

2 Corinthians Chapter 12

1. It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord:

A. It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast

1. **not profitable**- Gr. *sumphero ou*- *to help, be profitable, be expedient*

a. Boasting has never helped anyone. To make a point, Paul will boast.

3. **boast**- Gr. *kauchaomai*

B. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord

1. **come**- Gr. *erchomai*

2. **visions**- Gr. *optasia*- *a sight, a vision, an appearance presented to one whether asleep or awake*

a. There are four different types of visions in the Bible.

i. **Spiritual vision**- Your eyes are closed, you know where you are, and see something from the Spirit. [Acts 9:12](#) [We know Paul's eyes were closed because he could not see at the time]

ii. **Open vision**- Your eyes are open, you know where you are, and you see something in the natural realm from the Spirit that others can't see. [Acts 12:8-10](#)

iii. **Trance**- You lose all sense of where you are and see something from the Spirit. [Acts 11:5](#)

iv. **Night/Dream visions**- You see something from the Spirit in a dream. [Is. 29:7](#)

3. **revelations**- Gr. *apokalupsis*- *manifestation, appearance, spiritual enlightenment*

1. Visions are where you see things supernaturally. Revelations are where you know things supernaturally.

2. Many of these revelations found their way into the Bible.

4. **Lord**- Gr. *kurios*

1. This includes visions where Jesus appeared to him, but also visions from the Lord that gave him spiritual insight.

2. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was

caught up to the third heaven.

A. I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago

1. **know-** Gr. **eido-** *to know fully or accurately*

a. Paul knew this fully and accurately because he is referring to himself. Up until now Paul had been speaking strictly of his own qualifications, so it would not fit the context if he then switched and started speaking of someone other than himself.

2. **in Christ**

a. In Christ means he was born again at the time and does not refer to a time when he was unsaved.

3. **fourteen years-** Gr. **dekatessares etos**

a. Fourteen years before the writing of 2 Corinthians would be around A.D. 40, close to the beginning of Paul's ministry. This event could have occurred when Paul was stoned and left for dead in Lystra during Paul's first missionary journey.

B. whether in the body I do not know,

1. **body-** Gr. **soma**

2. **know-** Gr. **eido-** *to know fully or accurately*

a. At the time he was having this vision he did not know if he was in his body or not.

C. or whether out of the body I do not know,

1. This shows that our spirit when it leaves our body looks much like our physical body. Paul could tell he had a bodily form but did not know if it was his physical body or spiritual body.

D. God knows

1. **knows-** Gr. **eido**

a. God knows if Paul was in his body or out of it.

E. such a one was caught up to the third heaven

1. **such a one**

a. Paul uses this phrase to exhibit a level of humility in the midst of his boasting.

2. **caught up-** Gr. **harpazo-** *to seize, carry off by force*

a. Paul experienced a private rapture in which he was caught up into heaven. He returned and lived out his natural life and then died.

b. Notice Paul was caught up, he did not go up of his own desire and volition. Spiritual experiences such as this should

never be sought. If God wants to do this for his purpose then fine, but don't seek them. Satan can deceive with "spiritual experiences".

c. *Rev 4:1 After these things I looked, and behold, **a door standing open in heaven**. And the first voice which I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, "**Come up here**, and I will show you things which must take place after this."*

i. John was invited to come up and was greeted with an open door. He did not knock on or kick open this door.

3. third heaven- Gr. tritos ouranos

a. There are three heavens: the atmosphere surrounding the earth, the universe, and then the place of God's abode.

b. This heaven is God's abode.

3. And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows—

A. And I know such a man--

1. **know-** Gr. **eido-** *to know fully or accurately*

a. Paul knew this man very well because he was the man!

