Corinthians 6:7

is already a defeat

"is already a failure"

Why not rather suffer the wrong? Why not rather allow yourselves to be cheated?

Paul continues to shame the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "It would be better to let others wrong you and cheat you than to take them to court."

1 Corinthians 6:8

your own brothers

Here "brothers" means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

1 Corinthians 6:9

Do you not know that ... kingdom of God?

Paul emphasizes that they should already know this truth. Alternate translation: "You already know that ... kingdom of God."

inherit

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if it were inheriting property and wealth from a family member.

inherit the kingdom of God

God will not judge them as righteous at the judgment, and they will not enter eternal life.

nor men who submit to homosexual acts, nor men who perform homosexual acts

Both of these phrases refer to men who have sex with other men.

1 Corinthians 6:10

thieves

people who steal from others

the greedy

people who are willing to use evil means to take others' property

1 Corinthians 6:11

you have been cleansed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has cleansed you"

you have been sanctified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has set you apart for himself"

you have been justified

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has made you right with him"

in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ

"Name" here is a metonym for the power and authority of Jesus Christ. Alternate translation: "by the power and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ"

1 Corinthians 6:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that God wants them pure because Christ has bought them with his death. Their bodies are now God's temple. He does so by saying what the Corinthians might say and then correcting them.

"Everything is lawful for me," but

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is saying what some Corinthians might be thinking. Alternate translation: "People say, 'I am allowed to do anything,' but" or 2) Paul is saying what he thinks is

true. Alternate translation: "I am allowed to do anything, but"

but not everything is profitable

Paul is answering whoever says, "Everything is lawful for me." Alternate translation: "but not everything is good for me"

I will not be mastered by any of them

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I will not allow these things to rule over me like a master"

1 Corinthians 6:13

"Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," but God will do away with both of them

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is correcting what some Corinthians might be thinking, "food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," by answering that God will do away with both the stomach and food or 2) Paul actually agrees that "food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food," but he is adding that God will do away with both of them.

Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food

One possible meanings is that the speaker is speaking indirectly of the body and sex, but you should translate this literally as "stomach" and "food."

do away with

"destroy"

1 Corinthians 6:14

raised the Lord

"caused the Lord to live again"

1 Corinthians 6:15

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

The word translated as "members" refers to parts of a body. Our belonging to Christ is spoken of as if we were parts of his body. We belong to him so much that even our bodies belong to him. Paul uses this question to remind the people of something they should already know. Alternate translation: "You should know that your bodies belong to Christ."

Should I then take the members of Christ and join them to a prostitute? May it not be!

Paul uses this question to emphasize how wrong it is for someone who belongs to Christ to go to a prostitute. Alternate translation: "I am part of Christ. I will not take my body and join myself to a prostitute!" or "We are parts of Christ's body. We must not take our bodies and join ourselves to prostitutes!"

May it not be!

"That should never happen!" or "We must never do that!"

1 Corinthians 6:16

Do you not know that ... her?

Paul begins to teach the Corinthians by emphasizing a truth that they already know. "I want to remind you that ... her."

he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her

This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when a man joins his body to the body of a prostitute, it is as if their bodies become one body"

1 Corinthians 6:17

he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him

This can also be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "when the Lord joins his spirit to the spirit of a person, it is as if their spirits become one spirit"

1 Corinthians 6:18

Run away from

Paul speaks of a person rejecting sexual sin as if that person were running away from danger. Alternate translation: "Get away from"

immorality! Every other sin that a person commits is outside the body, but

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is showing that sexual sin is especially bad because it is not only against others but against the sinner's own body or

2) Paul is quoting what some Corinthians were thinking. Alternate translation: "immorality! Some of you are saying, 'Every sin that a person commits is outside the body,' but I say that"

sin that a person commits

"evil deed that a person does"

1 Corinthians 6:19

Do you not know ... God? Do you not know that you are not your own?

Paul is continuing to teach the Corinthians by emphasizing what they already know. Alternate translation: "I want to remind you ... God and that you are not your own."

your body

the body of each individual Christian is a temple of the Holy Spirit

temple of the Holy Spirit

A temple is dedicated to divine beings, and it is also where they dwell. In the same way, the bodies of believers are like temples because the Holy Spirit lives within them.

1 Corinthians 6:20

For you were bought with a price

God paid for the freedom of the Corinthians from the slavery of sin. This can be stated in an active form. Alternate translation: "God paid for your freedom"

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true,"

Chapter 7

¹ Now concerning the issues you wrote about: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman." ² But because of temptations for many immoral acts, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. ³ The husband should fulfill his duty to have sexual relations with his wife, and in the same way the wife to her husband. ⁴ It is not the wife who has authority over her own body, it is the husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵ Do not deprive each other, except by mutual agreement and for a specific period of time. Do this so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then you should come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

⁶ But I say these things to you as a concession and not as a command. ⁷ I wish that everyone were as I am. But each one has his own gift from God. One has this kind of gift, and another that kind. ⁸ To the unmarried and to widows I say that it is good for them if they remain unmarried, as I am. ⁹ But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better for them to marry than to burn with passion. ¹⁰ Now to the married I give this command—not I, but the Lord—the wife should not separate from her husband ¹¹ (but if she does separate from her husband, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. ¹² But to the rest I say—I, not the Lord—that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and if she is content to live with him, he should not divorce her. ¹³ If a woman has an unbelieving husband, and if he is content to live with her, she should not divorce him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is set apart because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is set apart because of the brother. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but actually they are set apart. ¹⁵ But if the unbeliever departs, let him go. In such cases, the brother or sister is not bound to their vows. God has called us to live in peace. ¹⁶ For how do you know, woman, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, man, whether you will save your wife? ¹⁷ However, as the Lord has given each one his portion, let each one walk as God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. ¹⁸ Was anyone circumcised when he was called to believe? He should not try to appear uncircumcised. Was anyone uncircumcised when he was called to faith? He should not be circumcised. ¹⁹ For it is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision that matters. What matters is obeying the commandments of God. ²⁰ Each one should remain in the calling he was in when God called him to believe. ²¹ Were you a slave when God called you? Do not be concerned about it. But if you can become free, take advantage of it. ²² For someone who is called by the Lord as a slave is the Lord's freeman. In the same way, the one who was free when he was called to believe is Christ's slave. ²³ You have been bought with a price, so do not become slaves of men. ²⁴ Brothers, in whatever situation he was in when he was called, let each one remain with God in that.

²⁵ Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord. But I give my opinion as one who, by the Lord's mercy, is trustworthy. ²⁶ Therefore, I think that because of the disaster that is coming, it is good for a man to remain as he is. ²⁷ Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek a divorce. If you are free of a wife, do not seek a wife. ²⁸ But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who do will have many kinds of fleshly trouble, and I want to spare you from this. ²⁹ But this I say, brothers: The time is short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none. ³⁰ Those who weep should act as though they were not weeping, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they did not possess anything, ³¹ and those who use the world should not act as though they are using it to the full. For the world in its present form is coming to an end. ³² I would like you to be free from worries. The unmarried man is concerned about the things of the Lord, how to please him. ³³ But the married man is concerned about the things of the world, how to please his wife— ³⁴ he is divided. The unmarried woman or the virgin is concerned about the things of the Lord, how to be set apart in body and in spirit. But the married woman is concerned about the things of the world, how to please her husband. ³⁵ I say this for your own benefit, and not to put any constraint on you. I say this for what is right, so that you may be devoted to the Lord without any distraction. ³⁶ But if anyone thinks that he is not treating his virgin with respect—if she is beyond the age of marriage and it must be so—he should do what he wants. He is not sinning. They should marry. ³⁷ But if he is standing firm in his heart, if he is not under pressure but can control his own will, and if he has decided in his own heart to do this, to keep his own a virgin, he will do well. ³⁸ So the one who marries his virgin does well, and the one who chooses not to marry will do even better. ³⁹ A woman is bound to

her husband while he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but only in the Lord. ⁴⁰ Yet in my judgment she would be happier if she lives as she is. And I think that I also have the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 7 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul begins to answer a series of questions that the Corinthians may have asked him. The first question is about marriage. The second question is about a slave trying to become free, a Gentile becoming a Jew, or a Jew becoming a Gentile.

Special concepts in this chapter

Divorce

Paul says married Christians should not divorce. A Christian married to an unbeliever should not leave their husband or wife. If the unbelieving husband or wife leaves, this is not a sin. Paul advises that, because of the difficult times and because it is near to the time that Jesus will return, it is good to remain unmarried. (See: believe and sin)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Euphemisms

Paul uses many euphemisms to discreetly refer to sexual relations. This is often a sensitive topic. Many cultures do not wish to speak openly about these matters.

1 Corinthians 7:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives the believers some specific instructions on marriage.

Now

Paul is introducing a new topic in his teaching.

the issues you wrote about

The Corinthians had written a letter to Paul to ask for answers to certain questions.

"It is good for a man not to touch a woman."

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is quoting what the Corinthians had written. Alternate translation: "you wrote, 'It is good for a man not to touch a woman.'" or 2) Paul is saying what he really thinks. Alternate translation: "my answer is that yes, it is good for a man not to touch a woman."

It is good

"It is most helpful"

for a man

Possible meanings are 1) "a man" refers to a married man. Alternate translation: "a husband" or 2) "a man" refers to any man.

not to touch a woman

Possible meanings are 1) "touch a woman" is a euphemism for having sexual relations. Alternate translation: "not to have sexual relations with his wife for a while" or 2) "touch a woman" is a metonym for marry. Alternate translation: "not to marry"

1 Corinthians 7:2

But because

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is responding to what the Corinthians had written. Alternate translation: "That is true, but because" or 2) Paul is saying what he really thinks.

But because of temptations for many immoral acts, each

"But because Satan tempts people to commit sexual sin, each" or "But we desire to commit sexual sin because of our sinful nature, so each"

1 Corinthians 7:3

fulfill his duty to have sexual relations with his wife

Husbands should regularly have sexual relations with their wives. Alternate translation: "should give to his wife her sexual rights"

in the same way the wife to her husband

The words "should fulfill" and "duty to have sexual relations" are understood from the previous phrase, as is the meaning of the euphemism. Alternate translation: "in the same way, the wife should fulfill her duty to have sexual relations with her husband" or "in the same way, the wife should give to her husband his sexual rights"

1 Corinthians 7:4

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 7:5

Do not deprive each other, except by mutual agreement and for

This double negative emphasizes that mutual agreement is necessary. Alternate translation: "Only if you both agree to deprive each other should you do so, and even then only do so for"

Do not deprive each other

The word "deprive" means to keep from someone something that the other person has the right to receive, in this case marital relations. "Do not refuse to have marital relations with your spouse"

so that you may devote yourselves to prayer

in order to have a period of especially deep prayer

devote yourselves

"commit yourselves"

come together again

"sleep together again"

because of your lack of self-control

"because after some days, your sexual desires will be harder to keep under control"

1 Corinthians 7:6

I say these things to you as a concession and not as a command

Possible meanings are Paul is telling the Corinthians that he is allowing them, but not commanding them, 1) to marry and sleep together or 2) to stop sleeping together for a time.

1 Corinthians 7:7

were as I am

Either Paul had never married or his wife had died. It is unlikely that he had been through a divorce.

But each one has his own gift from God. One has this kind of gift, and another that kind

"But God enables people to do different things. He enables one person to do one thing and another person to do something different"

1 Corinthians 7:8

the unmarried

"those who are not married"

to widows

"to women whose husbands have died"

it is good

See how you translated this in 1 Corinthians 7:1.

1 Corinthians 7:9

to burn with passion

"to live with the constant desire to sleep with someone"

1 Corinthians 7:10

should not separate from

Paul's readers knew no difference between separating and divorcing. To stop living with someone was to end the marriage. Alternate translation: "should not divorce"

1 Corinthians 7:11

be reconciled to her husband

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "she should make peace with her husband and return to him"

should not divorce

Paul's readers knew no difference between divorcing and simply separating. To do either was to end the marriage. Alternate translation: "should not separate from"

1 Corinthians 7:12

content

willing or satisfied

1 Corinthians 7:13

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 7:14

For the unbelieving husband is set apart because of his wife

Possible meanings are 1) "For God has set apart the unbelieving husband for himself because of his believing wife" or 2) "God treats the unbelieving husband as he would treat a son for the sake of his believing wife"

the unbelieving wife is set apart because of the brother

Possible meanings are 1) "God has set apart the unbelieving wife for himself because of her husband who believes" or 2) "God treats the unbelieving wife as he would treat a daughter for the sake of her husband who believes"

the brother

the believing man or husband

they are set apart

Possible meanings are 1) "God has set them apart for himself" or 2) "God treats them as he would treat his own children"

1 Corinthians 7:15

In such cases, the brother or sister is not bound to their vows

Here "brother" and "sister" refers to a Christian husband or wife. Here "not bound to their vows" is a metaphor that mean the person is not obligated to do what they vowed to do. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "In such cases, God does not require the believing spouse to continue to obey the marriage vow"

1 Corinthians 7:16

do you know, woman ... you will save your husband ... do you know, man ... you will save your wife

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so all instances of "you" and "your" here are singular.

how do you know, woman, whether you will save your husband?

Paul uses a question to cause women to think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation: "you cannot know if you will save your unbelieving husband."

how do you know, man, whether you will save your wife?

Paul uses a question to cause men to think deeply about what he is saying. Alternate translation: "you cannot know if you will save your unbelieving wife."

1 Corinthians 7:17

However

No matter what is true for the people in any of the situations Paul has just been discussing, he addresses the following words to everyone.

as the Lord has given each one his portion

God giving people skills and work to do and guiding the events of their lives is spoken of as if he were dividing physical objects and giving parts out to them. Alternate translation: "as the Lord has assigned each one his life"

each one

"each believer"

let each one walk as God has called him

The word "walk" is a metaphor for "live." Possible meanings of the word "called" are 1) it refers to people responding to the gospel. Alternate translation: "each one should live as he was when he became a Christian." Or 2) it is a metaphor for "commanded" or "instructed." Alternate translation: "each one should live as God has instructed him to" or "each one should follow God's commands as he lives his life"

This is my rule in all the churches

Paul was teaching believers in all the churches to act in this manner.

1 Corinthians 7:18

Was anyone circumcised when he was called to believe? He

Paul was addressing the circumcised ones

Was anyone uncircumcised when he was called to faith? He

Paul was now addressing the uncircumcised ones.

Alternate translation: "If someone was uncircumcised when God called him to believe, he"

1 Corinthians 7:19

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 7:20

remain in the calling

Here "calling" refers to the work or social position in which you were involved. Alternate translation: "live and work as you did"

1 Corinthians 7:21

Were you ... called you? Do not be ... you can become

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so all instances of "you" and the command "be" here are singular.

Were you a slave when God called you? Do not be concerned

This can be stated as a statement. Alternate translation: "To anyone who was a slave when God called you to believe, I say this: do not be concerned"

1 Corinthians 7:22

the Lord's freeman

This freeman is forgiven by God and therefore free from Satan and sin.

1 Corinthians 7:23

You have been bought with a price

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Christ bought you by dying for you"

1 Corinthians 7:24

Brothers

Here this means fellow Christians, including both men and women.

whatever situation he was in when he was called

"whether he was married or unmarried, slave or free, when he was called"

he was called

You may need to make explicit who called and use an active verb. Alternate translation: "God called him"

called

called to believe in Christians

let each one remain

"each one should remain." That is, each one should remain slave, free, married, or unmarried, as he was when he first believed in Christ.

with God

"as a person responsible to God"

1 Corinthians 7:25

Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment from the Lord

Paul knows no teaching of Jesus that speaks about this situation. Alternate translation: "The Lord has not commanded me to say anything to people who have never married"

virgins

This is probably a synecdoche for anyone who has never married. Alternate translation: "people who have never married"

I give my opinion

"I tell you what I think"

as one who, by the Lord's mercy, is trustworthy

"because, by the Lord's mercy, I am trustworthy"

1 Corinthians 7:26

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 7:27

General Information:

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if he were speaking to each person, so all these instances of "you" and the command "do not seek" here are singular.

