II CORINTHIANS 1:1-24

Problems with worldliness, internal quarreling and doctrinal desertion from allegiance continue to fester in spite of Paul’s efforts in the first epistle. And also opposition to Paul’s ministry continues to mount. Paul starts of his letter in 2nd Corinthians 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ— “Apostle” means that he has been called to be a messenger, an ambassador, a witness, a teacher, a missionary, a messenger of God. One of the very first things that Paul stresses is his apostleship in his greeting. Some of the Corinthian believers were questioning and denying Paul’s call by God. …by the will of God,— He has been chosen by God to work for God. His life work is not due to men; it’s not even due to his own choice. It’s due to God and God alone. God is to be the source of the believer’s call. …and timothy our brother,— Paul calls Timothy “our brother” which means brother in Christ. Timothy was a young man who had been led to the Lord at a very early age. Paul had sensed God’s call upon Timothy’s life, so Paul encouraged him to give his life to the ministry. God is the source of brotherhood among believers. Timothy is with Paul in the district of Macedonia (probably the city of Philippi) while Paul is writing this letter to the Corinthians. …unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:— God is the source of the church and the source of all saints. Paul is not only writing to the church at Corinth, but to all the other churches in Achaia. He knew that writing would help all the churches, so he wanted the letter to be circulated among them all.

(2nd) 1:2 Grace be to you and peace from— For Paul, grace usually precedes peace. God is the source of grace and peace. Until one has received the grace of God he can know nothing of His peace. Grace is the infinite love of God that enables Him to pour out infinite favor on the object loved without receiving anything in return. …God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. He links the Father and the Son thus affirming the deity of Christ. The reference is to the eternal Father and the Incarnate Son.

(2nd) 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;— Continuing in his greeting or introduction of second letter to the Corinthians, Paul makes it plain that God is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. Paul can say that because of Jesus Christ! “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...” A father could show no greater mercy than to give the life of His Son to save others. This is exactly what God did. He gave Christ to die for His enemies; for those who were in rebellion against Him. God had mercy upon us, and He continues to have mercy upon us. His nature is that of a Father. The word “mercies” means compassion; pity; it means looking upon people in need and having concern and kindness upon them. The word “comfort” means to be by the side of another; to relieve and support; give solace, consolation, and encouragement. There is also the idea of strength, an enablement, a confidence. It consoles and relieves a person, but it also strengthens him at the same time. It charges a person to go out and face the world. He says blessed is God; thanks be to God!

(2nd) 1:4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God, The word “tribulation” means to be http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html
weighed down exceedingly; to be pressed and crushed. Even in tribulation they have a God who comforts them and then they are able to comfort another in trouble. How? - By the comfort of God. We have to remember that God comforts us as well.

- God comforts the sufferer so that he might be a testimony to other sufferers.
- God carries us through trials so that we can carry others through trials.
- God strengthens us so that we can strengthen others.
- God encourages us so that we can encourage others.

Because you were comforted by God, you are able to comfort others during their times of tribulations.

(2nd) 1:5 For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. God matches the comfort to equal the sufferings. Christ bore every kind of suffering imaginable, even the suffering of death. What He went through enables us to know that we can go through. It is about His sufferings. When we suffer in the Will of God, we are sharing the sufferings of the Savior. This does not refer to the sufferings on the cross, for only Jesus could die as a sinless substitute for us. So, as the sufferings increase, so does the supply of God’s grace. James 4:6a says, “But He giveth more grace…” It’s like a river overflowing and overflowing with God’s grace! God has ample grace for our every need, but He will not give it in advance. Paul went through many struggles:

- being born to an unwed mother (Mt.1:18-19)
- being born to poor parents (Lk.2:24)
- having His life threatened as a baby (Mt.2:13)
- being the cause of unimaginable sorrow (Mt.2:16)
- having to be moved and shifted as a baby (Mt.2:13)
- being reared in a despicable place, Nazareth (Lk.2:39)
- having His father die during His youth (Mt.13:53-58)
- having no home, not even a place to lay His head (Mt.8:20; Lk.9:58)
- being hated and opposed by religionists (Mt.14:1-2)
- being tried before the high court of the land on the charge of treason (Jh.18:33)
- being executed by crucifixion, the worst possible death (Jh.19:16).

Christ stooped to the lowest point of human experience in every condition. He can now identify with and feel for any person’s circumstance. No matter how terrible it may be, God showers us with the comfort of His Son. He does not just give us some strength and comfort to bear the suffering; He gives us all the strength and comfort necessary to handle all the suffering.

(2nd) 1:6 And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. Whatever hardships Paul endured was for the sake of eternal salvation of his converts. It made for the encouragement of their salvation. One thing we have to remember is that we cannot save ourselves. It is by the grace of God through faith in Christ Jesus, but they needed encouragement, consolation (comfort) which was capable enough for them to endure the same sufferings Paul and others had suffered. The bottom line is: whether they are afflicted or whether they are comforted, it is for their good. Note that both the affliction and the comfort are for the same purposes. God uses both suffering and comfort in a believer to stir four things in other believers. He does not place suffering upon you, but He uses or He allows suffering. What glory would God get? For you see all suffering was placed upon Jesus at the cross. To ‘share the pains of Christ’ does not mean that His pains were not enough. It means that we suffer because we follow him. It would be null and void for what Jesus has already done if we had to be afflicted for what Christ went through!

1. God uses suffering to stir consolation or comfort in others who suffer.
2. God uses suffering to stir salvation. A person cannot trust God today and not trust Him tomorrow.