2. **man-** Gr. **anthropos**

a. *Why does he use the third person? Because Paul, in describing this remarkable spiritual experience, is describing just the kind of thing that the "super apostles" among the Corinthian Christians would glory in. When he described his humble experiences in 2Co 11:23-30, he did not hesitate to write in the first person. No one would think he was glorifying himself as the "super apostles" did. But here, he walks more carefully. He is doing everything he can to relate this experience without bringing glory to himself. -David Guzik Commentary*

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

1. **body-** Gr. **soma**

a. It is interesting to note that Paul repeats this twice, once in the previous verse, and now in this verse. Why? The reason probably was because the Corinthians would have been very curious to know this particular point. The reason why is because of the prevailing Greek philosophy of the day which

taught that physical matter was evil, and spirit was good and they had no interaction with each other. Paul here is saying that his body could have gone into the spirit realm but did not know if that actually happened or not.

2. **know-** Gr. **eido**

C. **God knows---**

1. **knows-** Gr. **eido**

4. **how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.**

A. **how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words,**

1. **caught up-** Gr. **harpazo-** *to seize, carry off by force*

a. Again, Paul was caught up, he did not go up of his own desire or volition.

2. **Paradise-** Gr. **paradeisos-** *a pleasure-park, a garden of trees of various kinds; used in the LXX for the Garden of Eden; in NT the celestial paradise*

a. Here we see that Paradise is now in the third heaven.

Paradise used to be under the earth. This is where believers in the OT went. Jesus told the thief on the cross, "Today you will be with me in Paradise." [Luke 23:43](#) When Jesus died, he went down into the lower parts of the earth before He went up into heaven after the third day. This place of Paradise was also called Abraham's bosom. [Luke 16:22](#) When Jesus was raised from the dead, he emptied this compartment and transported Paradise and those in it into the third heaven.

3. **heard-** Gr. **akouo**

4. **inexpressible-** Gr. **arrhetos-** *unspeakable (on account of its sacredness)*

a. Paul could not even put into exact words what he heard and saw even if he wanted to.

5. **words-** Gr. **rhema-** *spoken words*

B. **which it is not lawful for a man to utter**

1. **not lawful-** Gr. **exesti ou-** *not permitted*

a. It is interesting to me that Paul had visited heaven and was not allowed to talk about what he heard and saw there. We have many that claim to have had similar visitations but write

books filled with what they heard and saw. I wonder why they are allowed to tell what they heard, and Paul was not allowed to. Makes me think....

2. **man**- Gr. **anthropos**

3. **utter**- Gr. **laleo**- *to speak*

5. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities.

A. Of such a one I will boast;

1. such a one

a. This is his modesty speaking.

2. boast- Gr. **kauchaomai**

B. yet of myself I will not boast,

1. of myself

a. *When boasting of weakness, the apostle didn't mind mentioning himself. But when boasting of visions and revelations of the Lord, he would not apply them directly to himself, but would rather speak of the experience impersonally as having occurred to some man he knew. He was not denying that he was the one who had the experience but was simply refusing to involve himself directly and personally. -Believer's Bible Commentary*

C. except in my infirmities

1. infirmities- Gr. **astheneia**- *weaknesses*

a. This does not refer to sicknesses, but weaknesses.

b. Most Christians are embarrassed by their weaknesses and try to conceal them. Paul said that he boasted in them! Why? Because he knew when he admitted his weaknesses to the Lord, but trusted in God's grace, that God's power would rest on him and God would get the glory when he overcame them.

[2 Cor. 12:9-10](#)

6. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me *to be* or hears from me.

A. For though I might desire to boast,

1. desire- Gr. **thelo**

a. There is always a desire in the flesh to boast of oneself.

2. **boast**- Gr. **kauchaomai**

B. I will not be a fool,

1. **fool**- Gr. **aphron**- *out of one's mind*

a. People who brag on themselves are out of their mind. Everything we are and have are gifts of grace not inherent attributes.

C. for I will speak the truth

1. **speak**- Gr. **laleo**

2. **truth**- Gr. **aletheia**

a. *"Whatever I should say on this subject would be the simple truth. I should mention nothing which has not actually occurred."* - Barnes Commentary

D. But I refrain,

1. **refrain**- Gr. **pheidomai**- *to spare*

E. lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me.

1. **think**- Gr. **logizomai**- *to reckon, esteem, count*

2. **sees**- Gr. **blepo**

a. Fame comes from either what people sees firsthand about you, or what they hear about you.