Are you bound to a wife? Do not ...

Paul uses this question to introduce a possible condition. The question can be translated as a phrase with "if." Alternate translation: "If you are bound to a wife, do not"

bound

married

Do not seek a divorce

"Do not try to divorce her" or "Do try to separate from her"

do not seek a wife

"do not try to get married"

1 Corinthians 7:28

fleshly trouble

The word "fleshly" is a metonym for mortal life. Alternate translation: "trouble in this life"

I want to spare you from this

The word "this" refers to the kinds of worldly trouble that married people might have. Alternate translation: "I want to help you not to have worldly trouble"

virgin

This is probably a synecdoche for anyone who has never married. See how you translated "virgins" in [1 Corinthians 7:25]

1 Corinthians 7:29

The time is short

"There is little time" or "Time is almost gone"

1 Corinthians 7:30

weep

cry or grieve with tears

1 Corinthians 7:31

those who use the world

"those who deal every day with unbelievers"

should not act as though they are using it to the full

"should show by their actions that they have their hope in God"

1 Corinthians 7:32

free from worries

Being "free from" something is an idiom which means having the ability to live without it.

Alternate translation: "without needing to worry"

concerned about

"focused on"

1 Corinthians 7:33

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 7:34

he is divided

"he is trying to please God and please his wife at the same time"

The unmarried woman or the virgin

Possible meanings are 1) "virgin" refers only to virgins, while "unmarried woman" could be a divorcée or any other unmarried non-virgin, and 2) "unmarried woman" explains what Paul means by "virgin."

1 Corinthians 7:35

constraint
restriction

may be devoted to
"can concentrate on"

1 Corinthians 7:36

not treating his virgin with respect

"not being kind to his virgin" or "not honoring his virgin"

his virgin

Possible meanings are 1) "the woman whom he promised to marry" or "his fiancée" or 2) "his virgin daughter."

They should marry

Possible meanings are 1) "He should marry his fiancée" or 2) "He should let his daughter get married."

1 Corinthians 7:37

But if he is standing firm in his heart

Here "standing firm" is a metaphor for deciding something with certainty. Here "heart" is metonym for a person's mind or thoughts. Alternate

translation: "But if he has decided firmly in his own mind"

1 Corinthians 7:38

So the one who marries his virgin does well, and the one who chooses not to marry will do even better

Or "So the one who allows his virgin daughter to marry does well, and the one who chooses not to have her marry will do even better." See how you translated "virgin" and "He should marry" in [1 Corinthians 7:36](#).

1 Corinthians 7:39

A woman is bound to her husband

Here "bound" is a metaphor for a close relationship between people in which they support each other emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Here it means the union of marriage. Alternate translation: "A woman is married to her husband" or "A woman is united with her husband"

while he lives

"for as long as he lives" or "until he dies"

in the Lord

"if the new husband is a believer"

1 Corinthians 7:40

my judgment

"my understanding of God's word"

happier

more contented, more joyful

lives as she is

"remains unmarried"

Chapter 8

¹ Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. ² If anyone thinks he knows something, that person does not yet know as he should know. ³ But if anyone loves God, that person is known by him. ⁴ Therefore, concerning the eating of food sacrificed to idols: We know that an idol in this world is nothing and that there is no God but one. ⁵ For even if there were so-called gods, either in heaven or on earth (just as there are many "gods" and many "lords"), ⁶ yet for us there is only one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we live, and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things exist, and through whom we exist.

⁷ However, this knowledge is not in everyone. Instead, some previously practiced idol worship, and they eat this food as if it were something sacrificed to an idol. Their conscience is thereby defiled because it is weak. ⁸ But food will not present us to God. We are not worse if we do not eat, nor better if we do eat it. ⁹ But take care that your freedom does not become a reason for someone who is weak in faith to stumble.

¹⁰ For suppose that someone sees you, who have knowledge, eating a meal in an idol's temple. Is not his weak conscience emboldened to eat what is offered to idols? ¹¹ So because of your understanding about the true nature of idols, the weaker one, the brother for whom Christ died, is destroyed. ¹² Thus, when you sin against your brothers and wound their weak consciences, you sin against Christ. ¹³ Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I may not cause my brother to fall.

1 Corinthians 8 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In Chapters 8-10, Paul answers the question: "Is it acceptable to eat meat that has been sacrificed to an idol?"

Special concepts in this chapter

Meat sacrificed to idols

Paul answers the question about eating meat sacrificed to idols by saying that idols are supposed to be gods but that those gods do not really exist. Therefore nothing is wrong with the meat. Christians are free to eat it. However, someone who does not understand this may see a Christian eating it. They may then be encouraged to eat the meat as an act of worship to the idol.

1 Corinthians 8:1

General Information:

"We" means Paul and, though specifically writing to the Corinthian believers, includes all believers.

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the believers that though idols have no power, believers must be careful not to affect the weaker believers who might think that the believers care about idols if the believers eat food that was sacrificed to idols. He tells believers to be careful with the freedom that they have in Christ.

Now concerning

Paul uses this phrase to move on to the next question the Corinthians had asked him.

food sacrificed to idols

Gentile worshipers would offer grain, fish, fowl, or meat to their gods. The priest would burn a portion of it on the altar. Paul is speaking of the portion the priest would give back for the worshiper to eat or sell in the market.

Knowledge puffs up

"Knowledge puffs people up." Here "puffs up" is a metaphor for making someone proud. The abstract noun "knowledge" can be expressed with the verb "know." Alternate translation: "Knowledge makes people proud" or "People who think that they know a lot become proud"

but love builds up

The abstract noun "love" can be expressed as a verb. Alternate translation: "but when we love people, we build them up"

love builds up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. Alternate translation: "love strengthens people" or "when we love people, we strengthen them"

1 Corinthians 8:2

thinks he knows something

"believes he knows everything about something"

1 Corinthians 8:3

that person is known by him

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God knows that person"

1 Corinthians 8:4

General Information:

"We" here refers to all believers and include Paul's audience.

We know that an idol in this world is nothing and that there is no God but one

Paul is probably quoting phrases that some Corinthians used. Being "nothing" represents having no power. Alternate translation: "We all know, as you yourselves like to say, that an idol in this world has no power and that there is no God but one"

1 Corinthians 8:5

so-called gods

"things that people call gods"

many "gods" and many "lords"

Paul does not believe that many gods and many lords exist, but he recognizes that the pagans believe they do.

1 Corinthians 8:6

General Information:

"Us" and "we" here refer to all believers and include Paul's audience.

yet for us there is only one God

"yet we know that there is only one God"

1 Corinthians 8:7

General Information:

Paul is speaking here of "weak" brothers, people who cannot separate food sacrificed to idols from the worship of those idols. If a Christian eats food that has been sacrificed to an idol, weak brothers might think that God will allow them to worship the idol by eating the food. Even if the eater has not worshiped the idol and is simply eating the food, he has still corrupted his weak brothers' conscience.

everyone ... some

"all people ... some people who are now Christians"

defiled

ruined or harmed, especially as regards the person's relationship with God

1 Corinthians 8:8

food will not present us to God

Paul speaks of food as though it were a person who could make God welcome us. Alternate translation: "food does not give us favor with God" or "the food we eat does not make God pleased with us"

We are not worse if we do not eat, nor better if we do eat it

"Some people might think that if we do not eat some things, God will love us less. But they are wrong. Those who think that God will love us more if we do eat those things are also wrong"

1 Corinthians 8:9

someone who is weak

believers not strong in their faith

1 Corinthians 8:10

sees you, who have

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so these words are singular.

his ... conscience

what he understands to be right and wrong

emboldened to eat

"encouraged to eat"

1 Corinthians 8:11

your understanding

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so the word "your" here is singular.

the weaker one ... is destroyed

The brother or sister who is not strong in his or her faith will sin or lose his or her faith.

1 Corinthians 8:12

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 8:13

Therefore

"Because what I have just said is true"

if food causes

"Food" here is a metonym for the eating of food. Alternate translation: "if by eating I cause" or "if I, because of what I eat, cause"

Chapter 9

¹ Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? ² If I am not an apostle to others, at least I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. ³ This is my defense to those who examine me: ⁴ Do we not have the right to eat and drink? ⁵ Do we not have the right to take along a wife who is a believer, as do the rest of the apostles, and the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? ⁶ Or do only I and Barnabas not have the right to not work at a trade? ⁷ Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit? Or who shepherds a flock and does not drink milk from it? ⁸ Do I say these things based on human authority? Does not the law also say this? ⁹ For it is written in the law of Moses, "Do not put a muzzle on an ox when it is threshing the grain." Is it really the oxen that God cares about? ¹⁰ Is he not speaking about us? It was written for us, because the one who plows should plow in hope, and the one who threshes should thresh in the hope of sharing in the harvest. ¹¹ If we sowed spiritual things among you, is it too much for us to reap physical things from you? ¹² If others exercised this right from you, do we not have even more? But we did not claim this right. Instead we endured everything rather than be a hindrance to the gospel of Christ. ¹³ Do you not know that those who perform sacred duties get their food from the temple? Do you not know that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living from the gospel. ¹⁵ But I have not claimed any of these rights. And I do not write this so something might be done for me. It would be better for me to die than—No one will make my boast empty! ¹⁶ For if I preach the gospel, I have no reason for boasting, because I must do this. And woe be to me if I do not preach the gospel! ¹⁷ For if I do this willingly, I have a reward. But if not willingly, I still have a stewardship that was entrusted to me. ¹⁸ What then is my reward? That when I preach, I may offer the gospel without charge and so not take full use of my right in the gospel. ¹⁹ For though I am free from all, I became a servant to all, in order that I might win more. ²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law, I became like one under the law in order to win those under the law. I did this even though I myself was not under the law. ²¹ To those outside the law, I became like one outside the law, although I was not outside the law of God myself, but under the law of Christ. I did this so that I may win those outside the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, so that I may win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I may by all means save some. ²³ I do all things for the gospel's sake, so that I may participate in its blessings. ²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run the race, but that only one receives the prize? So run to win the prize. ²⁵ Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a wreath that is perishable, but we do it to receive one that is imperishable. ²⁶ Therefore this is how I run, as not without purpose; this is how I box, not as one beating the air. ²⁷ But I subdue my body and make it a slave, so that after I have preached to others, I myself may not be disqualified.

Footnotes

9:20 ^[1]The ULB has:

1 Corinthians 9 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul defends himself in this chapter. Some people claimed that he was trying to gain financially from the church.

Special concepts in this chapter

Earning money from the church

People accused Paul of just wanting money from the church. Paul answered that he rightfully could get money from the church. The Old Testament taught that those who worked should get their living from their work. He and Barnabas purposefully never used this right and earned their own living.

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Paul uses many metaphors in this chapter. These metaphors teach complex truths.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

Contextualization

This passage is important because Paul "contextualizes" ministering the gospel to different audiences. This means that Paul makes himself and the gospel understandable without his actions hindering the gospel being received. The translator should take extra care to preserve aspects of this "contextualization" if possible. (See: goodnews)

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses many rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize various points as he teaches the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 9:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains how he uses the liberty he has in Christ.

Am I not free?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of the rights he has. Alternate translation: "I am a free person."

Am I not an apostle?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of who he is and the rights he has. Alternate translation: "I am an apostle."

Have I not seen Jesus our Lord?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of who he is. Alternate translation: "I have seen Jesus our Lord."

Are you not my work in the Lord?

Paul uses this rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of their relationship to him. Alternate translation: "You believe in Christ because I have worked the way the Lord wants me to."

my work

"the result of the work that I have done"

1 Corinthians 9:2

you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord

The word "seal" here is a metaphor for the evidence needed to prove something. Alternate translation: "you are evidence I can use to prove that the Lord has chosen me to be an apostle"

1 Corinthians 9:3

This is my defense ... me:

Possible meanings are 1) the words that follow are Paul's defense or 2) the words in 1 Corinthians 9:1-2 are Paul's defense. Alternate translation: "This is my defense ... me."

1 Corinthians 9:4

Do we not have the right to eat and drink?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to challenge what some people think about him and Barnabas. Alternate translation: "We have the right to receive food and drink from the churches."

we

Here "we" refers to Paul and Barnabas.

1 Corinthians 9:5

Do we not have the right ... Cephas?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to challenge what some people think about him and Barnabas. Alternate translation: "We certainly have the right ... Cephas."

a wife who is a believer

"a believing wife" or "a Christian wife"

1 Corinthians 9:6

Or do only I and Barnabas not have the right to not work at a trade?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to challenge what some people think about him and Barnabas. Alternate translation: "You seem to think that Barnabas and I are the only apostles who have no authority to not work at a trade"

not have the right to not work at a trade

If this double negative causes confusion in your language, you can state it as a simple positive. Alternate translation: "have to work at a trade" or "have to have another job"

1 Corinthians 9:7

Who serves as a soldier at his own expense?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "We all know that no soldier has to buy his own supplies." or "We all know that

every soldier receives his supplies from the government."

Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its fruit?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "We all know that the one who plants a vineyard will be allowed to eat its fruit." or "No one expects that someone who plants a vineyard will be forbidden to eat its fruit."

Or who shepherds a flock and does not drink milk from it?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "We all know that those who shepherd flocks may drink milk from the flocks"

1 Corinthians 9:8

Do I say these things based on human authority? Does not the law also say this?

Paul uses these rhetorical questions as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "I am not saying these things based on human authority. The law also says this."

1 Corinthians 9:9

Do not put

Moses was speaking to the Israelites as if they were one person, so this command is singular.

Is it really the oxen that God cares about?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "God does not only care about the oxen."

1 Corinthians 9:10

Is he not speaking about us?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "Instead, God was certainly speaking about us."

should plow in hope

"should plow, expecting to receive something for his work" or "should plow, expecting to share in the harvest"

should thresh in the hope of sharing in the harvest

"should thresh, expecting to share in the harvest"

sharing in the harvest

"receiving some of the crop that is collected"

1 Corinthians 9:11

If we sowed spiritual things among you, is it too much for us to reap physical things from you?

Here "sowed spiritual things" and "reap physical things" are metaphors meaning Paul and Barnabas taught the Corinthians about Christ and spiritual things, so they deserve for the church to support them for their work. Alternate translation: "If we taught you about Christ and spiritual truths, is it too much for us to receive money from you for our work?"

is it too much for us to reap physical things from you?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "then it should not be too much for us to reap physical things from you."

1 Corinthians 9:12

If others exercised ... you, do we not have even more?

Paul uses this rhetorical question as a part of his argument to show that he and Barnabas have the right to be supported by the church for their work. Alternate translation: "If others exercised ... you, then we have that right even more."

If others exercised this right

Paul and the Corinthians both know that others exercised the right. Alternate translation: "Since others exercised this right"

others

other workers of the gospel

this right

the right to have the believers at Corinth provide for the living expenses of those who told them the good news

be a hindrance to

"be a burden to" or "stop the spread of"

1 Corinthians 9:13

Do you not know that those who perform sacred duties get their food from the temple?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of what they know so he can add new information. Alternate translation: "I want to remind you that those who perform sacred duties get their food from the temple."

perform sacred duties

"perform sacred duties in the temple" or "work in the temple"

Do you not know that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the Corinthians of what they know so he can add new

information. Alternate translation: "I want to remind you that those who serve at the altar get some of the foods and meat that people offer on the altar."