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person cannot bless God when things are going well and curse God when things go bad. A person who truly believes in God trusts Him no matter the circumstance. He continues with God in the way of salvation no matter how great the suffering he has to bear.

(2nd) 1:7 And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation. Our hope is that we try to spare the younger ones to avoid such sufferings, but we cannot, they need to experience the suffering so they can experience the comfort! Paul’s hope was steadfast and enduring for them. We are all partakers of suffering and also partakers of comfort.

3. God uses suffering to stir endurance.
4. God uses suffering to stir sharing among believers. You have nothing to share unless you go through something. “If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord of one mind” Phil.2:1-2.

(2nd) 1:8 For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life:— Paul is talking about the afflictions that had come upon he an those with him. He does not want them to be ignorant of the trouble which came to them in Asia. They were oppressed out of measure; they were weighed down exceedingly; they were crushed far beyond what they could stand, insomuch that they despared even of life; gave up; lost hope; didn’t see any light at the end of the tunnel. Paul really broke it down to them. He allowed Paul, probably the greatest missionary of all time to experience suffering time and time again. Why does God allow His dear servant to go through such suffering?

5. God uses suffering to teach trust.
And note the intensity of the trouble.

1. Paul’s life was threatened by a huge angry mob led by Demetrius the silversmith (Acts 19:23-40).
2. Paul knew the trouble that awaited him in Asia (Acts 20:18-27)
3. Paul says Priscilla and Aquilla… risked their lives for him (Rom.16:3-4)
4. Paul says Andronicus and Junia…were his fellow prisoners (Rom.16:7)
5. Paul expresses the great victory experience through terrifying trials (1 Cor.4:9-13)
6. Paul fought with beasts at Ephesus (1 Cor.15:32)
7. Paul says he was crushed by some fearful burden which made him despair of life itself (2 Cor.1:8-10)
8. Paul expresses an extremely anxious mood while the memory of his days at Ephesus was still vivid (2 Cor.4:8-12).
9. Paul lists his terrifying trials. Clement of Rome says…..seven times in bonds (2 Cor.11:23-27)
10. Paul at some point while a prisoner in Rome experienced some sorrow so great that it threatened to crush him into a frightening despair (Phil.2:27).

(2nd) 1:9 But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:— Paul lets them know that in his circumstances due to external pressures and physical limitations reached the point where the only way out, visible to them was death. Death was staring them in the face. They really couldn’t trust in themselves to get out of these circumstances, but it had to be in the God who is able to raise the dead. It had to be in the God they put their trust in.

(2nd) 1:10 Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver

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6. God allows suffering to teach a daily trust for deliverance.

Paul says:

(1) Who delivered (past)
(2) doth deliver (present)
(3) yet delivers (future). That’s shouting news!

Note, Paul says that God continued to deliver him through the trials of life and that he continued to trust God to deliver him. God recued them out of a terrible death! God preserved them from such a deadly peril! How? Because their hope was not in themselves, but in the God who raises the dead; who delivered; now delivers, and will deliver from death! I am excited! To trust God in such backed-up to the wall circumstances is to have astounding faith. Ask God He is able to give it to you. The challenges we go through may be small next to others challenges, but they will all need faith to believe in the God who is able to raise the dead!

(2nd) 1:11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf. Paul lets them know that together they help when they pray for him and others. He needed their prayers then, and in the future. Why? - Because the gift bestowed; the favor of blessings that God gives and Paul would receive in being delivered from death—when people pray. It is God’s underserved favor or divine answer to prayer. Many were able to give thanks on Paul’s behalf because of their prayers.

7. God uses suffering to teach prayer and thanksgiving.

Pray for pastors, teachers, missionaries, and others who are on the front lines of spreading the gospel. Anyone making a real difference for God will be challenged by Satan. When Satan sets a trap for God’s people, he is really setting the trap for himself because God is going to get the glory out of any circumstance the devil sets. “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” Rom.8:28.

SUMMARY:

1Paul teaches why it is necessary for the Christian to pass through fiery trials and how Christ is always merciful to us (1:3-4). There are some sufferings that we endure simply because we are human and subject to pain; but there are other sufferings that come because we are God’s children and are serving Him (1:5-6). The Corinthians were exposed to testings, not because they were especially wicked, but because tribulation is the portion of all believers and he knew they would be comforted by the Lord (1:7). Paul goes on to state that their sufferings were so horrible and so unbearable that death seemed certain, but it made them trust more in God as He saved them from death (1:8-10). He asks the Corinthians to pray for him (1:11). God has to work in us before He can work through us. In times of suffering, most of us are prone to think only of ourselves and to forget others. However, suffering can help us minister to others. Paul experienced trouble, not as punishment for something he had done but as preparation for something he was yet going to do in ministering to others in need (1:1-11)

APPLICATION:

This lesson spoke directly to me. “The effectual fervent prayers of a righteous man/woman avail much!” Those that care will pray for the sufferings of others and give comfort, will also receive the same because of the favor of God to give Him glory.

1 http://www.family-times.net/commentary/comfort-in-suffering/
http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html
(2nd) 1:12-14 Paul defends his integrity. Apparently the Corinthians (many new believers) accused Paul of lying when he did not visit them as promised, but he had to change his plans. But he was really sincere and honest in his dealings, for he depended upon the Lord for help, not in his fleshly wisdom. He tells them that he is forth-coming and there’s nothing written in between the lines. As they have partly understood the truth, Paul says one day they will understand in the Day of the Lord Jesus. Then they will be able to boast in and rejoice in him as he is rejoicing in them.

