

The Epistle of Paul to the
Corinthians
with SED key verses highlighted

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

² To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his holy people, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and **ours**:

³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

⁴ I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus.

⁵ For in him you have been enriched in every way—with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge—

⁶ God **thus confirming** our testimony about Christ among you.

⁷ Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

⁸ He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be **blameless** on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹ God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

A Church Divided Over Leaders

¹⁰ I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you **agree** with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

¹¹ My brothers and sisters, some from **Chloe's** household have **informed** me that there are **quarrels** among you.

¹² What I mean is this: One of you says, “I follow Paul”; another, “I follow Apollos”; another, “I follow Cephas”; still another, “I follow Christ.”

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?

¹⁴ I thank God that I did not baptize any of you except **Crispus** and **Gaius**,

¹⁵ so no one can say that you were baptized in my name.

¹⁶ (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.)

¹⁷ For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ be **emptied** of its power.

Christ Crucified Is God's Power and Wisdom

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

¹⁹ For it is written: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the **intelligence** of the **intelligent** I will **frustrate**.”

²⁰ Where is the wise person? Where is the **teacher** of the law? Where is the **philosopher** of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

²¹ For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.

²² Jews **demand** signs and Greeks look for 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, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

²⁵ For the foolishness of God is **wiser** than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human **strength**.

²⁶ Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were **influential**; not many were of **noble birth**.

²⁷ But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

²⁸ God chose the **lowly** things of this world and the **despised** things—and the things that are not—to **nullify** the things that are,

²⁹ so that no one may boast before him.

³⁰ It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and **redemption**.

³¹ Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

2¹ And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I **proclaimed** to you the testimony about God.

² For I **resolved** to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.

³ I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling.

⁴ My message and my preaching were not with wise and **persuasive** words, but with a **demonstration** of the **Spirit's** power,

⁵ so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

God's Wisdom Revealed by the Spirit

⁶ We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the **mature**, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

⁷ No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God **destined** for our glory before time **began**.

⁸ None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

⁹ However, as it is written: "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has **conceived**"—the things God has **prepared** for those who love him—

¹⁰ these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit **searches** all things, even the deep things of **God**.

¹¹ For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

¹² What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.

¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, **explaining** spiritual **realities** with **Spirit-taught** words.

¹⁴ The person without the Spirit does not **accept** the things that come from the Spirit of God but **considers** them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are **discerned** only through the Spirit.

¹⁵ The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments,

¹⁶ for, "Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

The Church and Its Leaders

3¹ Brothers and sisters, I could not **address** you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ.

² I gave you milk, not **solid** food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.

³ You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and **quarreling** among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere **humans**?

⁴ For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings?

⁵ What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task.

⁶ I **planted** the seed, Apollos **watered** it, but God has been making it grow.

⁷ So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

⁸ The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be **rewarded** according to their own labor.

⁹ For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s **field**, God’s building.

¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care.

¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

¹² If anyone builds on this foundation **using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw**,

¹³ their work will be **shown** for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the **quality** of each person’s work.

¹⁴ If what has been built **survives**, the builder will receive a reward.

¹⁵ If it is **burned** up, the builder will suffer **loss** but yet will be saved—even though only as one **escaping** through the **flames**.

¹⁶ Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit **dwells** in your midst?

¹⁷ If anyone **destroys** God’s temple, God will destroy that person; for God’s temple is **sacred**, and you together are that temple.

¹⁸ Do not **deceive** yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become “fools” so that you may become wise.

¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God’s sight. As it is written: “He **catches** the wise in their **craftiness**”;

²⁰ and again, “The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile.”

²¹ So then, no more boasting about human **leaders**! All things are yours,

²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the **future**—all are yours,

²³ and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

The Nature of True Apostleship

4¹ This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those **entrusted** with the mysteries God has revealed.

2 Now it is **required** that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself.

4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who **judges** me.

5 Therefore judge nothing before the **appointed** time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will **expose** the **motives** of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God.

6 Now, brothers and sisters, I have **applied** these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may **learn** from us the meaning of the saying, “Do not go beyond what is written.” Then you will not be **puffed up** in being a **follower** of one of us over against the other.

7 For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

8 Already you have all you want! Already you have become rich! You have begun to reign—and that without us! How I wish that you really had begun to reign so that we also might reign with you!

9 For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on **display** at the end of the procession, like those condemned to die in the **arena**. We have been made a **spectacle** to the whole **universe**, to angels as well as to human beings.