1 Corinthians 9:14

get their living from the gospel

The words "the gospel" here are a metonym for 1) the people to whom they tell the gospel, "receive their food and other things they need from those to whom they teach the good news," or 2) the result of working to tell the gospel, "receive their food and other things they need because they work to tell the good news."

1 Corinthians 9:15

these rights

"these things that I deserve"

so something might be done for me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "so you will do something for me"

It would be better for me to die than—No one will make my boast empty!

Paul seems to have started a new sentence before finishing the first one. Some modern translations read, "It would be better for me to die than to have someone deprive me of this boast."

It would be better for me to

"I would rather." Paul is speaking of what he desires, not necessarily of what God thinks is best.

make my boast empty

"take away this opportunity I have to boast" or "make it so I have nothing to boast about"

1 Corinthians 9:16

I must do this

"I must preach the gospel"

woe be to me if

"may I suffer misfortune if"

1 Corinthians 9:17

if I do this willingly

"if I preach willingly" or "if I preach because I want to"

But if not willingly

The words "I do this" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "But if I do this unwillingly" or "But if I do this even though I do not want to" or "But if I do this because I was forced to do it"

I still have a stewardship that was entrusted to me

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "I still must complete this work that

God entrusted to me" or "I still must do this work that God gave me to complete"

1 Corinthians 9:18

What then is my reward?

Paul is preparing them for the new information he is going to give them. Alternate translation: "This is my reward."

That when I preach, I may offer the gospel without charge

"My reward for preaching is that I can preach without receiving payment"

offer the gospel

"preach the gospel"

so not take full use of my right in the gospel

"so not ask people to support me as I travel and preach"

1 Corinthians 9:19

I am free from all

Paul uses the image of freedom from slavery to talk about not being obligated to others. Alternate translation: "I am free of obligation to all" or "Though I am not obligated to anyone"

I became a servant to all

Paul uses the image of slavery to talk about his willingness to meet others' needs. Alternate translation: "I became like a servant to all" or "I became willing to serve all"

win more

"persuade others to believe" or "help others trust in Christ"

1 Corinthians 9:20

I became like a Jew

"I acted like a Jew" or "I practiced Jewish customs"

I became like one under the law

"I became like one committed to following the demands of the Jewish leadership, accepting their understanding of the Jewish scriptures"

1 Corinthians 9:21

To those outside the law, I became like one outside the law

To be "outside the law" is a metaphor that means not to be obligated to obey the law. "The "law" refers to the law of Moses, and "those outside the law" refers to the Gentiles. Alternate translation: "To Gentiles, who are not obligated to follow the law of Moses, I became like them"

although I was not outside the law of God myself, but under the law of Christ

The phrases "not outside the law" and "under the law" are metaphors that mean to be obligated to obey the law. Alternate translation: "although I was not one of those who is not obligated to obey the law of God, but I was obligated to obey the law of Christ"

1 Corinthians 9:22

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 9:23

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 9:24

Connecting Statement:

Paul explains that he uses the liberty he has in Christ to discipline himself.

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run the race, but that only one receives the prize?

Paul is reminding the Corinthians of what they know so he can add new information. Alternate translation: "Let me remind you that although all runners run the race, only one runner receives the prize."

run the race

Paul compares living the Christian life and working for God to running a race and being an athlete. As in a race, the Christian life and work require strict discipline on the part of the runner, and, as in a race, the Christian has a specific goal.

run to win the prize

Paul is speaking of the reward God will give his faithful people as if it were a prize given for an athletic contest.

1 Corinthians 9:25

a wreath that is perishable ... one that is imperishable

A wreath is a bunch of leaves twisted together. Wreaths were given as prizes to athletes who won games and races. Paul speaks of eternal life as if it were a wreath that would never dry up.

1 Corinthians 9:26

run ... box

These are both metaphors for living the Christian life and serving God by working as hard as one can to succeed and so gain something good and to avoid failing and so losing something good.

run

This is running in a race to win a prize.

run, as not without purpose

If this double negative would confuse the reader in your language, you can state it as a simple positive. Alternate translation: "run: with purpose"

box

to beat another person with the fists in a sporting contest

1 Corinthians 9:27

I myself may not be disqualified

This passive sentence can be rephrased to an active form. The judge of a race or competition is a metaphor for God. Alternate translation: "the judge will not disqualify me" or "God will not say that I have failed to obey the rules"

Chapter 10

¹ I do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea. ² All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ and all ate the same spiritual food. ⁴ All drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. ⁵ But God was not well pleased with most of them, and their corpses were scattered about in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things were examples for us, so we would not be those who lust for evil things as they lusted. ⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were. This is as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." ⁸ Let us not commit sexual immorality, as many of them did. In one day, twenty-three thousand people died because of it. ⁹ Neither let us put Christ to the test, as many of them tested him and were destroyed by snakes. ¹⁰ Also do not grumble, as many of them did and were destroyed by an angel of death. ¹¹ Now these things happened to them as examples for us. They were written for our instruction—for us on whom the end of the ages has come. ¹² Therefore let anyone who thinks he stands be careful that he does not fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to all humanity. Instead, God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability. With the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, so that you may be able to endure it.

¹⁴ Therefore, my beloved ones, run away from idolatry. ¹⁵ I speak to you as people who have understanding, so you may judge what I say. ¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one loaf of bread, we who are many are one body. We all take of one loaf of bread together. ¹⁸ Look at the Israel that is according to the flesh. Are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? ¹⁹ What am I saying then? That an idol is anything? Or that food sacrificed to an idol is anything? ²⁰ But I say about the things they sacrifice, that they offer these things to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons! ²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot participate at the table of the Lord and the table of demons. ²² Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he is?

²³ "Everything is lawful," but not everything is profitable. "Everything is lawful," but not everything builds people up. ²⁴ No one should seek his own good. Instead, each one should seek the good of his neighbor. ²⁵ Eat everything sold in the market without asking questions of conscience. ²⁶ For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness of it." ²⁷ If an unbeliever invites you to eat a meal, and you wish to go, eat whatever is set before you without asking questions of conscience. ²⁸ But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience—^[1]²⁹ the conscience of the other man, I mean, and not yours. For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience? ³⁰ If I partake of the meal with gratitude, why am I being insulted for that for which I gave thanks? ³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³² Be blameless both to Jews and to Greeks, and to the church of God. ³³ In the same way I try to please all people in all things. I do not seek my benefit, but that of the many. I do this so that they may be saved.

Footnotes

10:28 ^[1]Some ancient copies of the Greek text add,

1 Corinthians 10 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Chapters 8-10 together answer the question: "Is it acceptable to eat meat that has been sacrificed to an idol?"

In this chapter, Paul uses the exodus to warn people not to sin. Then he returns to discussing meat offered to idols. He uses the Lord's Supper as an example. (See: sin)

Special concepts in this chapter

Exodus

Paul uses the experiences of Israel leaving Egypt and roaming the desert as a warning to the believers. Although the Israelites all followed Moses, God did not allow most of them to enter the Promised Land. Some worshiped an idol, some tested God, and some grumbled. Paul warns Christians not to sin. We can resist temptation because God provides a way of escape. (See: promisedland)

Eating meat sacrificed to idol

Paul discusses meat offered to idols. Christians are allowed to eat, but doing so may hurt others. So when buying meat or eating meat with a friend, do not ask if it has been offered to idols. But if someone tells you it has been offered to idols, don't eat it for the sake of that person. Do not offend anyone. Seek to save them instead. (See: save)

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses many rhetorical questions in this chapter. He uses them to emphasize important points as he teaches the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 10:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthians of the example of their ancient Jewish fathers' experiences with immorality and idolatry.

our fathers

Paul is referring to the time of Moses in the book of Exodus when Israel fled through the Red Sea as the Egyptian army pursued them. Here "our" refers to Paul and includes the Corinthians. The Corinthians were not actual descendants of the Israelites who escaped Egypt. Paul means that all Christians are spiritual descendants of Israel. Alternate translation: "our ancestors"

were all under the cloud

When the Israelites left Egypt, God traveled with them in a pillar of cloud. Alternate translation: "were all led by God who was in the cloud"

passed through the sea

This sea is known by two names, the Red Sea and the Sea of Reeds.

passed through

"walked through" or "traveled through"

1 Corinthians 10:2

All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea

To be "baptized into Moses" means to become united with or to become a follower of Moses through baptism. The Israelites were not baptized in the way that Christians were baptized in the New Testament. Paul is comparing Christian being baptized as followers of Christ with the Israelites, who became followers of Moses as they walked across the Red Sea with God leading them in the cloud. Alternate translation: "It was like all of them were baptized when they followed Moses across the sea as God led them in the cloud"

All were baptized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "All received baptism"

1 Corinthians 10:3

all ate the same spiritual food

Here "spiritual food" refers to the manna that God supernaturally supplied to the Israelites while they traveled in the wilderness. Alternate translation: "All ate the same food that God supernaturally provided from heaven"

1 Corinthians 10:4

drank the same spiritual drink ... spiritual rock

Here "spiritual drink" refers to the water that God supernaturally caused to flow out of a rock. Alternate translation: "drank the same water that God supernaturally caused to come out of the rock ... supernatural rock"

that rock was Christ

The "rock" was a literal, physical rock, so it would be best to translate this literally. If your language cannot say that a rock "was" a person's name, treat the word "rock" as a metonym for the power of Christ that worked through the rock. Alternate translation: "it was Christ who worked through that rock"

1 Corinthians 10:5

not well pleased

"displeased" or "angry"

most of them

"most of the Israelite fathers" or "most of our ancestors"

their corpses were scattered about

"God scattered their dead bodies around" or "God killed them and scattered their bodies"

in the wilderness

the desert land between Egypt and Israel through which the Israelites wandered for 40 years

1 Corinthians 10:6

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 10:7

idolaters

people who worship idols

sat down to eat and drink

"sat down to eat a meal"

play

Paul is quoting the Jewish scriptures. His readers would have understood from this one word that the people were worshipping an idol by singing and dancing and engaging in sexual activities, not simply enjoying innocent fun.

1 Corinthians 10:8

In one day, twenty-three thousand people died

"God killed 23,000 people in one day"

because of it

"because they committed those unlawful sexual acts"

1 Corinthians 10:9

as many of them tested him

or "as many of them did"

tested him and were destroyed by snakes

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "tested him. As a result, snakes destroyed them"

1 Corinthians 10:10

grumble

"complain"

did and were destroyed by an angel of death

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "did. As a result, an angel of death destroyed them"

1 Corinthians 10:11

these things happened to them

"God punished our ancestors"

examples for us

Here "us" refers to all believers.

the end of the ages

"the last days"

1 Corinthians 10:12

does not fall

does not sin or reject God

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to all humanity

This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: "Every temptation that has overtaken you is common to all humanity" or "The temptations that affect you are temptations that all people experience"

He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability

"He will only allow you to be tempted in ways that you are strong enough to resist"

will not let you be tempted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "will not allow anyone to tempt you"

1 Corinthians 10:14

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to remind them to be pure and to stay away from idolatry and immorality as he talks about communion, which represents the blood and body of Christ.

run away from idolatry

Paul is speaking of the practice of worshipping idols as if it were a physical thing like a dangerous animal. Alternate translation: "do all you can to get away from worshipping idols"

1 Corinthians 10:15

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 10:16

The cup of blessing

Paul is speaking of God's blessing as though it were the wine in the cup used in the ritual of the Lord's Supper.

that we bless

"for which we thank God"

is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ?

Paul is reminding the Corinthians of what they already know, that the cup of wine that we share represents us sharing in the blood of Christ. Alternate translation: "we share in the blood of Christ."

The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?

Paul is reminding the Corinthians of what they already know. Alternate translation: "We share in the body of Christ when we share bread."

a sharing in

"taking part in" or "equally participating with others in"

1 Corinthians 10:17

loaf of bread

a single unit of baked bread that is sliced or broken into pieces before it is eaten

1 Corinthians 10:18

the Israel that is according to the flesh

This refers to people who belonged to Israel because they were descendants of Israel. Alternate translation: "the natural Israel" or "the physical Israel" or "the people of Israel"

Are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar?

Paul uses a question to remind the Corinthians of what they already know so that he can give them new information. Alternate translation: "Those who eat the sacrifices share in the activities and the blessings of the altar."

1 Corinthians 10:19

What am I saying then? That an idol is anything? Or that food sacrificed to an idol is anything?

Paul uses these rhetorical questions to clear up any confusion the Corinthians might have about what he meant. The second and third questions are elliptical, and the understood words can be provided. Alternate translation: "I am not saying that an idol is anything or that food sacrificed to an idol is anything." or "I am not saying that an idol is a real god or that food that has been sacrificed to idols has any power." or "What am I saying then? Am I saying that an idol is anything? Or am I saying that food sacrificed to an idol is anything?"

1 Corinthians 10:20

the things they sacrifice

You may need to make explicit that the word "they" refers to Gentile pagans. Alternate translation: "the things that the Gentile pagans sacrifice"

1 Corinthians 10:21

You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons

Drinking from the cup of the Lord is a symbol of being united to the Lord, and drinking from the cup of demons is a symbol of being united to demons. It is impossible to be united to both the Lord and

demons. Alternate translation: "You cannot be united to the Lord by drinking from his cup and also be united to demons by drinking from their cup"

You cannot drink the cup

Here "cup" is a metonym for the wine in the cup. Alternate translation: "You cannot drink from the cup" or "You cannot drink the wine from the cup"

the cup of the Lord

This refers to the cup of wine that people drink from when celebrating the Lord's supper.

the cup of demons

This refers to anything people might drink during a meal dedicated to demons.

You cannot participate at the table of the Lord and the table of demons

Here "participate at the table" refers to eating a meal together. The "table of the Lord" refers to a meal that people eat to honor the Lord. Alternate translation: "You cannot eat together at the table of the Lord and at the table of demons" or "You cannot join in eating to honor the Lord and join in eating to honor demons"

1 Corinthians 10:22

Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the people of what they already know. Alternate translation: "Surely you do not want to provoke the Lord to jealousy."

provoke

to anger or irritate

Are we stronger than he is?

Paul uses a rhetorical question to remind the people of what they already know. Alternate translation: "You are not stronger than he is."

1 Corinthians 10:23

Connecting Statement:

In the rest of this chapter, Paul reminds the Corinthians that though they are free, they must care about others and not do things that could lead others to sin.

Everything is lawful

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is saying what some Corinthians might be thinking. Alternate translation: "People say, 'I am allowed to do anything'" or 2) Paul is saying what he thinks is true. Alternate translation: "I am allowed to do anything." This should be translated as in 1 Corinthians 6:12.

not everything is profitable

"some things are not profitable" or "some things do not help people"

not everything builds people up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

1 Corinthians 10:24

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 10:25

Eat everything sold in the market

Or "You may eat anything sold in the market." Paul is granting permission, not issuing a command.

without asking questions of conscience

Questions of conscience are questions that a person asks because he wants to know if something is sinful or not. In this case, a person might ask if the food at the market was offered to idols; if he thinks that it is sinful to eat food sacrificed to idols, he would feel guilty about eating it. Paul is saying that the person does not need to ask if the food has been sacrificed to an idol or not. Alternate translation: "without asking questions that could make the conscience feel guilty" or "without asking questions about whether it is sinful to eat it"

1 Corinthians 10:26

General Information:

This quotation is from the Psalms in the Old Testament.

and the fullness of it

"and everything in it." This means that everything on the earth belongs to the Lord. By saying this, Paul shows that even meat at the market that was offered to idols belongs to the Lord.