(2nd) 1:15-22 Paul explained that he had intended to visit them twice. The first visit would have been on his way from Ephesus to Macedonia. The second visit would have been on his return journey. He did not intend to change his mind when he made those plans. He did not make promises that he did not intend to keep. He was not fickle or indecisive in his plans as some might have thought. To clarify things, he says, God is true; He’s faithful; He can be relied on, therefore, the Good News they bring and deliver to them is not yes and no; it is true! As the truth of God stands, so does the word of the apostle. His change of plans is always in accord with the Will of God. Jesus is the Person about whom Timothy, Paul and Silas had preached. God says that Jesus is the ‘yes’ to all His promises. Jesus proves that all God’s promises are true. So when we pray by Jesus Christ we can say ‘Amen’. This is a Hebrew word that means ‘firm, steady, trustworthy’. We use it at the end of prayers. It shows that we agree with them. In this way, we give glory to God. ‘Standing firm’ in business meant that they would keep their promises. The mark of possession was a ‘seal.’ This was a piece of wax that they put on an official piece of paper. It showed who owned it. A ‘guarantee’ (certain promise) was a payment of part of a sum of money. This was a sign that the full amount would be paid in the future. God gives us the Holy Spirit to show that we belong to Him. The sealing of the Holy Spirit has a threefold significance in the New Testament: 1) to indicate ownership, 2) to indicate genuineness, and 3) to preserve and keep safe. The Holy Spirit Himself is the down-payment, or pledge, or redemption. The indwelling Spirit is the surety and the security of all that is to follow in the final salvation of the believer.

(2nd) 1:23 Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth. What should a minister do when he is under attack by some persons in the church? Paul faced the problem, accusing him of every conceivable weakness and fault, and it almost broke his heart. Some of the church had also become corrupt (morally and doctrinally)—living in sin—teaching contrary to the Word of God. Paul was the center of controversy, being heavily criticized and he felt it was best not to come. He stood no chance to minister to the people. Therefore, he delayed his trip to Corinth. Just as Jesus Christ came first to save His people rather than to judge the world, so too, Paul’s desire was not to cause any more sorrow among them, but come with joy instead of anguish. At this time it was best for the minister to spare the rod of discipline. He had the spiritual authority over their welfare, and would be forced to deal with their sin and shame. He waited instead for a report from Titus before taking further actions, hoping he would not have to come again, as he had earlier, to face their rebellion. He called God as his witness, for his soul shall answer to it.

(2nd) 1:24 Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand. Paul does not want to pull rank. He doesn’t wish to dictate to them in an authoritative way as he goes on to express that he or others does not have dominion over their faith; he does not control their spiritual lives; he is

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2 http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/2corinthians-lbw.htm
http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html
not a dictator to take authority over their behavior. What he means is that when he comes to them, he wants to be able to minister to them; to be a helper of their joy; work along with them; join them in their efforts to grow; to help them in fulfilling their joy in Christ. The Corinthians were not to stand firm because of Paul but stand firm in their faith in Christ. They had to make the effort. They were engulfed in controversy over Paul and in sin before God. Paul and the others wanted only to be helpers of their joy, as they stood in faith in Christ!

SUMMARY:

3The reason for Paul’s delayed visit to Corinth was to spare them, calling God a witness to his soul that he was telling the truth. He did not want to suggest an attitude of domination nor “pull rank” on them, for he views himself as one working for their joy. He acknowledges that they stand on the basis of their faith (1:23-24).

http://executableoutlines.com/2co/2co_01.htm
http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html
II CORINTHIANS 2:1-11

(2nd)2:1 But I determined this with myself, that I would not come again to you in heaviness. Paul said he determined; made a decision; resolved in his own mind that it was best for the minister to delay his trip at that time, so he would not cause pain; heaviness. He loved and cared for the people of Corinth and their church, but he just didn’t want to be the cause of more pain and hurt; therefore, staying away was the risk he took.

(2nd)2:2 For if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me?—So, Paul didn’t want to put them in a painful and embarrassing position. How would they then be free to bring pleasure and gladness to him if they are sorrowful? What point would it be for him to depress the very people who could give him joy? His coming would only cause gloom and heaviness to settle over the congregation because of the rumors and controversy about him. A minister’s presence should bring joy and cheer to a congregation, not conflict and stress. Jesus’ Words—John 16:33: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” There could be no gladness or joy until the rumors of Paul, and the sin stopped. It was best for the minister not to fight with those whom he loved.

(2nd)2:3 And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all. Paul had written a letter urging the church to put the Lord first and to quit the controversy. It was best for the minister not to be attacked and hurt time and again. His desire was that they would take care of these measures themselves, so that when he came, he would be able to rejoice in a congregation that acted obediently, and he would see that it had prompted repentant hearts and the restoration of those who had been disciplined. He longed to minister; not to have controversy and sin swirling around him, and certainly not in the church.

A leader has to be accountable and the people have to be accountable. Accountability is the standard or order in making right choices. An important part of being accountable is being truthful and making amends for your choices. When all, come together, accountability will bring joy.

(2nd)2:4 For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you. Affliction, anguish, and many tears, all characterized Paul’s emotional condition as he penned this letter to the Corinthians. It was best for the minister to write a strong appeal. Many say it was lost. He does not want them to be grieved, but to know the love he has for them. Sometimes others make choices that we know are wrong. If we ignore their behavior and let them continue, we aren’t showing love to them. We aren’t causing them to be accountable. Love mends and restores.

(2nd)2:5 But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. When a person within the church is causing trouble, what should the church do? Church discipline is the message. There was an offender; his name is not mentioned; but he is a person who is causing grief and pain for the whole church. Paul is just acknowledging the grief and its continued affects, not so much him, in part (to such a degree), but on the whole congregation.