10 We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are **dishonored**!

11 To this very hour we go hungry and **thirsty**, we are in **rags**, we are **brutally** treated, we are **homeless**.

12 We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it;

13 when we are **slandered**, we answer **kindly**. We have become the **scum** of the earth, the **garbage** of the world—right up to this **moment**.

Paul’s Appeal and Warning

14 I am writing this not to shame you but to **warn** you as my dear children.

15 Even if you had ten thousand **guardians** in Christ, you do not have many **fathers**, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel.

16 Therefore I urge you to **imitate** me.

17 For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which **agrees** with what I teach everywhere in every church.

18 Some of you have become arrogant, as if I were not coming to you.

19 But I will come to you very **soon**, if the Lord is willing, and then I will find out not only how these arrogant people are talking, but what power they have.

20 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.

21 What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a **rod** of **discipline**, or shall I come in love and with a **gentle** spirit?

Dealing With a Case of Incest

5¹ It is **actually reported** that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is **sleeping** with his **father's** wife.

² And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into **mourning** and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this?

³ For my part, even though I am not **physically** present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this.

⁴ So when you are **assembled** and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present,

⁵ hand 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. Don't you know that a little yeast **leavens** the whole batch of **dough**?

⁷ Get **rid** of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our **Passover lamb**, has been sacrificed.

⁸ Therefore let us keep the **Festival**, not with the old bread **leavened** with **malice** and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

⁹ I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—

¹⁰ not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to **leave** this world.

¹¹ But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who **claims** to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an **idolater** or **slanderer**, a **drunkard** or **swindler**. Do not even eat with such people.

¹² What **business** is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those **inside**?

¹³ God will judge those outside. "**Expel** the **wicked** person from among you."

Lawsuits Among Believers

6¹ If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the **ungodly** for judgment instead of before the Lord's people?

² Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge **trivial cases**?

³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!

⁴ Therefore, if you have **disputes** about such matters, do you ask for a **ruling** from those whose way of life is **scorned** in the church?

⁵ I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers?

⁶ But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in **front** of unbelievers!

⁷ The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?

⁸ Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters.

⁹ Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men

¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Sexual Immorality

¹² "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything.

¹³ You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also.

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never!

¹⁶ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."

¹⁷ But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.

¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body.

¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;

²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Concerning Married Life

⁷ ¹ Now for the matters you wrote about: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”

² But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband.

³ The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband.

⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife.

⁵ Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

⁶ I say this as a concession, not as a command.

⁷ I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

⁸ Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do.

⁹ But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

¹⁰ To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband.

¹¹ But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

¹² To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her.

¹³ And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him.

¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

¹⁵ But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

¹⁶ How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Concerning Change of Status

¹⁷ Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.

¹⁸ Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised.

¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God’s commands is what counts.

²⁰ Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

²¹ Were you a slave when you were called? Don’t let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so.

²² For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord’s freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ’s slave.

²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings.

²⁴ Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

Concerning the Unmarried

²⁵ Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord’s mercy is trustworthy.

²⁶ Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is.

²⁷ Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment? Do not look for a wife.

²⁸ But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this.

²⁹ What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not;

³⁰ those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep;

³¹ those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

³² I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord.

³³ But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—

³⁴ and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband.

³⁵ I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord.

³⁶ If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if his passions are too strong and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married.

³⁷ But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing.

³⁸ So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does better.

³⁹ A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord.

⁴⁰ In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

Concerning Food Sacrificed to Idols

8¹ Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that “We all possess knowledge.” But knowledge puffs up while love builds up.

² Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know.

3³ But whoever loves God is known by God.

⁴ So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.”

⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”),

6⁶ yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

⁷ But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled.

⁸ But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

9⁹ Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak.

¹⁰ For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol’s temple, won’t that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols?

¹¹ So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge.

¹² When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.

13¹³ Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.

Paul's Rights as an Apostle

⁹ Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord?

² Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

³ This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me.

⁴ Don't we have the right to food and drink?

⁵ Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas?

⁶ Or is it only I and Barnabas who lack the right to not work for a living?

⁷ Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink the milk?

⁸ Do I say this merely on human authority? Doesn't the Law say the same thing?

⁹ For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned?

¹⁰ Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because whoever plows and threshes should be able to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest.

¹¹ If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?

¹² If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ.

¹³ Don't you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar?

¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

¹⁵ But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me, for I would rather die than allow anyone to deprive me of this boast.

¹⁶ For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!

¹⁷ If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me.