1 Corinthians 10:27

without asking questions of conscience

See how you translated a similar phrase in 1 Corinthians 10:25.

1 Corinthians 10:28

General Information

Some translations put verse 28 and the first part of verse 29 in parentheses because the second part of verse 29 appears to give a reason for what Paul taught in verses 25-27 about not asking questions of conscience.

This has been offered in sacrifice

Here being offered in sacrifice means that it was offered to idols. This was the part of the meat that the worshiper was allowed to bring home after killing an animal as a sacrifice to an idol.

for the sake of the one who informed you

This is the first reason not to eat the meat. Alternate translation: "for the good of the one who informed you"

and for the sake of conscience

This is the second reason not to eat the meat. Alternate translation: "and because of conscience" or "and in order not to cause concerns about whether or not it is sinful"

1 Corinthians 10:29

General Information

Some translations put verse 28 and the first part of verse 29 in parentheses because the second part of verse 29 appears to give a reason for what Paul taught in verses 25-27 about not asking questions of conscience.

the conscience of the other man, I mean, and not yours

Here Paul explains whose conscience he was writing about in verse 28.

For why should my freedom be judged by another's conscience?

This is a rhetorical question, and it can be expressed as a statement. The verb "be judged" can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "For another person's conscience should not judge my freedom."

my freedom

The abstract noun "freedom" can be expressed with the adjective "free." Alternate translation: "my being free" or "what I do because I am free"

1 Corinthians 10:30

If I partake of the meal with gratitude

The meaning of the abstract noun "gratitude" can be expressed with the phrase "give thanks." It can be made explicit that the thanksgiving is to God. Alternate translation: "If I give thanks to God for the food when I share in the meal"

why am I being insulted for that for which I gave thanks?

This is a rhetorical question, and it can be expressed as a statement. The verb "be insulted" can be translated with an active form. Alternate translation: "I should not be insulted for that for which I gave thanks." or "People should not be insult me for eating food that I have thanked God for." (See: and)

1 Corinthians 10:31

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 10:32

Be blameless both to Jews and to Greeks, and to the church of God

"Be blameless in the opinion of both Jews and Greeks, and of the church of God" or "Make sure that neither Jews nor Greeks nor the church of God can accuse you of doing wrong"

1 Corinthians 10:33

please all people

"make all people glad"

I do not seek my benefit, but that of the many

"I do not do things I desire for myself, but things that help as many people as possible"

Chapter 11

¹ Be imitators of me, just as I am an imitator of Christ.

² Now I praise you because you remember me in everything. I praise you because you hold firmly to the traditions just as I delivered them to you. ³ Now I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, that a man is the head of a woman, and that God is the head of Christ. ⁴ Any man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. ⁵ But any woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head. For it is the same thing as if her head were shaved. ⁶ For if a woman will not cover her head, she should cut her hair short. If it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or for her to shave her head, let her cover her head. ⁷ For a man should not have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God. But the woman is the glory of the man. ⁸ For man was not made from woman. Instead, woman was made from man. ⁹ For neither was man created for woman. Instead, woman was created for man. ¹⁰ This is why the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. ¹¹ Nevertheless, in the Lord, the woman is not independent from the man, nor is the man independent from the woman. ¹² For as the woman comes from the man, so does the man come from the woman. And all things come from God. ¹³ Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor for him? ¹⁵ Does not nature teach you that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair has been given to her as a covering. ¹⁶ But if anyone wants to argue about this, we do not have any other practice, nor do the churches of God.

¹⁷ But in the following instructions, I do not praise you. For when you come together, it is not for the better but for the worse. ¹⁸ For in the first place, I hear that when you come together in the church, there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. ¹⁹ For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you. ²⁰ For when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat. ²¹ When you eat, each one eats his own food before the others have their meal. One is hungry, and another becomes drunk. ²² Do you not have houses to eat and to drink in? Do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I praise you? I will not praise you for this! ²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread. ²⁴ After he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this to remember me." ²⁵ In the same way he took the cup after supper, and he said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, to remember me." ²⁶ For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. ²⁷ Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸ Let a person examine himself first, and in this way let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment to himself. ³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and ill, and some of you have fallen asleep. ³¹ But if we examine ourselves, we will not be judged. ³² But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined, so that we may not be condemned along with the world. ³³ Therefore, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. ³⁴ If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, so that when you come together it will not be for judgment. And about the other things you wrote, I will give instructions when I come.

1 Corinthians 11 General Notes

Structure and formatting

This is the beginning of a new section of the letter (Chapters 11-14). Paul now talks about proper church services. In this chapter, he deals with two different problems: women in the church services (verses 1-16) and the Lord's Supper (verses 17-34).

Special concepts in this chapter

Proper conduct in a church service

Disorderly women

Paul's instructions here are debated among scholars. There may have been women who were abusing their Christian freedom and causing disorder in the church by going against established cultural customs. The disorder that their actions created would have caused him to be concerned.

The Lord's Supper

There were problems in how the Corinthians were handling the Lord's Supper. They did not act in a unified manner. During the feast celebrated along with the Lord's Supper, some of them ate their own food without sharing. Some of them got drunk while the poor people remained hungry. Paul taught that the believers dishonored Christ's death if they participated in the Lord's Supper while they were sinning or while they were in broken relationships with each other. (See: sin and reconcile)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Rhetorical questions

Paul uses rhetorical questions to scold the people for their unwillingness to follow the rules for worship he has suggested.

The head

Paul uses "head" as a metonym for authority in verse 3 and also to refer to a person's actual head in verse 4 and following. Since the verses are so close together, it is likely that Paul intentionally used "head" in this way. This would show that the ideas in these verses are connected.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Connecting Statement:

After reminding them to follow him in the same way that he follows Christ, Paul gives some specific instructions about how women and men are to live as believers.

1 Corinthians 11:2

you remember me in everything

"you think of me at all times" or "you always try act as I would want you to act" The Corinthians had not forgotten who Paul was or what he had taught them.

you hold firmly

Paul speaks of the Corinthians believing what he taught them and obeying his commands as if he had given them a solid object that they were holding on to while someone tried to take it away. Alternate translation: "you believe and practice"

1 Corinthians 11:3

Now I want

Possible meanings are 1) "Because of this, I want" or 2) "However, I want."

is the head of

has authority over

a man is the head of a woman

Possible meanings are 1) "men are to have authority over women" or 2) "the husband is to have authority over the wife"

1 Corinthians 11:4

with his head covered

This means to have some kind of garment on his head that covers his hair.

dishonors his head

Possible meanings are 1) "brings disgrace on himself" or 2) "brings disgrace on Christ, who is his head."

1 Corinthians 11:5

woman who prays ... dishonors her head

Possible meanings are 1) "woman who prays ... brings disgrace on herself" or 2) "wife who prays ... brings disgrace on her husband."

with her head uncovered

That is, without the cloth that was worn on the top of the head and that covered the hair and shoulders.

as if her head were shaved

as if she had removed all the hair on her head with a razor

1 Corinthians 11:6

If it is disgraceful for a woman

It was a mark of disgrace or humiliation for a woman to have her hair shaved off or cut short.

cover her head

place on her head the cloth that was worn on the top of the head and that covered the hair and shoulders

1 Corinthians 11:7

should not have his head covered

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: Possible meanings are 1) "must not cover his head" or 2) "does not need to cover his head"

glory of the man

Just as man reflects God's greatness, the woman reflects the man's character.

1 Corinthians 11:8

For man was not made from woman. Instead, woman was made from man

God made the woman by taking a bone from the man and making the woman from that bone. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God did not make the man from the woman. Instead, he made the woman from the man"

1 Corinthians 11:9

For neither ... for man

These words and all of 1 Corinthians 11:8 could be put in parentheses so that the reader can see that the word "this" in "this is why ... the angels" clearly refers back to the words "the woman is the glory of the man" in 1 Corinthians 11:7.

1 Corinthians 11:10

have a symbol of authority on her head

Possible meanings are 1) "to symbolize that she has man as her head" or 2) "to symbolize that she has the authority to pray or prophesy."

1 Corinthians 11:11

Nevertheless, in the Lord

"While what I have just said is all true, the most important thing is this: in the Lord"

in the Lord

Possible meanings are 1) "among Christians, who belong to the Lord" or 2) "in the world as created by God."

the woman is not independent from the man, nor is the man independent from the woman

This can be stated positively. Alternate translation: "the woman depends on the man, and the man depends on the woman"

1 Corinthians 11:12

For as the woman comes from the man, so does the man come from the woman

This means that the first woman, Eve, was made from the rib of the first man, Adam, and since then all men have been born by women.

all things come from God

"God created everyone and everything" or "God created all"

1 Corinthians 11:13

Judge for yourselves

"Judge this issue according to the local customs and church practices you know"

Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

Paul expects the Corinthians to agree with him. This can be stated in active form. "To honor God as she prays to him, a woman should have a covering on her head."

1 Corinthians 11:14

Does not even nature itself teach you ... for him?

Paul expects the Corinthians to agree with him. Alternate translation: "Nature itself even teaches you ... for him."

Does not even nature itself teach you ... for him?

He is speaking of the way people in society normally act as if it were a person who teaches. Alternate translation: "You know just from looking at the way people normally act ... for him."

1 Corinthians 11:15

For her hair has been given to her

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "For God created woman with hair"

1 Corinthians 11:16

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 11:17

Connecting Statement:

As Paul talks about communion, the Lord's supper, he reminds them to have right attitudes as well as unity. He reminds them that if they fail in those things when taking communion, they will become sick and die, as has already happened to some of them.

in the following instructions, I do not praise you. For when

Another possible meaning is "as I give you these instructions, there is something for which I cannot praise you: when"

the following instructions

"the instructions I am about to talk about"

come together

"gather together" or "meet"

it is not for the better but for the worse

"you do not help each other; instead, you harm each other"

1 Corinthians 11:18

in the church

"as believers." Paul is not talking about being inside a building.

there are divisions among you

"you divide yourselves into opposing groups"

1 Corinthians 11:19

For there must also be factions among you, so that those who are approved may become evident among you

Possible meanings 1) Paul is being ironic to shame the Corinthians for dividing the people they thought were more important from those they thought were less important. Alternate translation: "For you seem to want to have factions among you so that everyone will know whom you consider to be most important" or 2) Paul means factions are necessary so that God can show those whom he approves. Alternate translation: "For it is necessary for there to be factions among you so that you will know which people God has approved"

factions

opposing groups of people

1 Corinthians 11:20

come together

"gather together"

it is not the Lord's Supper that you eat

"you may believe you are eating the Lord's Supper, but you are not, because you do not treat it with respect"

1 Corinthians 11:21

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 11:22

to eat and to drink in

"in which to gather for a meal"

despise

hate or treat with dishonor and disrespect

humiliate

embarrass or cause to feel shame

What should I say to you? Should I praise you?

Paul is rebuking the Corinthians. Alternate translation: "I can say nothing good about this. I cannot praise you."

1 Corinthians 11:23

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you, that the Lord

"For it was from the Lord that I heard what I told you, and it was this: the Lord"

on the night when he was betrayed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "on the night that Judas Iscariot betrayed him"

1 Corinthians 11:24

he broke it

"he pulled pieces from it"

This is my body

"The bread I am holding is my body"

1 Corinthians 11:25

the cup

It is best to translate this literally. The Corinthians knew which cup he took, so it is not simply "a cup" or "some cup" or "any cup." Possible meanings are that it was 1) the cup of wine that one would expect him to use or 2) the third or fourth of the four cups of wine that the Jews drank at the Passover meal.

Do this as often as you drink it, to remember me

"Drink from this cup, and as often as you drink from it, remember me"

1 Corinthians 11:26

proclaim the Lord's death

teach about the crucifixion and resurrection

until he comes

Where Jesus comes to can be made explicit. Alternate translation: "until Jesus comes back to the earth"

1 Corinthians 11:27

eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord

"eats the bread of the Lord or drinks the cup of the Lord"

1 Corinthians 11:28

examine

Paul speaks of a person looking at his relationship to God and how he has been living his life as if that person is looking over something he wants to buy. See how "test the quality" is translated in [1 Corinthians 3:13]

1 Corinthians 11:29

without discerning the body

Possible meanings are 1) "and does not recognize that the church is the body of the Lord" or 2) "and does not consider that he is handling the Lord's body."

1 Corinthians 11:30

weak and ill

These words mean almost the same thing and can be combined, as in UDB.

and some of you have fallen asleep

"Sleep" here is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "and some of you have died" .

some of you

If this would sound like Paul is talking to those who have died, you may need to make explicit that he is not. Alternate translation: "some of the members of your group"

1 Corinthians 11:31

examine

Paul speaks of a person looking at his relationship to God and how he has been living his life as if that person is looking over something he wants to buy. See how this is translated in [1 Corinthians 11:28]

we will not be judged

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will not judge us"

1 Corinthians 11:32

we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined, so that we may not be condemned

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the Lord judges us, he disciplines us, so that he will not condemn us"

1 Corinthians 11:33

wait for one another

"allow the others to arrive before beginning the meal"

1 Corinthians 11:34

let him eat at home

"let him eat before attending this gathering"

it will not be for judgment

"it will not be an occasion for God to discipline you"

Chapter 12

¹ About spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed. ² You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to idols who could not speak, in whatever ways you were led by them. ³ Therefore I want you to know that no one who speaks by the Spirit of God can say, "Jesus is accursed." No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different ministries, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are different kinds of work, but it is the same God who works all in all. ⁷ Now to each one is given the outward display of the Spirit for the benefit of all. ⁸ For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, and to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit. ⁹ To another is given faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit. ¹⁰ To another is given miraculous works, and to another prophecy. To another is given the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, giving the gifts to each one individually, as he chooses.

¹² For as the body is one and has many members and all are members of the same body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slave or free, and all were made to drink of one Spirit. ¹⁴ For the body is not a single member, but many. ¹⁵ If the foot says, "Since I am not the hand, I am not part of the body," it is not any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear says, "Because I am not an eye, I am not part of the body," it is not any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But God has appointed each member, each one of them, into the body as he has desired. ¹⁹ If they were all the same member, where would the body be? ²⁰ So now they are many members, but only one body. ²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you." Nor does the head say to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² But the members of the body that appear to be weaker are essential, ²³ and the parts of the body that we think are less honorable, we give them greater honor, and our unpresentable members have more dignity. ²⁴ Now our presentable members have no such need. Rather, God has composed the body, giving greater honor to those members that lack it. ²⁵ He did this so there may be no division within the body, but that the members should care for one another with the same affection. ²⁶ So when one member suffers, all the members suffer together; or when one member is honored, all the members rejoice together. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. ²⁸ And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then those who do miracles, then gifts of healing, those who provide helps, those who do the work of administration, and those who have various kinds of tongues. ²⁹ Are all of them apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all do miracles? ³⁰ Do all of them have gifts of healing? Do all of them speak with tongues? Do all of them interpret tongues? ³¹ Zealously seek the greater gifts. And now I will show you a more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 12 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

This chapter begins a new section. Chapters 12-14 discuss spiritual gifts within the church.

Special concepts in this chapter

The church, the body of Christ

This is an important metaphor in Scripture. The church has many different parts. Each part has different functions. They combine to make one church. All of the different parts are necessary. Each part is to be concerned for all the other parts, even those that seem less important.

Other possible translation difficulties in this chapter

"No one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit."