3. **hears**- Gr. **akouo**

7. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

A. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations,

1. **exalted above measure**- Gr. **huperairomai**- *to be lifted up higher or above*

a. This verse is one of the most misinterpreted and misunderstood verses in the entire bible.

b. Most people take this Greek word to mean *to be proud and self-exalting*. This is not the case. The word simply means *to be lifted up higher or above* other things.

c. This verse is saying that the revelations Paul received would cause him to be lifted up and exalted above others so that he

would be conspicuous to everyone around him. The revelations would exalt him in the eyes of everyone. This exaltation would cause the gospel to reach further and to more people. To stop this Satan put a plan into action.

2. **abundance**- Gr. **hyperbole**- *a throwing beyond, superiority, excellence, pre-eminence, beyond measure*

3. **revelations**- Gr. **apokalupsis**- *a disclosure of spiritual enlightenment*

a. A close look at all of Paul's letters, you see an abundance of revelations.

B. a thorn in the flesh was given to me,

1. **thorn**- Gr. **skolops**

a. Many get it wrong when trying to pin-point what this thorn was. Many say it was physical sickness. There is absolutely no grounds to make this assertion at all!

b. What is this thorn? Let's let the Bible interpret the Bible!

Thorns are ones that persecute and harass you!

i. **Num 33:55** But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain *shall be* irritants in your eyes and **thorns** in your sides, and **they shall harass you** in the land where you dwell.

ii. **Jos 23:13** know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and **thorns** in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

iii. **Jdg 2:3** Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be **thorns** in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.' "

c. The thorn here is a messenger that followed Paul wherever he went stirring up persecution against him and harassing him at every turn.

2. **flesh**- Gr. **sarx**

3. **given**- Gr. **didomi**

a. This thorn was given from a source. Most people get the

source of it wrong. They say the source of the thorn was from God. The source is not God, but Satan. The rest of this verse proves that point very clearly.

C. a messenger of Satan to buffet me,

1. messenger- Gr. **aggelos-** *angel or messenger*

a. A messenger is sent from someone. It is vitally important to get the right source this messenger was sent from.

b. Next, please see that the thorn is **a MESSENGER-** a messenger is always **A PERSON!** It is not a thing, so it could not be sickness!

c. This was a fallen spirit sent to harass Paul.

2. Satan- Gr. **satanas-** *The adversary*

a. Here we **CLEARLY** see who sent this messenger- It was **SATAN**, not **GOD!** I simply do not see how people get this wrong and say it was from God.

3. buffet- Gr. **kolaphizo-** *to beat with the fist, to maltreat, treat with violence*

a. This Greek word is in the present tense which means a repeated experience of affliction.

b. We saw from the word "thorn" above in context this is speaking of persecution not sickness. Wherever Paul went this Satanic messenger stirred up persecution against Paul.

D. lest I be exalted above measure

1. exalted above measure- Gr. **huperairomai-** *to lift up higher or above*

a. Most people say that the thorn was given to Paul so he would not get too proud. Let's put on our thinking caps for a moment. Would Satan send a messenger against you to keep you humble and not get proud? God gives grace and exalts the humble. Proverbs tells us that pride goes before a fall. Satan wants us to be proud! He would never want us to be humble.

b. Again, Satan sent a messenger to stir up persecution against Paul to shut him up from sharing the revelations he had received lest his ministry be exalted very high for all to see and he then lose many in his kingdom to the kingdom of God.

8. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart

from me.

A. **this thing**- Gr. *of this one*

1. This thing is a bad translation. It should read "of this **ONE**".

B. **pleaded**- Gr. **parakaleo**- *to beseech*

C. **three times**- Gr. **tris**

1. Paul prayed like most Christians here. We often pray for things we don't like in our life to depart so we have an easier go of it.