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Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. Paul writes that it comes down to this: the man causing the mess has been punished enough by their united disapproval and discipline, and he does not want to be any harder on this man than what has already been done. Many churches will not deal with discipline; they overlook it; sweep it under the rug; don’t correct. True discipline is an evidence of love. But always make sure you go in love, and not in harshness. One has to be restored back to God in order to continue in God’s plan for their life.

So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Any believer who attacks God’s minister and disturbs the church must be corrected. It doesn’t stop there, after disciplinary actions, now it’s time to forgive (meaning to show it), and comfort them, lest one becomes so bitter and discouraged that they won’t be able to recover from this. This is all a part of the restoration process of a person.

1. The offending brother must be corrected not only for the sake of the church and the minister, but for his own sake.
2. The offending believer must be restored to the point that he loves God, the people of God; including the minister of God.

Note: the man here must have repented of his sin; he was gripped with sorrow for Paul to have said this. Therefore, the purpose of the discipline had been achieved and restoration was needed. There were four things involved in restoration: he had to repent (v. 7); they were to forgive (v.7); comfort (v.7), and they were to confirm their love (v.8). There is a point where discipline can go on too long and become destructive instead of corrective. Once the person has repented and demonstrated genuine sorrow, he is to be restored back into the fellowship of the church, thereby, causing accountability for all.

Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. Showing assurance and demonstrating their love toward the man was necessary. That means they were to go out of their way to show the man that he was loved. The discipline and correction were only to straighten out the mess and get everyone back on track of loving one another to minister for the Lord.

For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things. Paul wanted to know the proof; the evidence of their obedience. As long as the church allowed the man to continue his disturbance, the church could not focus on its mission and ministry. Allowing the controversy and division to rule meant they would still be complaining and arguing. But Paul’s aim in writing the letter was to see how they stood the test; whether they fully accepted his authority—being obedient in all things.

To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ;— Paul declares that forgiveness is the best way:

1. Paul had forgiven the man to help the church and himself. If a church refuses to forgive one who truly repents, the church is denying its very nature and purpose for existing (God’s existence in them).
2. Paul had forgiven the man for the sake of Christ. "In the person of Christ" means in the presence or face of Christ, that is, before Christ. Christ is so displeased with an unforgiving spirit that He refuses to forgive the sins of any man who is unforgiving. Paul loved Christ, loved Him with all of his heart; therefore, Paul could not cut the heart of Christ with an unforgiving spirit.

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices. Paul had to forgive the man for the sake of Christ which keeps Satan from getting an advantage.
1. Satan would have had an advantage over the man if the church had not forgiven him.
   a. He would have remained out of the church; out in the world.
   b. He would have been subject to falling into depression and despair; swallowed up with sorrow.

2. Satan would have had an advantage over Paul and his ministry. It would have become ineffective, for God could no longer bless a man who did not do what he was preaching: forgiving the sins of men.

3. Satan would have had an advantage over the church for the same reasons; for it was denying its very purpose for existing. Instead of opening its doors to the repentant sinner, it would be closing its doors to meeting the needs of people—people who are ever so precious to God.

   We should not be ignorant to Satan’s devices. Satan has great influence upon men and their affairs. His devices come to tempt and destroy people!

SUMMARY:

"The reason for Paul’s delayed visit to Corinth was to spare them, calling God a witness to his soul that he was telling the truth. He did not want to suggest an attitude of domination nor “pull rank” on them, for he views himself as one working for their joy. He acknowledges that they stand on the basis of their faith. In his letter, he didn’t want to cause pain and heaviness when he came to them, for he needed their joy. He wanted to bring accountability with joy, not with grief. He also wanted to receive their refreshment when he came (2:1-3).

   Paul had shed many tears in writing this letter, not to give pain, but rather to let them know of his love for them. There was one who had grieved Paul, not as much as what was done to grieve the church. However, there was sufficient punishment inflicted upon this man by the majority of the church. Now it was time to restore him by forgiving and comforting him, so he would not be overcome with sorrow or bitterness (2:4-7).

   True discipline is an evidence of love, but there had to a continuance of love toward the offender. They would in turn show their obedience in all things by restoring relationships. Paul had forgiven the man for the sake of Christ and the church had to do the same. It would help the church and it would please Christ, to not be ignorant of Satan’s devices, thereby, keeping Satan from getting an advantage over them (2:8-11).

APPLICATION:

God does not want us to be in offense with anyone! Are there people you need to forgive? Do it!

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4 http://executableoutlines.com/2co/2co_01.htm
http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html
When Moses came down Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments, his face glowed from being in God’s presence (Exo.34:29-35). He put on a veil to keep the people from being terrified by the brightness of his face. Paul adds that his veil kept the fading of the old system and the veiling of the people’s minds and hearts. The Jewish heritage was like a veil of pride that kept them from understanding the references to Christ in the Scriptures. When anyone becomes a Christian, Christ must remove his or her veil of pride (3:16). Don’t let pride in your past keep you from eternity. When the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, He became life-giving Spirit (1 Cor.15:45). He entered into a new form of existence when He was glorified. As such, He can live in heaven and in the hearts of the believers at the same time. This is a mystery, but those who know that Christ lives within them appreciate the reality of His presence. The glory that the Spirit imparts to the believer is greater both in quality and longevity than that which Moses experienced. The glory gradually transforms the believer into Christlikeness. Becoming Christlike is a progressive experience. The more closely we relate to Him, the more we will be like Him.
(2nd) 4:1 Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not:— This ministry refers to the great task God had given him. The task of proclaiming the New Covenant, the message that man can now have a glorious relationship with God through the Spirit of God; the ministry of the glorious gospel; the Good News about Jesus Christ—that men can now be saved and forgiven of their sins and be redeemed to live forever in the glory of God. Because of this great task, Paul did not faint; he did not quit no matter the demands or circumstances. The minister does not quit because he has received mercy. Paul had personally received the mercy of God.