¹⁸ What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of charge, and so not make full use of my rights as a preacher of the gospel.

Paul's Use of His Freedom

¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.

²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.

²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.

²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.

²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

The Need for Self-Discipline

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.

²⁷ No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Warnings From Israel's History

10¹ For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.

² They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

³ They all ate the same spiritual food

⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.

⁶ Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry."

⁸ We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.

⁹ We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes.

¹⁰ And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

¹¹ These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.

¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!

¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper

¹⁴ Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.

¹⁵ I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.

¹⁶ Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?

¹⁷ Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

¹⁸ Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?

¹⁹ Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything?

²⁰ No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.

²¹ You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons.

²² Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

The Believer's Freedom

²³ "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive.

²⁴ No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

²⁵ Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience,

²⁶ for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

²⁷ If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising 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 told you and for the sake of conscience.

²⁹ I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience?

³⁰ If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

³² Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God—

³³ even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

11 ¹ Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

On Covering the Head in Worship

² I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you.

³ But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

⁴ Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head.

⁵ But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved.

⁶ For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head.

⁷ A man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man.

⁸ For man did not come from woman, but woman from man;

⁹ neither was man created for woman, but woman for man.

¹⁰ It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own head, because of the angels.

¹¹ Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

¹² For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

¹³ Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?

¹⁴ Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him,

¹⁵ but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a covering.

¹⁶ If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

Correcting an Abuse of the Lord's Supper

¹⁷ In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good.

¹⁸ In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it.

¹⁹ No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval.

²⁰ So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat,

²¹ for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk.

²² Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread,

²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me."

²⁵ In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

²⁶ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

²⁷ So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

²⁸ Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.

²⁹ For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.

³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

³¹ But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment.

³² Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

³³ So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together.

³⁴ Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment. And when I come I will give further directions.

Concerning Spiritual Gifts

12¹ Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.

² You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols.

³ Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.

⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.

⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.

⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,

⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,

¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues.

¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Unity and Diversity in the Body

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴ Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body.

¹⁶ And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being 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 in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be.

¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be?

²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!”

²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,

²³ and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,

²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it,

²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

²⁸ And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.

²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?

³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

³¹ Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

Love Is Indispensable

And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

13¹ If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a **resounding gong** or a **clanging cymbal**.

² If I have the gift of prophecy and can **fathom** all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move **mountains**, but do not have love, I am nothing.

³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to **hardship** that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not **self-seeking**, it is not easily **angered**, it keeps no record of wrongs.

⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

⁷ It always **protects**, always trusts, always hopes, always **perseveres**.

⁸ Love never fails. But where there are **prophecies**, they will **cease**; where there are tongues, they will be **stilled**; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.

⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

¹⁰ but when **completeness** comes, what is in part **disappears**.

¹¹ When I was a child, I **talked** like a child, I thought like a child, I **reasoned** like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of **childhood** behind me.

¹² For now we see only a **reflection** as in a **mirror**; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the **greatest** of these is love.

Intelligibility in Worship

14¹ Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy.

² For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one **understands** them; they **utter** mysteries by the Spirit.

³ But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, **encouraging** and comfort.

⁴ Anyone who speaks in a tongue **edifies** themselves, but the one who prophesies **edifies** the church.

⁵ I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone **interprets**, so that the church may be edified.

⁶ Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction?

⁷ Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the pipe or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes?

⁸ Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle?

⁹ So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air.

¹⁰ Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning.

¹¹ If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me.

¹² So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.

¹³ For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say.

¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful.

¹⁵ So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.

¹⁶ Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying?

¹⁷ You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified.

¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

¹⁹ But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

²⁰ Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

²¹ In the Law it is written: “With other tongues and through the lips of foreigners I will speak to this people, but even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.”

²² Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers.

²³ So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

²⁴ But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all,

²⁵ as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!”

Good Order in Worship

²⁶ What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.

²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret.

²⁸ If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God.

²⁹ Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said.

³⁰ And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop.

³¹ For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.

³² The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets.

³³ For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.

³⁴ Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says.

³⁵ If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

³⁶ Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?

³⁷ If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command.

³⁸ But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.

³⁹ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

⁴⁰ But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

The Resurrection of Christ

15¹ Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand.

² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.

⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles,

⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve 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 to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

¹¹ Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

The Resurrection of the Dead

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.

¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised.

¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either.

¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.

¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man.

²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

²³ But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.

²⁴ Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, 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.” Now when it says that “everything” has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ.

²⁸ When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

²⁹ Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?

³⁰ And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour?

³¹ I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord.

³² If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

³³ Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”

³⁴ Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.