2. Often we pray for problems to go away, but God wants us to tap into His grace to overcome them.

3. He asked three times for this spirit to depart. I don't know if he first tried God the Father, then God the Son, and then God the Holy Spirit. Just kidding.

D. **depart**- Gr. **aphistemi**- *to stand off, withdraw*

1. Instead of the translation- "**it** might depart from me", this should be translated- "**that he** stand off from me for good." -Robertson's Word Pictures [Greek commentary]

9. **And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.**

A. **And He said to me,**

1. This was the reply of God the Father to whom all prayer is directed and answered.

2. God does not always respond in a way we desire Him to.

B. **My grace is sufficient for you,**

1. **grace**- Gr. **charis**- *unmerited favor, free endowment*

a. In this case we see what form of grace was given. It was a free endowment of power to enable Paul to do what he could not do in the natural.

2. **sufficient**- Gr. **arkeo**- *to be possessed of unfailing strength, to be enough*

a. God's grace will not "become" sufficient for us but **IS** sufficient for us. This brings out that grace must be accessed in the now moment by faith.

C. **for My strength is made perfect in weakness**

1. **strength**- Gr. **dunamis**- *power*

2. **made perfect**- Gr. **teleiōo**- *to carry through completely, to*

*accomplish, finish, bring to an end, to bring to the end (goal)
proposed*

a. The strength of God does not find its goal until it is covering over your weakness.

3. weakness- Gr. **astheneia**

a. Often we beg God to remove our weakness, but God wants to rest over your weakness with His power and carry you over it.

b. Illust. When floating down a river sometimes the river is very low and there is not enough water for your boat to float down without getting stuck on the rocks on the riverbed. Instead of removing the rocks, you just need more water to flow that will carry you over the rocks! This is what God does with His grace.

D. Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities,

1. gladly- Gr. **hedista-** *with pleasure*

a. Paul took pleasure in his weaknesses, not so he could indulge his flesh, but because he was a candidate to experience God's power and victory!

2. boast- Gr. **kauchoami**

a. Most Christians are mortified and extremely embarrassed about their weaknesses and try to hide them and overcome them by their own energy. Paul was the opposite. He boasted and took pleasure in them, not so he would experience defeat by them, but that he could exchange his weakness for God's power and overcome them by the power of God. This brings God glory.

3. infirmities- Gr. **astheneia**

E. that the power of Christ may rest upon me

1. power- Gr. **dunamis**

a. We see this Greek word used twice in this verse and translated two different ways- strength, power

b. The power of Christ brings forth the fruit of the Spirit in undefeatable strength.

2. rest upon- Gr. **episkeno-** *to fix a tent or habitation on*

a. Most Christians experience God's power very infrequently, usually when they are really challenged, and they seek God for

grace. However, we can live with God's power resting over us on a consistent basis. We need to walk in God's grace, not just seek God's grace every once and a while.

b. In the OT there was first the tabernacle tent and then the permanent temple building. The first tabernacle represents Jesus earthly ministry and the latter his eternal fixed reign. Also, the same applies to us. We first have a physical body that is referred to as a tent. Afterwards, we will receive a permanent resurrection body. The power of God will tabernacle over our mortal weak body for God's purposes to be fulfilled in this life. Once we have a resurrection body, we will have God's power incorporated into our new body and it will remain.

c. The tabernacle was erected in the wilderness. It provided shade and respite from the harsh desert conditions. Likewise, the power of Christ will provide respite from the harsh conditions of this life.

10. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

A. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities,

1. take pleasure- Gr. **eudokeo-** *to be well pleased*

a. To be honest I have not gotten to Paul's level yet. I am not yet well pleased when I face the things listed in this scripture. If you are not either, you also have room to grow in the things of God!

b. We can rejoice knowing that is on the other side of the suffering in God's will. [1Pe 4:13](#); [1Pe 4:14](#)

2. infirmities- Gr. **astheneia**

B. in reproaches,

1. reproaches- Gr. **hubris-** *a wrong springing from insolence, an injury, affront, insult*

C. in needs,

1. needs- Gr. **anagke-** *necessity, imposed either by the circumstances, or by law of duty regarding to one's advantage, custom, argument*

D. in persecutions,

1. **persecutions-** Gr. **diogmos**

a. We are not redeemed from persecutions. [2Ti 3:12](#)

E. in distresses,

1. **distresses-** Gr. **stenochoria-** *narrowness of space, constriction*

F. for Christ's sake

1. This phrase is key to this verse. If we are facing these things because of our own carnal decisions, then we can't be well-pleased in them. However, when we are in the will of God doing what He has told us to do and face these, we can experience from the Lord His pleasure over us.