- God’s mercy had forgiven his sins and given him life forever with Christ.
- God’s mercy had given him his great task: to be a minister and to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Neither weariness nor opposition is to drive the minister to quit. He must not shrink from the ministry for any reason. His task is too great and God’s mercy has done too much for him and will continue to sustain him. Faint not, regardless of circumstances.

(2nd) 4:2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Continuing from the first verse, Paul lets us know what a minister is to do:

1. **He has to renounce** (relinquish, forsake) **the hidden things of dishonesty** (things that cause disgrace, shame, scandal; greed, covetousness). The minister is to live an open and above-board life; a life of honesty and integrity.

2. **He has to not walk in craftiness** (trickery, cunning, cleverness, shrewdness, evil design; a man who will do anything to get what he wants). He is not to walk that way. The minister of God is to walk as Jesus walked.

3. **He is to not handle the Word of God deceitfully** (falsify, corrupt, deceive, ensnare, pollute). The Word of God comes from God; He is the Authority, not man. The minister is only the spokesman for God. He is not to add the ideas of traditions, philosophies, or speculations of men to the Word of God. Neither is he to take away portions of Scripture: denying that they are the Word of God. Nor neglect, ignore, keep silent about some part of God’s Word, and he is not to distort the Word of God in any form or fashion.

4. **But the minister is to proclaim the truth honestly, openly, and purely.** He is to be both humble and receptive before God in his study and prayer life. He is not to be wise in his own conceits. And when he goes before people, he is to proclaim and teach the truth as God reveals it.

There were some in the church accusing Paul of four things:

2. Doing some shameful, disgraceful, and scandalous things.
3. Walking about deceiving people.
4. Mishandling the Word of God.

Rather, Paul and the others kept everything they did or said out in the open; the whole truth on display for all to see and judge for themselves in the presence of God.

(2nd) 4:3 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:— The ministry demands openness, never hiding.

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Paul openly proclaimed the gospel in all its purity. Paul says that the gospel was and is hid to men for two terrible reasons:

1. **The gospel is hid to men because they are lost** (perishing; have turned away from God and are traveling in the opposite direction along the road that leads to perdition). "The road that leads to perdition" means that one is traveling away from God; deliberately separated himself from God and severed all ties with God. Therefore, he cannot see God, or the things of God. His face and eyes are not turned toward the gospel, but toward the world that perishes.

It simply means that the gospel was preached to men who would not believe. The false teachers accused Paul of preaching an antiquated message. So, Paul showed that the problem was not with the message or the messenger, but with the hearers headed for hell. The preacher cannot persuade people to believe; only God can do that.

(2nd) 4:4 **In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not,**

2. **The gospel is hid to men because the "god of this world" has blinded the minds of those who do not believe.**
   a. The "god of this world" is Satan. It means his evil nature and ways rule throughout the world – selfishness and pride, lust and greed, anger and murder, lies and deception.
   b. Satan blinds the minds of unbelievers, lest they should believe the gospel. That’s his purpose. He blinds them by appealing to their flesh, enticing them with the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. If Satan can get a person to focus his life upon himself and the world, the person will become enslaved to his flesh (sensual appetites) and the things of the world.
      i. Possessing more and more  
      ii. drinking more and more  
      iii. eating more and more  
      iv. smoking more and more  
      v. lusting more and more  
      vi. cursing more and more  
      vii. seeking more and more  
      viii. indulging more and more

Well, the more he becomes hooked, the blinder and harder he becomes to the gospel.

(2nd) 4:4 b …lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

They are stone blind to the light of the glorious gospel of Christ. Jesus Christ is the image of God. When Jesus Christ came to earth, men were able to see God; to see exactly what God is like:

- Loving, compassionate, caring, healing, restoring, saving, correcting, disciplining, holy, righteous, just.

The light of the glorious gospel of Christ could not shine in their hearts. The image of God could not shine unto them. This is similar to a camera lens being covered so that the light cannot shine into the camera to bring the image. It is also like a blind man or a man with his eyes veiled, into whom the light of the sun is unable to shine.

(2nd) 4:5 **For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.**

Two things to look at:

1. **The minister must preach Christ, not self.**
   a. He does not preach to build himself up in the eyes of people.
   b. He does not preach his own ideas, notions, thoughts, opinions, or philosophy.
   c. He does not preach to impress people with his charisma, ability, influence, speech, or leadership. The message is to be about Christ alone.

2. **The minister must serve men, not self.** "Servant" means bondslave; to be devoted to people as a slave is to his master. It is all for Jesus’ sake. Jesus became our servant or slave. He sacrificed Himself every day and He did it for us. He suffered to overcome the world and the flesh for our sake; to conquer sin and lust for us; to gain freedom from the enslaving bondages and habits of life for us. Jesus Christ suffered...
Paul and the others only preached Christ and served the people as servants or slaves for the sake of Christ. First, dethrone self (preach not self); second, enthrone Christ (place Christ as Lord); and third, serve others (for the sake of Christ).