In reading the Old Testament, the Jews would have substituted the word "Lord" for the word "Yahweh." This sentence probably means that no one can say that Jesus is Yahweh, God in the flesh, without the Holy

Spirit's influence drawing them to accept this truth. If this statement is translated poorly, it can have unintended theological consequences.

1 Corinthians 12:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul lets the Corinthians know that God has given special gifts to believers. These gifts are to help the body of believers.

I do not want you to be uninformed

This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: "I want you to be informed"

1 Corinthians 12:2

you were led astray to idols who could not speak, in whatever ways you were led by them

Here "led astray" is a metaphor for being persuaded to do something wrong. Being led astray to idols represents being wrongly persuaded to worship idols. The phrases "were led astray" and "you were led by them" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you were persuaded in some way to worship idols who cannot speak" or "you believed lies somehow and so you worshiped idols who cannot speak"

1 Corinthians 12:3

no one who speaks by the Spirit of God can say

Possible meanings are 1) "no Christian who has the Spirit of God in him can say" or 2) "no one who is prophesying by the power of the Spirit of God can say."

Jesus is accursed

"God will punish Jesus" or "God will make Jesus suffer"

No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit

This double negative emphasizes that "by the Holy Spirit" is what makes it possible for one to say, "Jesus is Lord." Alternate translation: "One can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' only by the Holy Spirit"

by the Holy Spirit

"with the help of the Holy Spirit" or "by the power that the Holy Spirit gives him"

1 Corinthians 12:4

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:5

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:6

works all in all

Possible meanings are 1) "makes active all the gifts in everyone who has received them" or 2) "works all things in all people."

1 Corinthians 12:7

to each one is given

This can be stated in active form. God is the one who does the giving

1 Corinthians 12:8

to one is given by the Spirit the word

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "by means of the Spirit God gives to one person the word"

the word

"the message"

by the Spirit

God gives the gifts through the work of the Spirit.

wisdom ... knowledge

The difference between these two words is not as important here as the fact that God gives them both by the same Spirit.

the word of wisdom

Paul is communicating one idea through two words. Alternate translation: "wise words"

the word of knowledge

Paul is communicating one idea through two words. Alternate translation: "words that show knowledge"

1 Corinthians 12:9

is given

This can be stated in active form. See how this is translated in [1 Corinthians 12:8]

to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit

The words "are given" are understood from the previous phrase. Alternate translation: "to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit are given"

1 Corinthians 12:10

to another prophecy

The phrase "is given by the same Spirit" is understood from the previous phrases. Alternate translation: "to another prophecy is given by the same Spirit"

to another various kinds of tongues

The phrase "are given by the same Spirit" is understood from the previous phrases. Alternate translation: "to another various kinds of tongues are given by the same Spirit"

various kinds of tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "the ability to speak different languages"

to another the interpretation of tongues

The phrase "is given by the same Spirit" is understood from the previous phrases. Alternate translation: "to another the interpretation of tongues is given by the same Spirit"

the interpretation of tongues

This is the ability to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying. Alternate translation: "the ability to interpret what is said in other languages"

1 Corinthians 12:11

one and the same Spirit

God gives the gifts through the work of the one and only Holy Spirit. See how this is translated in 1 Corinthians 12:8.

1 Corinthians 12:12

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to talk of the variety of gifts God gives believers. God gives different gifts to different believers, but Paul wants them to know that all believers are made into one body, which is called the body of Christ. For this reason believers should have unity.

1 Corinthians 12:13

For by one Spirit we were all baptized

Possible meanings are 1) the Holy Spirit is the one who baptizes us, "For one Spirit baptized us" or 2) that the Spirit, like the water of baptism, is the medium through which we are baptized into the body, "For in one Spirit we were all baptized"

all were made to drink of one Spirit

This is a metaphor meaning everyone received and share in the same Spirit. The phrase "all were made" can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God gave us all the same Spirit, which we share as people might share a drink"

1 Corinthians 12:14

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:15

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:16

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:17

where would the sense of hearing be? ... where would the sense of smell be?

This can be made a statement. Alternate translation: "you could not hear anything. ... you could not smell anything."

1 Corinthians 12:18

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:19

the same member

The word "member" is a general word for the parts of the body, like the head, arm, or knee. Alternate translation: "the same part of the body"

where would the body be?

This can be made a statement. Alternate translation: "there would be no body."

1 Corinthians 12:20

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 12:21

I have no need of you

"I do not need you"

1 Corinthians 12:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 12:23

less honorable

"less important"

our unpresentable members

This probably refers to the private parts of the body, which people keep covered.

1 Corinthians 12:24

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 12:25

there may be no division within the body, but
"the body may be unified, and"

1 Corinthians 12:26

one member is honored

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "someone gives honor to one member"

1 Corinthians 12:27

Now you are

Here the word "now" is used to draw attention to the important point that follows.

1 Corinthians 12:28

first apostles

Possible meanings for "first" are 1) the first in the list or 2) the most important in the list.

those who provide helps

"those who provide help to other believers"

those who do the work of administration

"those who govern the church"

those who have various kinds of tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "those who have the ability to speak different languages"

1 Corinthians 12:29

General Information:

Paul is reminding his readers of what they already know.

Are all of them apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all do miracles?

The answer Paul expects to all of these rhetorical questions is no. You may need to translate them as

statements. Alternate translation: "Not all of them are apostles, are they? Not all are prophets, are they? Not all are teachers, are they? Not all do miracles, do they?" or "You and I all know that not all of them are apostles, not all are prophets, not all are teachers, and not all do powerful deeds."

1 Corinthians 12:30

Do all of them have gifts of healing?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "Not all of them have gifts of healing."

Do all of them speak with tongues?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "Not all of them speak with tongues."

speak with tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "speak different languages"

Do all of them interpret tongues?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "Not all of them interpret tongues."

interpret tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. To "interpret tongues" means to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying. Alternate translation: "interpret what is said in other languages"

1 Corinthians 12:31

Zealously seek the greater gifts.

Possible meanings are 1) "You must eagerly seek from God the gifts that best help the church." or 2) "You are eagerly looking for gifts that you think are greater because you think they are more exciting to have."

Chapter 13

¹ Suppose that I speak with the tongues of men and of angels. But if I do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ² Suppose that I have the gift of prophecy and understand all hidden truths and knowledge, and that I have all faith so as to remove mountains. But if I do not have love, I am nothing. ³ Suppose that I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and that I give my body to be burned. But if I do not have love, I gain nothing. ^[1]⁴ Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous and does not boast. It is not puffed up ⁵ or rude. It does not seek its own. It is not provoked, nor does it keep a count of wrongs. ⁶ It does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Instead, it rejoices in the truth. ⁷ Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. ⁸ Love never ends. If there are prophecies, they will pass away. If there are tongues, they will cease. If there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when the perfect comes, that which is incomplete will pass away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see indirectly in a mirror, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I have been fully known. ¹³ But now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Footnotes

13:3 ^[1]Most important and ancient Greek copies, and ancient translations read,

1 Corinthians 13 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul seems to interrupt his teaching about spiritual gifts to speak about love.

Special concepts in this chapter

Love

Love is the most important characteristic of the believer. This chapter fully describes love. Paul tells why love is more important than the gifts of the Spirit. (See: love)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Metaphor

Paul uses many different metaphors in this chapter. He uses these metaphors to instruct the Corinthians, especially on difficult topics. Readers often need spiritual discernment to understand these teachings.

1 Corinthians 13:1

Connecting Statement:

Having just talked about the gifts that God gives to believers, Paul emphasizes what is more important.

the tongues of ... angels

Possible meanings are 1) Paul is exaggerating for the sake of effect and does not believe that people speak the language that angels use or 2) Paul thinks that some who speak in tongues actually speak the language that angels use.

I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal

I have become like instruments that make loud, annoying sounds

gong

a large, thin, round metal plate that is hit with a padded stick to make a loud, low-pitched sound

a clanging cymbal

a thin, round metal plate that is hit with a padded stick to make a loud, high-pitched sound

1 Corinthians 13:2

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 13:3

I give my body to be burned

The phrase "to be burned" can be made active.
Alternate translation: "I allow those who persecute me to burn me to death"

1 Corinthians 13:4

Love is ... Love is not ... It is not

Paul describes the characteristics of love by speaking about love as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "Whoever loves is ... He is not ... He is not"

1 Corinthians 13:5

It does not ... It is not ... does it keep

Paul continues to describe the characteristics of love by speaking about love as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "He does not ... He does not ... does he keep"

seek its own

The word "seek" here means to desire and work for something. The person who loves wants and works for what is good for others as much as or more than what is good for himself.

It is not provoked

"It does not become angry easily." The person who loves controls his anger.

nor does it keep a count of wrongs

The person who loves others does not keep a record of the wrongs that people have done to him.

1 Corinthians 13:6

It does not ... it rejoices

Paul continues to describe the characteristics of love by speaking about love as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "He does not ... he rejoices"

does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Instead, it rejoices in the truth

This can be stated in positive form. Alternate translation: "rejoices only in righteousness and truth"

1 Corinthians 13:7

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues speaking about love as if it were a person.

bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things

The phrase "all things" here appears to be an idiom meaning "always". Alternate translation: "always perseveres, always believes, always hopes, and always endures"

hopes all things

This means that whoever loves others always expects that what is good will happen.

1 Corinthians 13:8

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 13:9

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 13:10

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 13:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 13:12

For now we see indirectly in a mirror

Mirrors in Paul's day were made of polished metal rather than glass and provided a dim, vague reflection.

now we see

Possible meanings are 1) "now we see Christ" or 2) "now we see God."

but then face to face

The understood words "we will see" can be supplied. Seeing face to face is a metaphor or synecdoche for being physically present with the one we will see. Alternate translation: "but then we will see face to face"

I will know fully

The word "Christ" is understood. Alternate translation: "I will know Christ fully"

just as I have been fully known

This can be stated as active. Alternate translation: "just as Christ has known me fully"

1 Corinthians 13:13

faith, hope, and love

These abstract nouns can be expressed in phrases with verbs. Alternate translation: "we must trust the Lord, be confident that he will do what he has promised, and love him and others"

Chapter 14

¹ Pursue love and be zealous for spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ² For the one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. For no one understands him because he speaks mysteries in the Spirit. ³ But the one who prophesies speaks to people to build them up, to exhort them, and to comfort them. ⁴ The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. ⁵ Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues. But even more than that, I wish that you would prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues (unless someone interprets so that the church may receive edification). ⁶ But now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you? I cannot, unless I speak to you with revelation, or knowledge, or prophecy, or teaching. ⁷ In the same way, when lifeless instruments are producing sounds—like the flute or the harp—if they do not produce different tones, how will anyone know what tune the flute or harp is playing? ⁸ For if the trumpet is played with an uncertain sound, how will anyone know when it is time to prepare for battle? ⁹ It is the same way for you with the tongue. If you utter speech that is not clear, how will what is said be understood? You will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ There are doubtless many kinds of languages in the world, and none is without meaning. ¹¹ But if I do not know the meaning of a language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker will be a foreigner to me. ¹² So it is with you. Since you are eager for the manifestations of the Spirit, seek for the edification of the church so that you might abound. ¹³ So the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind. I will sing with my spirit, and I will also sing with my mind. ¹⁶ Otherwise, if you bless God with the spirit, how will the outsider say "Amen" when you are giving thanks if he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you certainly give thanks well enough, but the other person is not built up. ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. ¹⁹ But in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding so that I might instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

²⁰ Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Rather, in regard to evil, be like infants. But in your thinking be mature. ²¹ In the law it is written,

"By men of strange tongues
and by the lips of strangers
I will speak to this people.
Even then they will not hear me,"
says the Lord.

²² So then, tongues are a sign, not to believers, but to unbelievers. But prophecy is for a sign, not for unbelievers, but for believers. ²³ If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders and unbelievers come in, would they not say that you are insane? ²⁴ But if you all were prophesying and an unbeliever or an outsider came in, he would be convicted by all he hears. He would be judged by all that is said. ²⁵ The secrets of his heart would be revealed. As a result, he would fall on his face and worship God. He would declare that God is really among you.

²⁶ What is next then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Do everything so that you build up the church. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at most three, and each one in turn, and then someone should interpret what is said. ²⁸ But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in the church. Let each one speak to himself alone and to God. ²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others listen with discernment to what is said. ³⁰ But if there is a revelation to one who is sitting, let the first be silent. ³¹ For each of you can prophesy one by one so that each one may learn and all may be exhorted. ³² For the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. ³³ For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.

This is the rule in all the churches of God's holy people. ³⁴ The women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak. Instead, they should be in submission, as also the law says. ³⁵ If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church. ³⁶ Did the word of God come from you? Are you the only ones it has reached?

³⁷ If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I write to you are a command of the Lord. ³⁸ But if anyone does not recognize this, let him not be recognized.

³⁹ So then, brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid anyone from speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ But let all things be done properly and in order.

1 Corinthians 14 General Notes

Structure and formatting

In this chapter, Paul returns to discussing spiritual gifts.

Some translations set what is quoted from the Old Testament farther to the right on the page than the rest of the text. The ULB does this with the words of verse 21.

Special concepts in this chapter

Tongues

Scholars disagree on the exact meaning of the gift of tongues. Paul describes the gift of tongues as a sign for unbelievers. It does not serve the whole church, unless someone interprets what is spoken. It is very important that the church uses this gift properly.

Prophecy

Scholars disagree on the exact meaning of prophecy as a spiritual gift. Paul says prophets can build up the entire church. He describes prophecy as a gift for believers. (See: prophet)

1 Corinthians 14:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul wants the Corinthians to know that though teaching is more important because it instructs people, it must be done with love.

Pursue love

Paul speaks of love as if it were a person. Alternate translation: "Follow after love" or "Work hard to love people"

especially that you may prophesy

"and work especially hard to be able to prophesy"

1 Corinthians 14:2

in the Spirit

Possible meanings are 1) the person speaks by the power of the Holy Spirit or 2) he speaks in his own spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:3

to build them up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

to exhort them

or "to encourage them"

1 Corinthians 14:4

builds up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

1 Corinthians 14:5

spoke in tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "had the ability to speak different languages"

The one who prophesies is greater

Paul is emphasizing that the gift of prophecy is greater than the gift of speaking in tongues. Alternate translation: "The one who prophesies has a greater gift"

interprets

This means to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying.

the church may receive edification

The abstract noun "edification" can be translated using the verb "edify," which means to build something up. This is a metonym for the words through which the people in the church learn God's word and love God more, and the word "church" here is a metonym for the people who make up the church. Alternate translation: "the people in the church may become stronger" or "the one who prophesies may help the people know and love God better"

1 Corinthians 14:6

how will I benefit you?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "I will not benefit you." or "I will not have done anything that helps you."

1 Corinthians 14:7

they do not produce different tones

This refers to sounds of different pitch that make up the melody, not to the difference between a flute sound and a harp sound.

how will anyone know what tune the flute or harp is playing?

Paul wants the Corinthians to answer this themselves. Alternate translation: "no one will know what tune the flute or harp is playing."

tune

melody or song

1 Corinthians 14:8

how will anyone know when it is time to prepare for battle?

Paul wants the Corinthians to answer this themselves. Alternate translation: "no one would know when it is time to prepare for battle."

1 Corinthians 14:9

you with the tongue. If you utter speech
or "you. If with the tongue you utter speech"

with the tongue

The word "tongue" here is a synecdoche for all the parts of the body which a person uses in order to speak.