2. Jesus foretold his disciples that they would be mistreated for His name sake. [Joh 15:21](#)

E. For when I am weak, then I am strong

1. **weak-** Gr. **astheneo**

a. When I am weak and put my faith in God's grace then I experience His strength. God gets the glory. [2Co 4:7](#)

2. **strong-** Gr. **dunatos-** *to be able or capable*

a. God's grace makes us capable to doing God's will no matter what it is. [Php 4:13](#)

11. I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing.

A. I have become a fool in boasting;

1. **fool-** Gr. **aphron-** *out of one's mind*

2. **boasting-** Gr. **kauchomai**

B. you have compelled me

1. **compelled-** Gr. **anagkazo-** *to necessitate*

a. The only reason Paul boasted of his accomplishments was it was necessary to wake up the Corinthians to the empty boasting of the false teachers and even of themselves.

C. For I ought to have been commended by you;

1. **commended-** Gr. **sunistao-** *to present for favorable regard*

D. for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles,

1. **behind-** Gr. **hustereo-** *lacking*

a. Paul did not lack in any graces or signs that accompanied a true apostle of the Lord. vs. 12; [1Co 15:10](#)

2. **eminent**- Gr. **huper lian**- *over much*

a. This would be the apostles of the Lamb- notably Peter, James, and John.

b. I believe Paul was God's replacement choice for Judas, not Matthias.

3. **apostles**- Gr. **apostolos**- *sent ones*

E. though I am nothing.

1. **nothing**- Gr. **oudeis**- *no one*

a. It was God's grace that enabled Paul to function in such a lofty office and calling. Apart from Christ, Paul was the chief of sinners.

12. Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

A. Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance,

1. **signs**- Gr. **semeion**- *a sign, mark, token; portent, i.e. an unusual occurrence, transcending the common course of nature*

a. In the OT, God sent Moses to Israel, but gave him corresponding signs to prove he was sent by God to them. Likewise, in the NT, an apostle sent by God will have corresponding signs to prove they were sent by God.

b. When God calls a man or woman, He gives them abilities and anointings that give proof of their call.

2. **apostle**- Gr. **apostolos**- *sent one*

a. Paul was sent by God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, not by a man or men.

3. **accomplished**- Gr. **katergazomai**- *to perform, accomplish, achieve*

a. These signs were like mighty acts to be performed like Elijah with the prophets of Baal in calling down fire from heaven.

b. Paul performed miracles, signs, and wonders. [Act 13:11](#); [Act 14:10](#); [Act 19:11-12](#)

4. **perseverance**- Gr. **hupomone**- *to remain under pressure*

a. Every time Paul performed signs to prove God sent him, Satan would put more pressure on him. Paul did not buckle under the pressure.

B. in signs and wonders and mighty deeds

1. **signs**- Gr. **semeion**- *a sign, mark, token; portent, i.e. an unusual occurrence, transcending the common course of nature*
 - a. A sign always points to something. NT signs should point to Jesus.
2. **wonders**- Gr. **teras**- *"something strange," causing the beholder to marvel, is always used in the plural*
 - a. Wonders are to catch people's attention so they can hear or receive what God has for them.
 - b. The burning bush was a wonder that caught Moses attention so he would turn aside and hear from God.
3. **mighty deeds**- Gr. **dunamis**- *works of power*
 - a. Miracles, signs, and wonders are works of God power in the earth.