\( \text{(2nd) 4:6} \) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The reason Paul preached Christ is that God had shined in his heart, that is, God had actually entered his heart and converted him. The same God, the Creator of the universe had commanded physical light into existence is the same God who creates supernatural light in the soul and ushers believers from the kingdom of darkness to His kingdom of light (Col.1:13). The light is expressed as "the knowledge of the glory of God." That means, to know that Christ is God Incarnate. And one must understand that the glory of God was shone in Jesus Christ. Now, His light shines out of darkness into our hearts, bringing us to know God’s glory.

\( \text{(2nd) 4:7} \) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. A priceless treasure is contained in worthless vessels. God’s shining in our hearts brings into us a treasure, the Christ of glory, who is the embodiment of God. The believer is simply the fragile clay jar. It is the treasure within the vessel that gives the vessel its value. When God called Paul, an earthen vessel, He knew his humanity in its weakness. Acts 9:15-16: "But the Lord said unto him (Ananias), Go thy way: for he (Saul at that time) is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake." The important thing about a vessel is that it has to be clean, empty, set-apart, and available for God’s service. The treasure, the indwelling Christ, in earthen vessels, is the divine source of the supply for the Christian life. It is by the excellent power of this treasure that the apostles as ministers of the New Covenant were capable of living a crucified life; that the resurrection life of Christ that they ministered might be manifested. Thus, they manifested the truth for the shining of the gospel.

The supremely valuable message of salvation in Jesus Christ is part of that treasure that has been entrusted by God to frail and fallible human beings (earthen vessels or jars of clay). The gospel is not a product of human genius or clever intellect. Yet it resides in men of clay. Why? - "...that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." God does so much for us, and it is all wrought by Him. Therefore, God and God alone get all the credit, and He is thereby praised; "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." No man can dispute His morality, for no man can convert and transform himself into an eternal being. His power converts and transforms us into new creatures; new men; having His divine nature in us; give us life both abundantly and eternally. Only the presence of God, this glorious treasure can enter our lives and change us into eternal beings; God and God alone! The presence of God sustains the minister. In the wilderness under the Old Covenant God dwelt in a tent; today He dwells in the believer’s heart.

\( \text{(2nd) 4:8} \) We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; – The diligent minister faces trial after trial. He experiences fatigue and weariness, strain and pressure, trouble and doubt, criticism and opposition, conflict and persecution, and the list goes on.

- "Troubled” means to be pressed, squeezed, oppressed, hedged in; pressured.

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"Distressed" means to be kept in a narrow, cramped place; to be crushed. "On every side" means in every imaginable way and place and occasion. "Perplexed" means to be at a loss, to be doubting, not knowing, questioning, wondering which way to go, what to do, what to say; unable to find an answer. "Despair" means to be hopeless, to have no confidence or assurance; to be without any sense of security. Although these things occurred, Paul lets us know he was troubled on every side, yet not distressed; he was perplexed, but not in despair. The power of God sustains the minister; steps in and saves him. God gives him hope and stirs his confidence and shows him the way out. God never allows him to be overcome by trouble or be perplexed in any way if he is truly connected and relies faithfully and wholly on God! With each difficulty, God is there to help.

(2nd) 4:9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;-- Ministers are sometimes opposed and sometimes the opposition is hot and severe. The persecution may be behind his back or to his face. It may take the form of:

- ridicule
- criticism
- slander
- mockery
- imprisonment
- confrontation
- threats
- jokes
- martyrdom etc.

However, God never forsakes, abandons, or deserts his dear servant. Wait on Him, God never fails. God never leaves him alone. His presence and power is always with you.

- "Cast down" means to be smitten down, struck down, or knocked down.
- "Destroyed" means to perish, to die, to strike out.

"The supreme characteristic of the Christian is not that he does not fall, but that every time he falls he rises again. It is not that he is never beaten, but he is never ultimately defeated. He may lose a battle, but he knows that in the end he can never lose the campaign" (crusade or promotion). (The Letters to the Corinthians, p.223).

(2nd) 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. "Always bearing" indicates that the suffering Paul experienced was endless. Those that hated Jesus took out their vengeance on those who represented Him. This does not refer to sufferings and troubles that are common to all human beings, such as, illness or calamity, or correction, discipline suffered because of sin, mistakes, or failure to fulfill one’s responsibility. This "bearing about in the body is the dying of the Lord Jesus." It happened continuously, where Paul was expected to lay down his life like Christ in all points; having his body exposed to being put to death in the cause of Jesus; or an image of the suffering Saviour in his own person. Carrying the death of Jesus consumes our natural man, our outward man, our flesh, thereby we enter into the process of dying of the Lord Jesus, so that our inward man may have the opportunity to develop and be renewed; that self may die to manifest the life of Jesus in his bodies. "Dying" means the sense in which Jesus was dying every day. Jesus had to come against sin every day; deny His own desires and live for God; come against daily temptations which men faced and He had to conquer them all. The minister is to die to self so that Christ might be seen in his body. Paul died to self. He used this analogy: Gal.2:20 says “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” When Paul disciplined his body and kept it under control—when he put his urges and desires to death; when he denied his will and did God’s will—he demonstrated that Jesus Christ lived within his body.

(2nd) 4:11 For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. Although we live, we live in a state to die. Continuously, while in human flesh, we are “delivered” meaning surrendered unto the hands of death for Jesus’ sake. Paul was daily given

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over to death for the sake of Christ. "In our body" (v.10) and "in our mortal flesh" (v.11) are interchangeable and both are done now, not when we get to heaven; not in our immortal body, but now in our human body.

- We take up the cross of Christ (willing to die to follow Christ; absolute surrender).
- We die to self, that is, our own desires and wishes.
- We deny ourselves in order to live for Christ.