The Resurrection Body

³⁵ But someone will ask, “How are the dead raised? With what kind of body will they come?”

³⁶ How foolish! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies.

³⁷ When you sow, you do not plant the body that will be, but just a seed, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has determined, and to each kind of seed he gives its own body.

³⁹ Not all flesh is the same: People have one kind of flesh, animals have another, birds another and fish another.

⁴⁰ There are also heavenly bodies and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another.

⁴¹ The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor.

⁴² So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised 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 it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit.

⁴⁶ The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual.

⁴⁷ The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is of heaven.

⁴⁸ As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven.

⁴⁹ And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man.

⁵⁰ I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—

⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.

⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁵⁸ Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

The Collection for the Lord's People

16 Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do.

² On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

³ Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem.

⁴ If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

Personal Requests

⁵ After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia.

⁶ Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go.

⁷ For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits.

⁸ But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost,

⁹ because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

¹⁰ When Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am.

¹¹ No one, then, should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers.

¹² Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.

¹³ Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong.

¹⁴ Do everything in love.

¹⁵ You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people. I urge you, brothers and sisters,

¹⁶ to submit to such people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it.

¹⁷ I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you.

¹⁸ For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition.

Final Greetings

¹⁹ The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house.

²⁰ All the brothers and sisters here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

²¹ I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand.

²² If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed! Come, Lord!

²³ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

²⁴ My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.

2 Corinthians

1 ¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia:

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise to the God of All Comfort

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,
⁴ who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

⁵ For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

⁶ If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

⁷ And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

⁸ We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself.

⁹ Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead.

¹⁰ He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us,

¹¹ as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

Paul's Change of Plans

¹² Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace.

¹³ For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that,

¹⁴ as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.

¹⁵ Because I was confident of this, I wanted to visit you first so that you might benefit twice.

¹⁶ I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea.

¹⁷ Was I fickle when I intended to do this? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say both "Yes, yes" and "No, no"?

¹⁸ But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No."

¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas and Timothy—was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes."

²⁰ For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

²¹ Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us,

²² set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

²³ I call God as my witness—and I stake my life on it—that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth.

²⁴ Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

2¹ So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you.

² For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved?

³ I wrote as I did, so that when I came I would not be distressed by those who should have made me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy.

⁴ For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

Forgiveness for the Offender

⁵ If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely.

⁶ The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient.

⁷ Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.

⁸ I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

⁹ Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything.

¹⁰ Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake,

¹¹ in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

Ministers of the New Covenant

¹² Now when I went to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord had opened a door for me,

¹³ I still had no peace of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.

¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.

¹⁵ For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing.

¹⁶ To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task?

¹⁷ Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.

3 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you?

² You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone.

³ You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

⁴ Such confidence we have through Christ before God.

⁵ Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.

⁶ He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

The Greater Glory of the New Covenant

⁷ Now if the ministry that brought death, which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was,

⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious?

⁹ If the ministry that brought condemnation was glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness!

¹⁰ For what was glorious has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory.

¹¹ And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts!

¹² Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

¹³ We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away.

¹⁴ But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away.

¹⁵ Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.

¹⁶ But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Present Weakness and Resurrection Life

4¹ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God.

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

⁵ For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.

⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ.

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

⁸ We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;

⁹ persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

¹⁰ We always carry 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 his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.

¹² So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

¹³ It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." Since we have that same spirit of faith, we also believe and therefore speak,

¹⁴ because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself.

¹⁵ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Awaiting the New Body

5¹ For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

² Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling,

³ because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked.

⁴ For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

⁵ Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

⁶ Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord.

⁷ For we live by faith, not by sight.

⁸ We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.

⁹ So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.

¹² We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart.

¹³ If we are “out of our mind,” as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.

¹⁴ For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:

¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

²⁰ We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6¹ As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain.

² For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Paul's Hardships

³ We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited.

⁴ Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses;

⁵ in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger;

⁶ in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love;

⁷ in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left;

⁸ through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors;

⁹ known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed;

¹⁰ sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

¹¹ We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you.

¹² We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us.

¹³ As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

Warning Against Idolatry

¹⁴ Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?

¹⁵ What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

¹⁶ What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."

¹⁷ Therefore, "Come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you."

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

7¹ Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Paul's Joy Over the Church's Repentance

² Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one.

³ I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you.

⁴ I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

⁵ For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within.

⁶ But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,

⁷ and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

⁸ Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—

⁹ yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us.

¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

¹¹ See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

¹² So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are.