13. For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!

A. For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches,

1. **inferior**- Gr. **hettao**- *to hold a thing inferior, set below*

2. **churches**- Gr. **eklessia**

- a. Paul did not deal with the church of Corinth only by not asking for financial support while he was there. This was his practice among all the churches that he ministered at.

B. except that I myself was not burdensome to you?

1. **burdensome**- Gr. **katanarkao**- *to be burdensome or a dead weight to someone*

- a. Unlike the false teachers among them.
- b. Sometimes you can't please people no matter what you do. Paul did not demand any money from the Corinthians, and some found fault in this.

C. Forgive me this wrong

1. **forgive**- Gr. **charizomai**- *to graciously pardon*

2. **wrong**- Gr. **adikia**- *injustice*

- a. This is strong sarcasm. This would be a sort of slap in the face of the Corinthians to wake them up.

14. Now *for* the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not

to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

A. Now for the third time I am ready to come to you.

1. third time- Gr. tritos

a. *On his first visit to Corinth, Paul founded the church and stayed a year and six months ([Act 18:11](#)). His second visit was a brief, painful visit in between the writing of 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians ([1Co 16:7](#)). Now he is prepared to come for a third time.* -David Guzik Commentary

2. ready- Gr. hetoimos

a. In the ministry you always need to be ready to do the will of God. If you are not ready you can miss God's timing!

B. And I will not be burdensome to you;

1. burdensome- Gr. katanarkao

a. A minister should never be a burden to the people of God, but always a blessing to them. If you are minister don't be demanding. Always seek how to leave the people better off than when you met them.

C. for I do not seek yours,

1. seek- Gr. zeteo

a. Some ministers are in the ministry for the things they can get from people. This is not the heart of Jesus.

D. but you

1. A true minister of God seeks the benefit of the people they minister to, not what they can get from them, even if it is praise and acceptance. [1Co 10:33](#)

E. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents,

1. children- Gr. teknon

a. A minister should raise up spiritual children, not just pass on information.

b. There are many teachers in the body of Christ, but not many fathers. What is the difference between a teacher and a father? A teacher passes along information, but a spiritual father passes along their spiritual DNA. [1Co 4:15](#)

2. lay up- Gr. thesaurizo- *to treasure up*

a. A minister is to treasure up the vast wealth of the Word in order to give it out to those they minister to. [1Co 10:24](#) The treasures of the Word of God are not just for you, but for you

to pass on to the next generation.

3. parents- Gr. goneus

a. A parent will sometimes bring correction out of love. NT correction is what you do for someone, not what you do to someone. In this letter Paul was bringing strong correction as a father does to wayward children. This was because he loved them. [1Co 4:14](#)

F. but the parents for the children

1. A parent is to lay up enough for them in their life and extra to leave the next generation. [Pro 19:14](#) It is sad that some people don't lay up for themselves later in life and their kids have to sustain them fully. This is opposite to God's will. You should lay up enough for yourself late in life and enough to give to the next generation. This does not mean we should not take care of our parents if needed. We commanded in the Word to do so if need be.

[1 Tim. 5:16](#)

15. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

A. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you souls;

1. **gladly-** Gr. **hedista-** *with pleasure*

2. **spend-** Gr. **dapanao-** *to incur expense*

a. When you love someone it is a pleasure to spend on them. If what you spend is not based on love, you will regret every bit spent and end up being miserly.

3. **be spent-** Gr. **ekdapanao-** *to exhaust by expending, to spend wholly, use up*

4. **souls-** Gr. **psuche**

a. Paul put his whole soul into ministering to others- his mind, his will, and all his emotions. [1Th 2:8](#)

b. It is a joy to sacrifice for the ones you love. Paul speaks of this in his ministry. [Php 2:17](#), [Col 1:24](#)

c. Some ministers will share what they know, but they won't share themselves. They keep their heart closed off from those they are trying to minister to. This does not work well. Give the people both what you know and your heart. Sometimes, in giving your heart you can get hurt, but we need to trust God to

protect and heal our heart. If you close your heart off to protect yourself from any bad things getting in, you also close off your heart to the good things that God wants to send you.