We do all of this for one purpose: that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest now in our human bodies.

(2nd)4:12 So then death worketh in us, but life in you. Paul lets the Corinthians know that because he and others die daily; because they daily lay down their lives as Christ; because of having their bodies exposed daily to death, the Corinthian believers receive life in them; they reap the benefits; they gain life in them. When Paul and others preached the Gospel, they were reproached, persecuted, had sorrow, trouble, affliction and death itself. This Gospel preached at such an expense is the savior of life in the lives of others, and is the means of maintaining spiritual life in souls, and nourishment unto eternal life. The continual "perishing of our outward man" works "spiritual life in our inward man" so that others "reap the fruit of the sufferer."

(2nd)4:13 We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak;— Faith will sustain you! In the minister, faith will not allow you to become discouraged to such a point that you would leave the ministry and fall into the depths of despair. Having the same spirit of faith; the same attitude or outlook of faith binds you to others of the same attitude—both believing on the same thing. What are you believing? — We believe in the truths of the gospel; we believe in God, in the Savior, in the atonement, in the resurrection, etc., as it is written. What Paul believed, he preached and by them believing they also spoke. Therefore, no one should tempt to preach the gospel unless he has a firm spirit of faith; belief of the truth, and in having such a conviction, preach it.

(2nd)4:14 Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you. Knowing what? This refers to the literal bodily Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus has conquered death, the last enemy. Therefore, the One who raised Christ from the dead, we in that glorious redemption day will raise us up from the dead also by Jesus. Until a person is prepared to die, he is not prepared to live. The minister suffers and bears all; continues to preach and teach to serve and meet the needs of people—all because he knows that the day of resurrection is coming. The hope of being resurrected sustains the minister.

(2nd)4:15 For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. If we die to self, it is so that the life of Christ might be revealed in us for others’ sake. It we go through trials, it is so that Christ might be glorified. The need of others and the glory of God sustains the minister. The minister refuses to be defeated, because people need the grace of God and because God needs to be glorified. And the only way people will glorify God is for them to experience the grace and blessings of God.

SUMMARY:

God showed mercy in the great task/ministry He had given Paul and the others, and so they never gave up (4:1).
Paul had renounced the hidden things of shame (4:2a). He does not walk in craftiness. He does not handle the Word of God deceitfully, but with open presentation of the truth he commends himself before all and before God (4:2b). If the gospel seems veiled, it is only the perishing who think it so (4:3). For their unbelieving minds have been blinded by the "god of this age" (4:4a), so that the light of gospel of the glorious Christ does not shine on them (4:4b). They preached not themselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord and themselves as their servants for Jesus' sake (4:5). It is God who has shone in their hearts so that they might spread the light of the knowledge of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ (4:6) (4:1-6).

The treasure of the gospel is in "earthen vessels", but this is so the excellence of God's power might be demonstrated in them (4:7). Examples of overcoming suffering (4:8-9)

- Hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed
- Perplexed, but not in despair
- Persecuted, but not forsaken
- Struck down, but not destroyed

In this way, "dying for Jesus" gives them the opportunity to demonstrate the "life of Jesus", which in turn blesses others (4:10-12). Confident of the resurrection and ultimate glorification, Paul knows that all things can be to their benefit, resulting in thanksgiving and glory to God (4:13-15). Their suffering was permitted to demonstrate the life of Jesus (4:7-15).

APPLICATION:

Knowing who lives within us, the God who sustains will cause us to not be destroyed!

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(2nd) 5:11-21 — The scriptures (5:11-17) show the devoted nature of Paul’s ministry. He is motivated by the fear of the Lord (5:11-13) and he is motivated by the love of Christ. By fear— Paul knows the terror of the Lord, he therefore, persuades men (not of salvation, but of his own personal integrity). By love— whether Paul appeared to be out of control or under control, Christ’s love for Paul held him in such a grip, that it constituted the compelling force in everything he did. In other words, Paul is constrained (controlled) by the love of Christ who died for all, which makes him now live for Christ and not for self (5:14-15). He ceases to make superficial judgments based upon appearance (outward fashion), even as he had once done with Christ (thought of Christ as merely a man) (5:16). For, whosoever is "in Christ", he is a new creation, and all things have become new. How? — It is "in Christ"! When a person truly believes in Christ, God places and positions him "in Christ." He is then identified with Christ, that is, he is counted and considered to be "in Christ"; reckoned and credited as "in Christ." The believer’s faith actually causes God to identify the believer with Christ. He then walks and lives "in Christ" day by day, bearing the fruit of the Spirit. For all is clearly seen in a new creature; becoming a new man. His old life has passed away and a new life has begun (5:17).

(2nd) 5:18-21 The scriptures (5:18-21) show the reconciling nature of Paul’s ministry. He himself has been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ (v.18a). Therefore, God has given him the "ministry of reconciliation" (5:18b-19). There are three persons involved in reconciliation:

1. God Himself is the first person. Note the words: "All things are of God."
2. Jesus Christ is the second person. Note the words: "...through Jesus Christ."
3. We (ministers and the body of Christ) are the third persons. Note the words: "...has given us."

The reconciliation of the world is actually God’s work in Christ (5:19a). God worked it out in Christ. How? First, God came to earth in Christ, that is, in the person of Christ.

- When Jesus Christ came to earth, God Himself came to earth.
- When Jesus Christ bore sin for man, God Himself was dying for man.
- When Jesus Christ died for man, God Himself was dying for man.