If you utter speech that is not clear

Clear speech is language that people can understand. Paul was talking about people speaking in other languages during church services. Alternate translation: "If you speak in a language that people do not know"

how will what is said be understood

These passive clauses can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "how will anyone understand what you have said"

1 Corinthians 14:10

none is without meaning

This can be stated as a positive. Alternate translation: "they all have meaning"

1 Corinthians 14:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 14:12

General Information:

All instances of "you" and the imperatives are plural.

for the manifestations of the Spirit

"to do things that show that the Spirit controls you"

seek for the edification of the church so that you might abound

Some modern translations read, "seek that you might abound in those things that edify the church." Paul speaks of the church as if it were a house that one could build. Alternate translation: "try to succeed greatly in making God's people more able to serve God so that things will go well with you"

1 Corinthians 14:13

interpret

This means to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying.

1 Corinthians 14:14

my mind is unfruitful

The mind not understanding what is being prayed and, therefore, receiving no benefit from the prayer is spoken of as if the "mind is unfruitful." Alternate translation: "I do not understand it in my mind" or "my mind does not benefit from the prayer, because I do not understand the words I am saying"

1 Corinthians 14:15

What am I to do?

Paul is introducing his conclusion. Alternate translation: "This is what I will do."

pray with my spirit ... pray with my mind ... sing with my spirit ... sing with my mind

Prayers and songs must be in a language that the people present can understand.

with my mind

"with words that I understand"

1 Corinthians 14:16

you bless God ... you are giving thanks ... you are saying

Though "you" is singular here, Paul is addressing everyone who prays only in the spirit, but not with the mind.

how will the outsider say "Amen" ... saying?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "the outsider will never be able to say 'Amen' ... saying."

the outsider

Possible meanings are 1) "another person" or 2) "people who are new to your group."

say "Amen"
"agree"

1 Corinthians 14:17

you certainly give

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so the word "you" here is singular.

the other person is not built up

Building people up represents helping them become mature and strong in their faith. This can be stated in active form. See how you translated "builds up" in [1 Corinthians 8:1]

1 Corinthians 14:18

I speak in tongues

Here "tongues" represents languages. Alternate translation: "I speak different languages"

1 Corinthians 14:19

than ten thousand words in a tongue

Paul was not counting words, but used exaggeration to emphasize that a few understandable words are far more valuable than even a great number of words in a language that people cannot understand. Also, here "tongue" represents a language. Alternate translation: "10,000 words in a different language" or "a great many words in a different language"

1 Corinthians 14:20

General Information:

Paul tells the Corinthians that people being able to speak in different languages was told ahead of time by the prophet Isaiah, many years before such speaking happened at the start of Christ's church.

do not be children in your thinking

Here "children" is a metaphor for being spiritually immature. Alternate translation: "do not think like children"

1 Corinthians 14:21

In the law it is written,

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "The prophet wrote these words in the law:"

By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers

These two phrases mean basically the same thing and are used together for emphasis.

1 Corinthians 14:22

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives specific instructions about an orderly way to use gifts in the church.

sign, not for unbelievers, but for believers

"sign only for believers"

1 Corinthians 14:23

would they not say that you are insane?

This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "they would say that you are insane."

1 Corinthians 14:24

he would be convicted by all he hears. He would be judged by all that is said

Paul says basically the same thing twice for emphasis. Alternate translation: "he would realize that he is guilty of sin because he hears what you are saying"

1 Corinthians 14:25

The secrets of his heart would be revealed

Here "heart" is a metonym for a person's thoughts. This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God would reveal to him the secrets of his heart" or "He would recognize his own private inner thoughts"

he would fall on his face and worship God

"Fall on his face" here is an idiom, meaning to bow down. Alternate translation: "He would bow down and worship God"

1 Corinthians 14:26

What is next then, brothers?

Paul uses a question to introduce the next part of his message. Alternate translation: "Because everything I have just told you is true, this is what you need to do, my fellow believers."

interpretation

This is the ability to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying.

1 Corinthians 14:27

speaks in a tongue

Here "tongue" represents a language. Alternate translation: "speaks in a different languages"

and each one in turn

"and they should speak one after another" or "and they should speak one at a time"

interpret what is said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "interpret what they said"

interpret

This means to listen to what someone says in one language and use another language to tell people what that person is saying.

1 Corinthians 14:28

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 14:29

Let two or three prophets speak

Possible meanings are 1) only two or three prophets speak at any one meeting or 2) only two or three prophets take turns speaking at any one time.

to what is said

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "to what they say"

1 Corinthians 14:30

there is a revelation

"God reveals something" or "God speaks"

to one who is sitting

"to one of the people sitting there listening to the prophets"

the first

the person who has been speaking

1 Corinthians 14:31

prophecy one by one

Only one person should prophesy at a time.

all may be exhorted

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you may exhort all"

1 Corinthians 14:32

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 14:33

God is not a God of confusion

God does not create confusing situations by making people all speak at the same time.

1 Corinthians 14:34

keep silent

Possible meanings are 1) stop speaking, 2) stop speaking when someone is prophesying, or 3) be absolutely silent during the church service.

1 Corinthians 14:35

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 14:36

Did the word of God come from you? Are you the only ones it has reached?

Paul emphasizes that the Corinthians are not the only ones who understand what God wants Christians to do. Alternate translation: "The word of God did not come from you in Corinth; you are not the only people who understand God's will."

the word of God

"Word of God" here is a metonym for the message from God. Alternate translation: "God's message"

1 Corinthians 14:37

he should acknowledge

A true prophet or truly spiritual person will accept Paul's writings as coming from the Lord.

1 Corinthians 14:38

if anyone does not recognize this, let him not be recognized

"if anyone ignores this, let him be ignored"

let him not be recognized

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "you should not recognize him"

1 Corinthians 14:39

do not forbid anyone from speaking in tongues

Paul makes it clear that speaking in tongues at a church gathering is permissible and acceptable.

1 Corinthians 14:40

But let all things be done properly and in order

Paul is stressing that church gatherings should be held in an orderly manner. Alternate translation: "But do all things properly and in order" or "But do everything in an orderly, appropriate way"

Chapter 15

¹ Now I want to make known to you, brothers, the gospel I proclaimed to you, which you received and on which you stand, ² and by which you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures. ⁵ Christ appeared to Cephas, and then to the twelve; ⁶ then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at once. Most of them are still alive, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸ Last of all, he appeared to me, as if to one born prematurely. ⁹ For I am the least of the apostles. I am unworthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace in me was not in vain. Instead, I labored harder than all of them. Yet it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. ¹¹ Therefore whether it is I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

¹² Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁴ and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith also is in vain. ¹⁵ Also, we are found to be false witnesses about God, because we testified that God raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him, if indeed the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; ¹⁷ and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is in vain and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those who have fallen asleep in Christ have also perished. ¹⁹ If only in this life we hope in Christ, of all people we are most to be pitied.

²⁰ But now Christ has been raised from the dead as the firstfruits of those who sleep. ²¹ For since death came by a man, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ, who is the firstfruits, and then those who belong to Christ will be made alive at his coming. ²⁴ Then will be the end, when he will hand over the kingdom to God the Father, when he will abolish all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "he has put everything under his feet." But when it says "he has put everything," it is clear that this does not include the one who put everything in subjection under him. ²⁸ When all things are subjected under him, then the Son himself will be subjected under the one who put all things into subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

²⁹ Or else what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are they baptized for them? ³⁰ Why then are we in danger every hour? ³¹ I die every day! This is as sure as my boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord. ³² What do I gain, from a human point of view, if I fought with beasts at Ephesus, if the dead are not raised?

"Let us eat and drink,
for tomorrow we die."

³³ Be not deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals." ³⁴ Sober up! Live righteously! Do not keep sinning. For some of you have no knowledge of God. I say this to your shame.

³⁵ But someone will say, "How are the dead raised, and with what kind of body will they come?" ³⁶ You fool! What you sow will not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ What you sow is not the body that will be, but a bare grain. It may become wheat or something else. ³⁸ But God will give it a body as he chooses, and to each seed its own body. ³⁹ Not all flesh is the same. Instead, there is one flesh for human beings, and another flesh for animals, and another flesh for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. But the glory of the heavenly body is one kind and the glory of the earthly is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. For one star differs from another star in glory. ⁴² So also is the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, and what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a

natural body, there is also a spiritual body. ⁴⁵ So also it is written, "The first man Adam became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But the spiritual did not come first but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ Just as the one made from dust is, so also are those who are made of the dust, and as the man of heaven is, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven.

⁵⁰ Now this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Neither does what is perishable inherit what is imperishable. ⁵¹ Look! I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed. ⁵² We will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on what is imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ But when this perishable body has put on what is imperishable, and when this mortal body has put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

⁵⁵ "Death, where is your victory?
Death, where is your sting?"

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! ⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers, be steadfast and immovable. Always abound in the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

1 Corinthians 15 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Resurrection

This chapter includes a very important teaching about the resurrection of Jesus. The Greek people did not believe that people could live after they died. Paul defends the resurrection of Jesus. He teaches why it is important to all believers. (See: resurrection and believe)

Special concepts in this chapter

Resurrection

Paul presents the resurrection as the ultimate proof that Jesus is God. Christ is the first of many whom God will raise to life. The resurrection is central to the gospel. Few doctrines are as important as this one. (See: goodnews and raise)

Important figures of speech in this chapter

Paul uses many different figures of speech in this chapter. He uses them to express difficult theological teachings in a way that people can understand.

1 Corinthians 15:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthians that it is the gospel that saves them and he tells them again what the gospel is. Then he gives them a short history lesson which ends with what will yet happen.

make known to you, brothers, the gospel

Possible meanings are 1) Paul wants to remind them by making the gospel known again, "help you remember, brothers, the gospel" or 2) he wants to make sure they understand the gospel, "make clear to you, brothers, the gospel."

on which you stand

Paul is speaking of the Corinthians as if they were a house and the gospel as if it were the foundation on which the house was standing.

1 Corinthians 15:2

you are being saved

This can be stated in active form. "God will save you"

the word I preached to you

"the message I preached to you"

1 Corinthians 15:3

as of first importance

Possible meanings are 1) as the most important of many things or 2) as the first in time of important things.

for our sins

"to pay for our sins" or "so that God could forgive our sins"

according to the scriptures

"just as the propets predicted in the scriptures." Here "scriptures" means the Old Testament.

1 Corinthians 15:4

he was buried

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "they buried him"

he was raised

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God raised him"

was raised

"was caused to live again"

1 Corinthians 15:5

appeared to

"showed himself to"

and then to the twelve

The information that is understood here can be included. Alternate translation: "and then he appeared to the twelve disciples"

to the twelve

Paul used the term "the twelve" to mean the original disciples, known as apostles, that followed Jesus. Although, when Jesus appeared to the apostles, Judas had already died, Paul still refers to the groups as "twelve." Alternate translation: "to the rest of the apostles"

1 Corinthians 15:6

five hundred

500

some have fallen asleep

"Sleep" here is a common euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "some have died"

1 Corinthians 15:7

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 15:8

Last of all

"Finally, after he had appeared to the others"

Last of all, he appeared to me, as if to one born prematurely

This is a simile, but its meaning is unclear. These words could refer to 1) a baby that is born unexpectedly early, in which case Paul means that he was unexpectedly called to be an apostle, or 2) a baby who is born early and is very small, in which case Paul means that he had not learned from Christ and grown spiritually as the other apostles had, or 3) a baby who is born dead, in which case Paul means that Christ appeared to him when he was spiritually dead.

one born prematurely

"a baby born too early"

1 Corinthians 15:9

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 15:10

the grace of God I am what I am

God's grace or kindness has made Paul as he is now.

his grace in me was not in vain

Paul is emphasizing through litotes that God worked through Paul. Alternate translation: "because he was kind to me, I was able to do much good work"

the grace of God that is with me

Paul speaks of the work he was able to do because God was kind to him as if grace were actually doing the work. Alternate translation: Possible meanings are 1) this is literally true, and God actually did the work and kindly used Paul as a tool or 2) Paul is using a metaphor and saying that God was kind to let Paul do the work and to make Paul's work have good results.

1 Corinthians 15:11

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 15:12

how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?

Paul is using this question to begin a new topic. Alternate translation: "you should not be saying that there is no resurrection of the dead!"

raised

made alive again

1 Corinthians 15:13

if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised

Paul uses this statement to argue that there is a resurrection of the dead. He knows that Christ has been raised and so infers that all who die will be resurrected. To say that there is no resurrection is to say that Christ has not been raised, but this is false because Paul has seen the resurrected Christ

not even Christ has been raised

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has not raised even Christ"

1 Corinthians 15:14

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 15:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul wants to assure the Corinthians that Christ rose from the dead.

we are found to be false witnesses about God

Paul is arguing that if Christ did not rise from the dead, then they are bearing false witness or lying about Christ's coming alive again.

we are found to be

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "everyone will realize that we are"

1 Corinthians 15:16

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 15:17

your faith is in vain and you are still in your sins

Their faith is based on Christ having risen from the dead, so if that did not happen, their faith will do them no good.

1 Corinthians 15:18

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 15:19

If only in this life we hope in Christ

Here to hope in Christ is to confidently expect good from him. Alternate translation: "If only in this life we can confidently expect Christ to help us" or "If we can trust in Christ to save us only in this life"

of all people we are most to be pitied

"people should feel sorry for us more than they do for anyone else"

1 Corinthians 15:20

now Christ

"as it is, Christ" or "this is the truth: Christ"

Christ has been raised from the dead

"Raised" here is an idiom for "caused to live again."

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God has raised Christ from the dead"

dead as the firstfruits

Here "firstfruits" is a metaphor, comparing Christ to the first of the harvest, which would be followed by the rest of the harvest. Christ was the first to be raised from the dead, and all who believe in him will also be raised from the dead. Alternate translation: "dead, like the first part of the harvest" or "dead; he is like the first part of the harvest"

those who sleep

Sleep here is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "those who have died"

1 Corinthians 15:21

death came by a man

The abstract noun "death" can be expressed with the verb "die." Alternate translation: "people die because of what one man did"

by a man also came the resurrection of the dead

The abstract noun "resurrection" can be expressed with the verb "raise." Alternate translation: "people are raised from the dead because of another man" or "people will become alive again because of what one man did"

1 Corinthians 15:22

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 15:23

who is the firstfruits

Here "firstfruits" is a metaphor, comparing Christ to the first of the harvest, which would be followed by the rest of the harvest. Christ was the first to be raised from the dead. Alternate translation: "who is like the first part of the harvest"

1 Corinthians 15:24

General Information:

Here the word "he" refers to Christ.

he will abolish all rule and all authority and power
"he will stop those people who rule, who have authority, and who have power, from doing what they are doing"

1 Corinthians 15:25

For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet

Possible meanings are 1) all occurrences of "he" and "his" refer to Christ or 2) "For Christ must reign until God the Father has put all Christ's enemies under Christ's feet"

until he has put all his enemies under his feet
Kings who won wars would put their feet on the necks of those whom they had defeated to their power over their enemies. Alternate translation: "until he has put all his enemies under his power"

1 Corinthians 15:26

The last enemy to be destroyed is death
Paul speaks of death here as if it were a person who will be killed. The passive verb can be stated as active. Possible meanings are 1) Christ will destroy death or 2) God the Father will destroy death. Alternate translation: "The final enemy that he will destroy is death itself"

1 Corinthians 15:27

he has put everything under his feet
Possible meanings are 1) "God the Father has put everything under Christ's feet" or 2) "Christ has put everything under his own feet"

put everything under his feet
Kings who won wars would put their feet on the necks of those whom they had defeated to show they have power over their enemies. See how "put ... under his feet" is translated in [1 Corinthians 15:25]

this does not include the one who put everything in subjection under him
"this does not include God the Father, who put everything in subjection under the Son"

1 Corinthians 15:28

all things are subjected under him
This can be stated as active. Alternate translation: "God the Father has made all things subject to the Son"

the Son himself will be subjected
This can be stated as active. Alternate translation: "the Son himself will become subject"

the Son himself
In the previous verses he was referred to as "Christ." Alternate translation: "Christ, that is, the Son himself,"

Son
This is an important title that describes the relationship between Jesus and God.