B. though the more abundantly I love you,

1. **abundantly**- Gr. **perissoteros**

2. **love**- Gr. **agape**

a. The love of God gives with no expectation or demand for any return. Human love will turn ugly if it is not reciprocated.

b. In the ministry you need to serve out of God's love. If you serve out of human love, you will sour when all you do is not appreciated or if you are insulted by those you are trying to help.

C. the less I am loved

1. **less**- Gr. **hetton**

a. It is a sad fact, that sometimes the more you do for someone the more they will turn on you in the end. I don't understand how that happens, but I have seen it happen a number of times.

16. But be that *as it may*, I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning!

A. But be that as it may,

1. That the more I love you, the less you love me.

B. I did not burden you.

1. **burden**- Gr. **katabareo**

a. Paul worked for his own up keep.

C. Nevertheless,

D. being crafty,

1. **crafty**- Gr. **panourgos**- *ready to do anything; hence, crafty, cunning, artful, wily*

a. *Here is Paul at his sarcastic self again. He was being accused by some among the Corinthian Christians of **being crafty**. Their accusation probably went like this: "Sure, Paul won't take any support money from you. But he will trick you by taking the collection, supposedly for the Jerusalem Christians, and putting it in his own pocket." In response, Paul said, "You bet I'm **being crafty**! I've **caught you with guile** and tricked you superbly!" -*

David Guizik Commentary

E. I caught you by cunning

1. **caught**- Gr. **lambano**

2. **cunning**- Gr. **dolos**- *a bait or contrivance for entrapping, fraud, deceit, cunning, guile*

a. This sarcasm by Paul.

17. Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you?

A. **take advantage**- Gr. **pleonekteo**- *to have more than another; to take advantage of; to overreach, make gain of*

1. Some possibly were claiming that those who Paul sent to Corinth to collect the offering for Jerusalem were there to take advantage of them and give Paul what they took.

2. They walked in the same spirit and way that Paul did. They were not a burden to the people.

B. **sent**- Gr. **apostello**- *to send forth a messenger, agent, message, or command*

1. This was Titus and an unnamed brother.

18. I urged Titus, and sent our 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?

A. **I urged Titus,**

1. **Titus**- means "*nurse*"

a. Titus was sent by Paul into critical situations and brought healing and health to what was sick and dying.

B. **and sent our brother with him.**

1. **sent**- Gr. **sunapostello**- *to send together with*

2. **brother**- Gr. **adelphos**

a. This brother is unknown.

C. **Did Titus take advantage of you**

1. **take advantage**- Gr. **pleonekteo**

D. **Did we not walk in the same spirit**

1. **walk**- Gr. **peripateo**

2. **same spirit**- Gr. **autos pneuma**

a. This was a spirit of humility and servanthood.

E. **Did we not walk in the same steps**- *to have more than another; to take advantage of; to overreach, make gain of*

1. **same steps**- Gr. **autos ichnos**- *a footprint, track, footstep*
 - a. You must walk in the same spirit to walk in the same steps. The spirit you are of determines what steps you take and in what direction.
 - b. The steps Paul took came out of the spirit of humility and servanthood he had. One of these steps was to work while he was with the Corinthians and not to become a financial burden on them. He was there to serve them, not to be served.

19. Again, do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? We speak before God in Christ. But *we do* all things, beloved, for your edification.

A. Again,

B. do you think that we excuse ourselves to you?

1. **excuse**- Gr. **apologeomai**- *to defend one's self*
 - a. What Paul said here in this chapter was for the Corinthian's benefit, not out of need to defend themselves.

C. We speak before God in Christ

1. **speak**- Gr. **laleo**

- a. There is only one person's opinion of us that matters in the end and it is God. If we are grounded in His opinion of us, it matters little of what others think about us. [1 Cor. 4:3](#)
- b. Our only safe standing before God is in Christ.

D. But we do all things,

E. beloved- Gr. **agapetos**

1. In the New Covenant, all correction should come out of love, not out of wrath or anger.
2. Paul uses this word to the Corinthian saints five times. Five speaks of grace. We are beloved by God by grace not our works.