¹³ By all this we are encouraged. In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you.

¹⁴ I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well.

¹⁵ And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling.

¹⁶ I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

The Collection for the Lord's People

8¹ And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches.

² In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,

⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people.

⁵ And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

⁶ So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.

⁷ But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

⁸ I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

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

¹⁰ And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so.

¹¹ Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means.

¹² For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

¹³ Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality.

¹⁴ At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need.

The goal is equality,

¹⁵ as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."

Titus Sent to Receive the Collection

¹⁶ Thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you.

¹⁷ For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative.

¹⁸ And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel.

¹⁹ What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help.

²⁰ We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift.

²¹ For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.

²² In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you.

²³ As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ.

²⁴ Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.

9¹ There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people.

² For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action.

³ But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be.

⁴ For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident.

⁵ So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

Generosity Encouraged

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

⁹ As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever."

¹⁰ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

¹¹ You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

¹² This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

¹³ Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

¹⁴ And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

¹⁵ Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Paul's Defense of His Ministry

10 ¹ By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am “timid” when face to face with you, but “bold” toward you when away!

² I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be toward some people who think that we live by the standards of this world.

³ For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does.

⁴ The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

⁵ We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

⁶ And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

⁷ You are judging by appearances. If anyone is confident that they belong to Christ, they should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as they do.

⁸ So even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it.

⁹ I do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you with my letters.

¹⁰ For some say, “His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing.”

¹¹ Such people should realize that what we are in our letters when we are absent, we will be in our actions when we are present.

¹² We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.

¹³ We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits, but will confine our boasting to the sphere of service God himself has assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you.

¹⁴ We are not going too far in our boasting, as would be the case if we had not come to you, for we did get as far as you with the gospel of Christ.

¹⁵ Neither do we go beyond our limits by boasting of work done by others. Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand,

¹⁶ so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you. For we do not want to boast about work already done in someone else's territory.

¹⁷ But, “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”

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

Paul and the False Apostles

11 ¹ I hope you will put up with me in a little foolishness. Yes, please put up with me!

² I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

³ But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

⁴ For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the Spirit you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.

⁵ I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles."

⁶ I may indeed be untrained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.

⁷ Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge?

⁸ I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you.

⁹ And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so.

¹⁰ As surely as the truth of Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia will stop this boasting of mine.

¹¹ Why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

¹² And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about.

¹³ For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ.

¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

¹⁵ It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.

Paul Boasts About His Sufferings

¹⁶ I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But if you do, then tolerate me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting.

¹⁷ In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool.

¹⁸ Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast.

¹⁹ You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise!

²⁰ In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face.

²¹ To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that! Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about.

²² Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I.

²³ Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again.

²⁴ Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.

²⁵ Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea,

²⁶ I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers.

²⁷ I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

²⁸ Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

²⁹ Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

³⁰ If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

³¹ The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying.

³² In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me.

³³ But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

Paul's Vision and His Thorn

12 ¹ I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord.

² I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows.

³ And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—

⁴ was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell.

⁵ I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses.

⁶ Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say,

⁷ or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.

⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.

¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Paul's Concern for the Corinthians

¹¹ I have made a fool of myself, but you drove me to it. I ought to have been commended by you, for I am not in the least inferior to the “super-apostles,” even though I am nothing.

¹² I persevered in demonstrating among you the marks of a true apostle, including signs, wonders and miracles.

¹³ How were you inferior to the other churches, except that I was never a burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

¹⁴ Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.

¹⁵ So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. If I love you more, will you love me less?

¹⁶ Be that as it may, I have not been a burden to you. Yet, crafty fellow that I am, I caught you by trickery!

¹⁷ Did I exploit you through any of the men I sent to you?

¹⁸ I urged Titus to go to you and I sent our brother with him. Titus did not exploit you, did he? Did we not walk in the same footsteps by the same Spirit?

¹⁹ Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you? We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ; and everything we do, dear friends, is for your strengthening.

²⁰ For I am afraid that when I come I may not find you as I want you to be, and you may not find me as you want me to be. I fear that there may be discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder.

²¹ I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.

Final Warnings

13¹ This will be my third visit to you. “Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

² I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others,

³ since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you.

⁴ For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God’s power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God’s power we will live with him in our dealing with you.

⁵ Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

⁶ And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test.

⁷ Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed.

⁸ For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.

⁹ We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored.

¹⁰ This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

Final Greetings

¹¹ Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss.

¹³ All God’s people here send their greetings.

¹⁴ May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.