1 Corinthians 15:29

Or else what will those do who are baptized for the dead?
Paul uses this question to teach the Corinthians. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "Otherwise it would be useless for Christians to receive baptism for the dead."

If the dead are not raised at all, why are they baptized for them?
Paul uses this question to argue that the dead are raised. Apparently some people, probably some members of the church in Corinth, were being baptized for the dead. Paul infers that those people did so because they believed that the dead would be raised.

If the dead are not raised at all
This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "If God does not raise the dead at all"

are not raised
"are not caused to live again"

why are they baptized for them?
Paul uses this question to teach the Corinthians. It can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "there would be no reason for them to have people baptize them on behalf of dead people."

1 Corinthians 15:30

Why then are we in danger every hour?
Paul uses this question to teach the Corinthians. The reason he and others were in danger is that some people were angry that they taught that Jesus will raise people from death. Alternate translation: "If people will not rise from the dead, we gain nothing by being in danger every hour for teaching that people will rise."

1 Corinthians 15:31

I die every day!
This exaggeration means he was in danger of dying. He knew that some people wanted to kill him because they did not like what he was teaching. Alternate translation: "Every day I am in danger of dying" or "Every day I risk my life!"

This is as sure as my boasting in you
Paul uses this statement as evidence that he faces death every day. Alternate translation: "You can

know that this is true, because you know about my boasting in you" or "You can know that this is true, because you know about how much I boast in you"

my boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord

Paul boasted in them because of what Christ Jesus had done for them. Alternate translation: "my boasting in you, which I do because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done for you"

my boasting in you

"the way I tell other people how good you are"

1 Corinthians 15:32

What do I gain ... if I fought with beasts at Ephesus ... not raised?

Paul wants the Corinthians to understand without him having to tell them. This can be a statement. Alternate translation: "I gained nothing ... by fighting with beasts at Ephesus ... not raised."

I fought with beasts at Ephesus

Paul is referring to something that he actually did. Possible meanings are 1) Paul was speaking figuratively about his arguments with learned pagans or other conflicts with people who wanted to kill him or 2) he was actually put into the arena to fight against dangerous animals.

Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die

Paul concludes that if there is no further life after death, it is better for us to enjoy this life as we can, for tomorrow our life will end without any further hope.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Bad company corrupts good morals

If you live with bad people, you will act like them. Paul is quoting a common saying.

1 Corinthians 15:34

Sober up

"You must think seriously about this"

1 Corinthians 15:35

Connecting Statement:

Paul gives some specifics about how the resurrection of the believers' bodies will take place. He gives a picture of natural and spiritual bodies (15:36-44) and compares the first man Adam with the last Adam, Christ (15:45-49).

But someone will say, "How are the dead raised, and with what kind of body will they come?"

Possible meanings are 1) The person is asking sincerely or 2) the person is using the question to mock the idea of a resurrection. Alternate translation: "But some will say that they cannot

imagine how God will raise the dead, and what kind of body God would give them in the resurrection."

someone will say

"someone will ask"

with what kind of body will they come

That is, will it be a physical body or a spiritual body? What shape will the body have? What will the body be made of? Translate using the most general question that someone who wants to know the answers to these questions would ask.

1 Corinthians 15:36

You fool! What you sow

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so both instances of "you" here are singular.

fool

"unthinking person." Paul is accusing them of not thinking carefully, He is not accusing them of moral error.

What you sow will not come to life unless it dies

A seed will not grow unless it is first buried underground. In the same way, a person has to die before God can resurrect him.

1 Corinthians 15:37

What you sow is not the body that will be

Paul uses the metaphor of the seed again to say that God will resurrect the dead body of the believer, but that body will not appear as it was.

What you sow

Paul is speaking to the Corinthians as if they were one person, so the word "you" here is singular.

1 Corinthians 15:38

God will give it a body as he chooses

"God will decide what kind of body it will have"

1 Corinthians 15:39

Not all flesh is the same ... there is one flesh ... another flesh

"Not all kinds of bodies are the same ... there is one kind of body ... another kind of body"

1 Corinthians 15:40

heavenly bodies

"bodies in the sky"

earthly bodies

"bodies on the earth." This refers to the kinds of bodies mentioned in 15:41.

the glory of the heavenly body is one kind and the glory of the earthly is another

"the glory that the bodies in the sky have is different from the glory that the bodies on the earth have"

glory

Possible meanings are 1) "brightness" or "radiance" or 2) "beauty" or "splendor"

1 Corinthians 15:41

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 15:42

What is sown ... what is raised

The writer speaks of a person's body being buried as if it were a seed that is planted in the ground. And he speaks of a person's body being raised from the dead as if it were a plant growing from the seed. The passive verbs can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "What goes into the ground ... what comes out of the ground" or "What people bury ... what God raises"

is raised

"is caused to live again"

is perishable ... is imperishable

"can rot ... cannot rot"

1 Corinthians 15:43

It is sown ... it is raised

The writer speaks of a person's body being buried as if it were a seed that is planted in the ground. And he speaks of a person's body being raised from the dead as if it were a plant growing from the seed. The passive verbs can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It goes into the ground ... it comes out of the ground" or "People bury it ... God raises it"

1 Corinthians 15:44

It is sown ... it is raised

The writer speaks of a person's body being buried as if it were a seed that is planted in the ground. And he speaks of a person's body being raised from the dead as if it were a plant growing from the seed. The passive verbs can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "It goes into the ground ... it comes out of the ground" or "People bury it ... God raises it"

1 Corinthians 15:45

General Information:

This page has intentionally been left blank.

1 Corinthians 15:46

But the spiritual did not come first but the natural, and then the spiritual

"The natural being came first. The spiritual being is from God and came later."

natural

created by earthly processes, not yet connected to God

1 Corinthians 15:47

The first man is of the earth, made of dust

God made the first man, Adam, from the dust of the earth.

dust

dirt

1 Corinthians 15:48

the man of heaven

Jesus Christ

those who are of heaven

"those who belong to God"

1 Corinthians 15:49

we have borne the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven

"we have been just like the man of dust, we will also be just like the man of heaven"

1 Corinthians 15:50

Connecting Statement:

Paul wants the Corinthians to realize that some believers will not die physically but will still get a resurrected body through Christ's victory.

flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

Neither does what is perishable inherit what is imperishable

Possible meanings are 1) the two sentences mean the same thing. Alternate translation: "human beings who will surely die cannot inherit the permanent kingdom of God" or 2) the second sentence finishes the thought begun by the first. Alternate translation: "weak human beings cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Neither can those who will certainly die inherit a kingdom that will last forever"

flesh and blood

Those who inhabit a body that is doomed to die.

inherit

Receiving what God has promised believers is spoken of as if property and wealth were being inherited from a family member.

is perishable ... is imperishable

"can rot ... cannot rot." See how these words are translated in 1 Corinthians 15:42.

1 Corinthians 15:51

We will not all sleep

Sleep here is a euphemism for death. Alternate translation: "We will not all die"

we will all be changed

This can be stated as active. Alternate translation: "God will change us all"

1 Corinthians 15:52

We will be changed

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will change us"

in the twinkling of an eye

It will happen as fast as it takes for a person to blink his or her eye.

at the last trumpet

"when the last trumpet sounds"

the dead will be raised

This can be translated in active form. Alternate translation: "God will raise the dead"

raised

"caused to live again"

imperishable

"in a form that cannot rot." See how a similar phrase is translated in 1 Corinthians 15:42.

1 Corinthians 15:53

this perishable body ... is imperishable

"this body that can rot ... cannot rot." See how similar phrases are translated in 1 Corinthians 15:42.

must put on

Paul is speaking of God making our bodies so they will never die again as if God were putting new clothes on us.

1 Corinthians 15:54

when this perishable body has put on what is imperishable

Here the body is spoken of as if it were a person, and becoming imperishable is spoken of as if being

imperishable were clothing that a body would wear. Alternate translation: "when this perishable body has become imperishable" or "when this body that can rot can no longer rot"

when this mortal body has put on immortality

Here the body is spoken of as if it were a person, and becoming immortal is spoken of as if being immortal was clothing that a body would wear.

Alternate translation: "when this mortal body has become immortal" or "when this body that can die can no longer die"

1 Corinthians 15:55

Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?

Paul speaks as if death were a person, and he uses this question to mock the power of death, which Christ has defeated. Alternate translation: "Death has no victory. Death has no sting."

your ... your

These are singular.

1 Corinthians 15:56

The sting of death is sin

It is through sin that we are destined to face death, that is, to die.

the power of sin is the law

God's law that was passed down by Moses defines sin and shows us how we sin before God.

1 Corinthians 15:57

gives us the victory

"has defeated death for us"

1 Corinthians 15:58

Connecting Statement:

Paul wants believers, while they work for the Lord, to remember the changed, resurrected bodies that God is going to give them.

be steadfast and immovable

Paul speaks of someone who lets nothing stop him from doing what he has decided to do as if he could not be physically moved. Alternate translation: "be determined"

Always abound in the work of the Lord

Paul speaks of efforts made in working for the Lord as if they were objects that a person could acquire more of. Alternate translation: "Always work for the Lord faithfully"

Chapter 16

¹ Now concerning the collection for God's holy people: as I instructed the churches of Galatia, so you are to do. ² On the first day of the week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper. Do this so that there will be no collections when I come. ³ When I arrive, to whomever you approve, I will give letters of introduction to them and will send them with your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴ If it is appropriate for me to go also, they will go with me. ⁵ But I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia. For I will pass through Macedonia. ⁶ Perhaps I may stay with you or even spend the winter, so that you may help me on my way, wherever I go. ⁷ For I do not wish to see you now for only a passing visit. For I hope to spend more time with you, if the Lord permits. ⁸ But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, ⁹ for a wide door has opened for me, and there are many adversaries.

¹⁰ Now when Timothy comes, see that he is with you unafraid, for he is laboring at the work of the Lord, as I am doing. ¹¹ Let no one despise him. Help him on his way in peace, so that he may come to me. For I am expecting him to come along with the brothers. ¹² Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly encouraged him to visit you with the brothers. But it was not at all his will that he come now. However, he will come when the time is right.

¹³ Be watchful, stand fast in the faith, act like men, be strong. ¹⁴ Let all that you do be done in love.

¹⁵ You know the household of Stephanas, that they were the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of God's holy people. Now I urge you, brothers, ¹⁶ to be in submission to such people and to everyone who helps in the work and labors with us. ¹⁷ I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus. They have made up for your absence. ¹⁸ For they have refreshed my spirit and yours. So then, acknowledge people like them.

¹⁹ The churches of Asia send greetings to you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you in the Lord, with the church that is in their home. ²⁰ All the brothers greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

²¹ I, Paul, write this with my own hand. ²² If anyone does not love the Lord, may he be accursed. Our Lord, come! ²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. ²⁴ My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. ^[1]

Footnotes

16:24 ^[1] A few important and ancient Greek copies and some ancient translations have

1 Corinthians 16 General Notes

Structure and formatting

Paul briefly covers many topics in this chapter. It was common in the ancient Near East for the last part of letters to have personal greetings.

Special concepts in this chapter

Preparation for his coming

Paul gives practical instructions to help prepare the Corinthian church for his visit. He tells them to start collecting money every Sunday for the believers in Jerusalem. He hopes to come and spend the winter with them. He tells them to help Timothy when he comes. He had hopes Apollos would go to them, but Apollos did not think it was the right time. Paul also tells them to obey Stephanus. Finally, he sends his greetings to everyone.

1 Corinthians 16:1

Connecting Statement:

In his closing notes, Paul reminds the Corinthian believers to collect money for the needy believers in Jerusalem.

for God's holy people

Paul was collecting money from his churches for the poor Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and Judea.

1 Corinthians 16:2

store it up

Possible meanings are: 1) "keep it at home" or 2) "leave it with the church"

as he may prosper

"according to how he prospers" or "according to how much he earns"

so that there will be no collections when I come

"so that you will not have to collect more money while I am with you"

1 Corinthians 16:3

to whomever you approve, I will give letters of introduction to them and will send them

Some modern translations read, "to whomever you have approved by letter of introduction, I will send"

1 Corinthians 16:4

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:5

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:6

you may help me on my way

This means they might give Paul money or other things he needs so that he and his ministry team could continue to travel.

1 Corinthians 16:7

I hope to spend more time with you, if the Lord permits

Paul wanted to see the believers in Corinth, but he did not know if he actually would be able to do that. Alternate translation: "I expect to spend more time with you, if the Lord permits" or "I plan to spend more time with you, if the Lord permits"

1 Corinthians 16:8

Pentecost

Paul would stay in Ephesus until this festival, which comes in May or June, 50 days after Passover. He would then travel through Macedonia, and later try to arrive in Corinth before winter started.

1 Corinthians 16:9

a wide door has opened

Paul speaks of the opportunity God has given him to win people to the gospel as if it were a door that God had opened so he could walk through it.

1 Corinthians 16:10

Now

"Now" here marks a change in topic. Here Paul begins to talk about Timothy's visit to Corinth.

see that he is with you unafraid

"see that he has no cause to fear being with you"

1 Corinthians 16:11

Let no one despise him

Because Timothy was much younger than Paul, sometimes he was not shown the respect he deserved as a minister of the gospel.

1 Corinthians 16:12

our brother Apollos

Here the word "our" refers to Paul and his readers, so it is inclusive.

1 Corinthians 16:13

Be watchful, stand fast in the faith, act like men, be strong

Paul is describing what he wants the Corinthians to do as if he were giving four commands to soldiers in war. These four commands mean almost the same thing and are used for emphasis.

Be watchful

Paul speaks of people being aware of what is happening as if they were guards keeping watch over a city or vineyard. This can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "Be careful whom you trust" or "Watch out for danger"

stand fast in the faith

Paul speaks of people continuing to believe in Christ according to his teaching as if they were soldiers refusing to retreat when the enemy attacks. Possible meanings are 1) "keep strongly believing what we have taught you" or 2) "keep strongly trusting in Christ"

act like men

In the society in which Paul and his audience lived, men usually provided for families by doing the heavy work and fighting against invaders. This can be stated more clearly. Alternate translation: "be responsible"

1 Corinthians 16:14

Let all that you do be done in love

"Everything you do should show people that you love them"

1 Corinthians 16:15

Connecting Statement:

Paul begins to close his letter and sends greetings from other churches, as well as from Prisca, Aquila, and Paul himself.

household of Stephanas

Stephanas was one of the first believers in the church at Corinth.

the firstfruits of Achaia

"the first people in Achaia to believe in Christ"

Achaia

This is the name of a province in Greece.

1 Corinthians 16:16

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:17

Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus

These men were either some of the first Corinthian believers or church elders who were co-workers with Paul.

Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus

These are men's names.

They have made up for your absence

"They made up for the fact that you were not here."

1 Corinthians 16:18

For they have refreshed my spirit

Paul is saying he was encouraged by their visit.

acknowledge people like them

The word "acknowledge" here might be an understatement. Paul wants the Corinthians to honor Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus

1 Corinthians 16:19

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:20

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:21

I, Paul, write this with my own hand

Paul was making it clear that the instructions in this letter are from him, even though one of his co-laborers wrote what Paul was saying in the rest of the letter. Paul wrote this last part with his own hand.