F. for your edification

1. **edification**- Gr. **oikodome**

- a. This is one of the steps Paul walked in due to the spirit of humility and servanthood he possessed.
- b. A servant led person will do things that edify others. Someone who is self-seeking will do things that benefit themselves.

20. For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and *that* I

shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest *there be* contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults;

A. **For I fear lest,**

1. This was not a fear born out of his own insecurity, but a fear for them.

B. **when I come,**

1. We do not have a record of this last visit of Paul to Corinth or its outcome.

C. **I shall not find you such as I wish,**

1. **find-** Gr. **heurisko**

- a. He had been a way for a good while and would find them in their present condition.

2. **wish-** Gr. **thelo**

- a. Paul wanted to find them in peace, walking in unity, serving one another in love, and standing in faith in the Lord Jesus.
- b. Paul will list out things in this verse that come out of the flesh. They are signs of immaturity.

D. **and that I shall be found by you such as you do not wish**

1. That is Paul being harsh in correcting them.

E. **lest there be contentions,**

1. **contentions-** Gr. **eris-** *contention, strife, wrangling*

- a. Paul talks about these in 1 Corinthians. These may have still been present.

F. **jealousies-** Gr. **zelos**

1. Paul addressed this in the area of different giftings in 1 Corinthians. This may have still been present.

G. **outbursts of wrath-** Gr. **thumos-** *passion, angry, heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again*

H. **selfish ambitions-** Gr. **eritheia-** *electioneering or intriguing for office*

1. This is called "church politics".

I. **backbitings-** Gr. **katalalia-** *speaking against*

1. This is public and out loud.
2. Backbiting can lead to being a hater of God! [Rom 1:30](#)

J. **whisperings-** Gr. **psithurismos-** *a whispering, i.e. secret slandering*

1. This is private and quiet. This kind of speaking can be worse than the public loud kind.

k. **conceits**- Gr. **psusiosis**- *a puffing up of soul, loftiness, pride*

1. Contention only comes by pride. [Prov. 13:10](#)

l. **tumults**- Gr. **akatastasia**- *instability, a state of disorder, disturbance, confusion*

1. Where strife and envy are there is confusion and every evil work.

[Jas 3:16](#)

2. God is not the author of confusion. [1Co 14:33](#)

21. lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

A. **lest,**

B. **when I come again,**

1. **come again**- This will be his third visit.

C. **my God will humble me among you,**

1. **humble**- Gr. **tapeinoo**- *to lay low*

a. *Paul had already told the Corinthians that he was concerned that he might be humiliated when he came to Corinth. Some Macedonian Christians were accompanying him. If Paul found the church in disorder and the Corinthians refusing to participate in the Jerusalem collection, then Paul would be humiliated in the presence of the devout Christians from Macedonia (see [2Co 9:3-5](#)). Paul hinted here that finding the Corinthian congregation in disorder would mean more than his own humiliation. He would also have to **grieve** over those who stubbornly refused to repent of their sins. -David Guizik Commentary*

D. **and I shall mourn for many who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness,**

1. **mourn**- Gr. **pentheo**- *to lament, be sad, grieve, mourn*

a. You mourn for the dead. These saints were living like the dead among the living. [Rev. 3:1](#) They would soon actually die if they did not repent of their sins.

2. **sinned**- Gr. **proamartano**

3. **repented**- Gr. **metanoeo**- *to change the mind*

a. True repentance does not begin with the actions, but with changing one's mind. That leads to a change of course and

action.

4. **uncleanness**- Gr. **akatharsia**

E. **fornication**- Gr. **porneia**- *illicit sexual intercourse*

1. We get the word porn from this word.

F. **and lewdness which they have practiced.**

1. **lewdness**- Gr. **aselgeia**- *unrestraint*

2. **practiced**- Gr. **prasso**- *to exercise, practice, to be busy with, carry on*

a. The answer to these sins is to walk in the Spirit. [Col. 3:1-5](#)