1 Corinthians 16:22

may he be accursed

"may God curse him." See how "accursed" was translated in 1 Corinthians 12:3.

1 Corinthians 16:23

General Information:

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1 Corinthians 16:24

General Information:

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Book: 2 Corinthians

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 worshippers 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 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

Chapter 1

¹ Paul, 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.

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

³ May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised. He is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. ⁴ God 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. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ abound for our sake, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. ⁶ But 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. ⁷ Our hope concerning you is unshaken, for we know that as you share the sufferings, you also share our comfort. ⁸ For 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. ⁹ Indeed, 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. ¹⁰ He rescued us from such a deadly peril, and he will rescue us. On him we have set our hope that he will rescue us. ¹¹ He 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.

¹² Our 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. ¹³ We write to you nothing that you cannot read and understand, and I hope that you will fully understand ¹⁴ as 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.

¹⁵ Because I was confident about this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might receive a second favor. ¹⁶ I 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. ¹⁷ When 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? ¹⁸ But just as God is faithful, our word to you is not "Yes" and "No." ¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom Silvanus, Timothy and I proclaimed among you, is not "Yes" and "No." Instead, he is always "Yes." ²⁰ For all the promises of God are "Yes" in him. So also through him we say "Amen" to the glory of God. ²¹ Now it is God who confirms us with you in Christ, and he anointed us, ²² he set his seal on us and he gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee of what is to come.

²³ But I call God as witness to my soul that the reason I did not come to Corinth was so that I might spare you. ²⁴ This 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)

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"

Chapter 2

¹ So I decided for my own part that I would not again come to you in sorrow. ² If I caused you sorrow, who could make me glad but the very one who was made sorrowful by me? ³ I 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. ⁴ For 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.

⁵ If anyone has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not only to me, but in some measure—not to burden you—to all of you. ⁶ This punishment of that person by the majority is enough. ⁷ So now rather than punish him, you should forgive and comfort him. Do this so that he is not overwhelmed by too much sorrow. ⁸ So I exhort you to confirm your love for him. ⁹ This was the reason I wrote, so that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. ¹⁰ If 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. ¹¹ This is so that Satan will not trick us. For we are not ignorant of his schemes.

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

¹⁴ But 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. ¹⁵ For we are to God the sweet aroma of Christ, both among those who are saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶ To 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? ¹⁷ For 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.

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"

Chapter 3

¹ 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)

2 Corinthians 3:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul reminds the Corinthians that he is not boasting as he tells them about what he has done through Christ.

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."

We do not need letters of recommendation to you or from you, like some people, do we?

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."

letters of recommendation

This is a letter that a person writes to introduce and give their approval of someone else.

2 Corinthians 3:2

General Information:

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 yourselves are our letter of recommendation

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 translation: "You yourselves are like our letter of recommendation"

written on our hearts

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.

written on our hearts

This can be stated in active form with "Christ" as the implied subject. Alternate translation: "which Christ has written on our hearts"

known and read by all people

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "that all people can know and read"

2 Corinthians 3:3

General Information:

Paul continues the extended metaphor that he began in [2 Corinthians 3:2]

you are a letter from Christ

Paul clarifies that Christ is the one who has written the letter. Alternate translation: "you are a letter that Christ has written"

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"

Chapter 4

¹ Therefore, because we have this ministry, and just as we have received mercy, we do not become discouraged. ² Instead, 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. ³ But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ⁴ In 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. ⁵ For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For 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.

⁷ But 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. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not overwhelmed. We are perplexed but not filled with despair. ⁹ We are persecuted but not abandoned; struck down but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹ For 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. ¹² So death is at work in us, but life is at work in you. ¹³ But 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, ¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will also raise us with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵ For 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.

¹⁶ So we do not become discouraged. Even though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal burden of glory that exceeds all measurement. ¹⁸ For 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)

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"

Chapter 5

¹ We 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. ² For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly residence. ³ We long for this because by putting it on we will not be found to be naked. ⁴ For 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. ⁵ The one who prepared us for this very thing is God, who gave us the Spirit as a guarantee of what is to come. ⁶ Therefore always be confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are away from the Lord. ⁷ For we walk by faith, not by sight. ⁸ So we have confidence. We would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So we make it our goal, whether we are at home or away, to please him. ¹⁰ For 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.

¹¹ Therefore, 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. ¹² We 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. ¹³ For if we are out of our minds, it is for God; and if we are in our right minds, it is for your sake. ¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: That one person died for all, and that therefore all have died. ¹⁵ He 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. ¹⁶ For 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. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. See, they have become new. ¹⁸ All these things are from God. He reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. ¹⁹ That 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.

²⁰ So 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!" ²¹ He 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 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)

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"

Chapter 6

¹ Working together with him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ² For 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. ³ We do not place a stumbling block in front of anyone, for we do not wish our ministry to be discredited. ⁴ Instead, in every way we commend ourselves as God's servants in much endurance, in affliction, in distress, in hardship, ⁵ in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in hard labor, in sleepless nights, in hunger, ⁶ in purity, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in sincere love, ⁷ in the word of truth, in the power of God; with the armor of righteousness for the right hand and the left. ⁸ We are God's servants in glory and dishonor, in slander and praise; regarded as deceivers and yet truthful; ⁹ as unknown, yet well known; as dying, yet, look, we live; as being disciplined, yet not killed; ¹⁰ as sorrowful, yet rejoicing; as poor, yet many are enriched; as having nothing, yet possessing all things.

¹¹ We have spoken the whole truth to you, Corinthians, and our heart is wide open. ¹² You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own hearts. ¹³ Now in fair exchange—I speak as to children—open yourselves wide also. ¹⁴ Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what association does righteousness have with lawlessness? For what fellowship does light have with darkness? ¹⁵ What agreement can Christ have with Belial? Or what share does a believer have together with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And 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."

¹⁷ Therefore,

"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.

2 Corinthians 6:1

Connecting Statement:

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

Working together with him

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

we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain
"we beg you to make use of the grace that you have received from God"

2 Corinthians 6:2

General Information:

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

For he says

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

Look

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

2 Corinthians 6:3

We do not place a stumbling block in front of anyone

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"

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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Chapter 7

¹ Beloved, 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.

² Make room for us! We have not wronged anyone. We have not corrupted anyone or taken advantage of anyone. ³ It 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. ⁴ I 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.

⁵ When 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. ⁶ But God, who comforts the lowly, comforted us by the arrival of Titus. ⁷ It 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. ⁸ Even 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. ⁹ Now 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. ¹⁰ For godly sorrow brings about repentance that accomplishes salvation without regret. Worldly sorrow, however, brings about death. ¹¹ See 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. ¹² Although 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. ¹³ It 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. ¹⁴ For 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. ¹⁵ His affection for you is even greater as he remembers the obedience of all of you, how you welcomed him with fear and trembling. ¹⁶ I 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.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Connecting Statement:

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

Beloved

"You whom I love" or "Dear friends"

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.

of all defilement of flesh and spirit

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

Let us perfect holiness

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

in the fear of God

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

2 Corinthians 7:2

Connecting Statement:

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.

Make room for us

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

2 Corinthians 7:3

It is not to condemn you that I say this

"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.

you are in our hearts

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"

for us to die together and to live together

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"

for us to die

"us" includes the Corinthian believers.

2 Corinthians 7:4

great is my boast about you

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

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:

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Chapter 8

¹ We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. ² During a great test of tribulation, the abundance of their joy and the extremity of their poverty have produced great riches of generosity. ³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond what they were able, and of their own free will ⁴ they begged us with much earnestness for the privilege of sharing in this service to God's holy people. ⁵ This did not happen as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and then to us by the will of God. ⁶ So we urged Titus, who had already begun this task, to complete among you this act of grace. ⁷ But 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. ¹⁸ I say this not as a command but to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it to the eagerness of other people. ⁹ For 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. ¹⁰ In 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. ¹¹ Now 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. ¹² For 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. ¹³ For this is not to cause relief for others and tribulation for you, but for fairness. ¹⁴ Your 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. ¹⁵ It 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."

¹⁶ But thanks be to God, who put into Titus' heart the same earnest care that I have for you. ¹⁷ For he not only accepted our appeal, but he was also very earnest about it. He came to you of his own free will. ¹⁸ We have sent with him the brother who is praised among all of the churches for his work in proclaiming the gospel. ¹⁹ Not 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. ²⁰ We are avoiding the possibility that anyone should complain about this act of generosity that we are carrying out. ²¹ We take care to do what is good, not only before the Lord, but also before people. ²² We 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. ²³ As 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. ²⁴ So show them the proof of your love, and show to the churches the reason for our boasting about you.

Footnotes

8:7 ^[1] There 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,

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](#))

2 Corinthians 8:1

Connecting Statement:

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

This can be stated in active form. Alternate translation: "the grace that God has given to the churches of Macedonia"

2 Corinthians 8:2

the abundance of their joy and the extremity of their poverty have produced great riches of generosity

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"

the abundance of their joy

Paul speaks of joy as if it were a physical object that could increase in size or quantity.

extremity of their poverty ... riches of generosity

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.

great riches of generosity

"a very great generosity." The words "great riches" emphasize the greatness of their generosity.

2 Corinthians 8:3

they gave

This refers to the churches in Macedonia.

of their own free will

"voluntarily"

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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Chapter 9

¹ Concerning 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. ³ Now 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.

⁶ The 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. ⁸ And 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."

¹⁰ He 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. ¹² For 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)

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.

Chapter 10

¹ I, 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. ² I 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. ³ For even though we walk in the flesh, we do not make war according to the flesh. ⁴ For the weapons we fight with are not fleshly. Rather, they have divine power to destroy strongholds. They bring misleading arguments to nothing. ⁵ We also destroy every high thing that rises up against the knowledge of God. We take every thought captive into obedience to Christ. ⁶ And we are getting ready to punish every act of disobedience, as soon as your obedience is complete. ⁷ Look 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. ⁸ For 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. ⁹ I do not want it to appear that I am terrifying you by my letters. ¹⁰ For some people say, "His letters are serious and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak. His words are not worth listening to." ¹¹ Let 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. ¹² We 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. ¹³ We, 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. ¹⁴ For 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. ¹⁵ We 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, ¹⁶ so 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."

¹⁸ For 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)

2 Corinthians 10:1

Connecting Statement:

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

by the humility and gentleness of Christ

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

2 Corinthians 10:2

we are walking

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

according to the flesh

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 walk in the flesh

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

the flesh

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

we do not make war

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.

make war according to the flesh

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 10:4

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

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"

we fight

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.

are not fleshly

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"

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 themselves

"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.

to group ourselves or compare ourselves with those

"to say we are as good as those"

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

Paul is saying much the same thing twice.

they measure themselves by one another

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"

have no insight

"show everyone that they do not know anything"

2 Corinthians 10:13

General Information:

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."

will not boast beyond limits. Instead

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"

within the limits of what God

"about things under the authority that God"

limits that reach even as far as you

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"

2 Corinthians 10:14

we are not overextending ourselves

"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."

2 Corinthians 10:15

We have not boasted beyond limits about the labors of others

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

our hope is that

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

2 Corinthians 10:16

another's area

"an area God has assigned to someone else"

2 Corinthians 10:17

boast in the Lord

"boast about what the Lord has done"

2 Corinthians 10:18

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.

who is approved

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

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"

Chapter 11

¹ I wish that you could put up with me in some foolishness. But you are indeed putting up with me! ² For 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. ³ 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. ⁴ For 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! ⁵ For I think that I am not in the least inferior to those so-called super-apostles. ⁶ But 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. ⁷ Did I sin by humbling myself so you might be exalted? For I freely preached the gospel of God to you. ⁸ I robbed other churches by accepting support from them so that I could serve you. ⁹ When 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. ¹⁰ As the truth of Christ is in me, this boasting of mine will not be silenced in the parts of Achaia. ¹¹ Why? Because I do not love you? God knows. ¹² And 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. ¹³ For such people are false apostles and deceitful workers. They disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And this is no surprise, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵ It is no great surprise if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their fate will be what their deeds deserve.

¹⁶ I 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. ¹⁷ What I am saying with this boastful confidence—I am not talking the way the Lord would—I am saying as a fool. ¹⁸ Since many people boast according to the flesh, I will also boast. ¹⁹ For you gladly put up with fools. You are wise yourselves! ²⁰ For 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. ²¹ I 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. ²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. ²³ Are 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. ²⁴ From Jews I received five times the "forty lashes minus one." ²⁵ Three 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. ²⁶ I 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. ²⁷ I have served in labor and toil, in many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often in fasting, in cold and nakedness. ²⁸ Apart from everything else, there is the daily pressure of my concern for all the churches. ²⁹ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who has been caused to stumble, and I do not burn? ³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast about what shows my weaknesses. ³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, the one who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying!

³² At Damascus, the governor under King Aretas was guarding the city of Damascus to arrest me. ³³ But 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](#))

2 Corinthians 11:1

Connecting Statement:

Paul continues to affirm his apostleship.

put up with me in some foolishness

"allow me to act like a fool"

2 Corinthians 11:2

jealous ... jealousy

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.

I promised you in marriage to one husband. I promised to present you as a pure virgin to Christ

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"

2 Corinthians 11:3

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

"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"

your thoughts might be led astray away

Paul speaks of thoughts as if they were animals that people could lead along the wrong path. Alternate translation: "someone might cause you to believe lies"

2 Corinthians 11:4

For suppose that ... preached. Or suppose that ... received. Or suppose that ... received. You put

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"

a different spirit than what you received. Or suppose that you receive a different gospel than the one you received

"a different spirit than the Holy Spirit, or a different gospel than you received from us"

put up with these things

"deal with these things." See how these words were translated in 2 Corinthians 11:1.

2 Corinthians 11:5

those so-called super-apostles

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"

2 Corinthians 11:6

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"

Chapter 12

¹ I must boast, even if it is unprofitable. But I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. ² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago who—whether in the body or out of the body, I do not know, God knows—was caught up into the third heaven. ³ And I know that this man—whether in the body, or out of the body, I do not know, God knows—⁴ was caught up into paradise and heard inexpressible words that people are not permitted to speak. ⁵ On behalf of such a person I will boast. But on behalf of myself I will not boast, except about my weaknesses. ⁶ If 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. ⁷ To 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. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, for him to take it away from me. ⁹ But 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. ¹⁰ Therefore 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.

¹¹ I 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. ¹² The true signs of an apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, signs and wonders and miracles. ¹³ For 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!

¹⁴ Look! 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. ¹⁵ I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less? ¹⁶ But as it is, I did not burden you. But since I am so crafty, I am the one who caught you by deceit. ¹⁷ Did I take advantage of you by anyone I sent to you? ¹⁸ I 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?

¹⁹ Do 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. ²⁰ For 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. ²¹ I 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](#))

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"

Chapter 13

¹ This is the third time that I am coming to you. "Every matter must be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses." ² I 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. ³ I 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. ⁴ For 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. ⁵ Examine 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. ⁶ And I hope that you will recognize that we have not failed the test. ⁷ Now 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. ⁸ For we are not able to do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. ⁹ For we rejoice when we are weak and you are strong. We also pray that you may be made complete. ¹⁰ I 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.

¹¹ Finally, brothers, rejoice! Work for restoration, be encouraged, think alike, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet each other with a holy kiss. All God's holy people greet you. ^[1]

¹³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. ^[2]

Footnotes

13:12 ^[1] Some copies number this sentence as verse 13.

13:13 ^[2] Some 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)

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

General Information:

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