God Himself was in the person of Jesus Christ reaching out to man. God loved man so much that He came to earth to seek and to save that which was lost. Second, God does not impute sin to men (5:19b). The word "impute" means to reckon, count, and credit. If God does not impute or charge sin against men, then it means that He forgives their sins. There on the cross God "in Christ" died for the sins of men, making it possible for men to be freed from the guilt and condemnation of their sins. The "word of reconciliation" has been committed to Paul (5:19c). Third, God has committed the word of reconciliation to us. God takes the initiative by equipping us to proclaim and preach the message of reconciliation—a world can be brought back to God.

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"Reconciliation" means to change thoroughly, to change from enmity to friendship, to bring together, to restore. Two persons who had allowed something to come between them are restored and reunited.

The thing that broke the relationship between God and man was sin! Paul pleads with them to be reconciled to God (5:20-21). Paul lets the Corinthian believers know that they are ambassadors for Christ, pleading for God and on Christ's behalf (5:20) "For Christ became sin for us, who knew no sin. How? God did it by laying all the sins of man upon Christ—all the guilt and condemnation of sin. He was the ideal, Perfect Man and He could die the Ideal death—the death that would satisfy the justice of God's eternal court and holy nature. Why? That we might be made the righteousness of God in Christ." God counts, credits, considers man's faith as already righteous in Christ; already having died in Christ; already having been resurrected in Christ. All because of His love for man (5:21).
(2nd) 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. We are co-workers with God. What do we do? We urge, beg, and plead as the Scripture says, with men to receive the wonderful grace of God. What is that grace? It is the glorious truth that God has provided salvation through Christ and proclaimed that salvation through Christ. This message of redemption (God’s grace) is not to be received in vain. A person must not hear the message with empty deaf ears. God has made it possible for him to receive.

(2nd) 6:2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) – This verse is from Isaiah 49:8. The Messiah is represented as proclaiming for the grace of God to be given to sinners. God give His favorable answer in a time of grace when salvation’s day comes to the world. His appointed time in the future, the Lord will, by His Servant, accomplish the final deliverance of Israel. Paul applied Isaiah’s words to his ministry of proclaiming the gospel of God’s grace to all people. The decision to be saved is to be made now. There may not be a tomorrow, in fact, there may not even be one hour left for any of us, and sometimes we put off a decision for Christ. If now is the day, then, there will be a day when it will no longer be present. Yes, the time is now!

(2nd) 6:3 Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: – Paul always considered what his actions communicated about Jesus Christ. He wanted his life and ministry to be so consistent, and that he would never give any reason for anyone to reject the Lord Jesus Christ. The word “offense” means to stumble, to strike against. He never wanted to put an obstacle; or a stumbling in anyone’s way. He did not want to be a poor reflection upon the ministry; lest the ministry should be discredited.

(2nd) 6:4 But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, – Paul was consistent and enduring in physical and mental suffering and stress where he and others proved to be servants and ministers of God. Six particular things are mentioned:

"Endurance" means patience; "Patience" means steadfast perseverance. When trials, fatigue, temptation, or opposition confront the minister of God, he must do all he can to endure.

1. Paul endured "afflictions" (pressure, strain, tension), that comes within and without. Sometimes the pressure is so heavy and tight that a man feels like he is going to explode or be crushed.

2. Paul endured "necessities" (inescapable hardship, difficulties, privation, and pain of life). Only one thing that will carry the minister through the necessities and experiences of life: endurance (patience).

3. Paul endured "distresses" (strait, calamities, tight places, inescapable situations). When the minister is cornered by temptation or trial; when there seems to be no escape, his only resource is endurance. He must steadfastly endure lest he offend the gospel and become a stumbling block to others.

The point is: prove yourself as the minister of God, by enduring suffering, hardship, and trouble. Why? – Because others are observing you; you are not working on your own, but with God; you have received God’s grace; and today is the day of salvation—the day someone makes the decision to be saved. How do you do it? By believing God controls all situations; and that it’s already done through Christ Jesus to bring you out and grow you up.

(2nd) 6:5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; – We serve an Awesome

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God! And the greatest need of the ministry is consistency and endurance. Paul endured in physical sufferings and mental stress.

4. Paul endured "stripes" (scourgings, beatings, lashings, whippings). This was a savage, excruciating punishment. The whip was made of leather straps with two small balls attached to the end of each strap. The balls were made of rough lead or sharp bones or spikes, so that they would cut deeply into the flesh. Paul’s hands were tied to a post above his head and he was scourged (near death by the presiding centurion). Jewish trials allowed only forty lashes. Paul was scourged at least eight times (5 times by the Jews and 3 times by the Gentiles).

5. Paul endured "imprisonments." Paul was arrested and imprisoned several times (some say seven times).

6. Paul endured "tumults." He often faced angry mobs and could not be heard. He had to stay consistent in his testimony no matter the temptation to go along with the crowd.

There were moments of being overworked, sleeplessness, and hunger. Paul covers three areas:

1. Paul endured "labours" (toils, laborious work to the point of exhaustion). He was not lazy, lethargic, slothful, or complacent. He got up in the mornings and put his hand to the plow: praying, studying, ministering, and witnessing, just as God had called him to.

2. Paul endured "watchings" (sleepless nights). He never stopped preaching, teaching, or ministering until he had to have rest. He spent nights in prayer with the weight of the churches on his mind, at times hard to sleep.

3. Paul endured "fastings" (deliberate fasting). Being so involved in his work that he forgot to eat or else chose to keep working instead of eating.

The point is: how many ministers endure overwork—laborious work to the point of exhaustion? sleepless nights for the sake of prayer and figuring out how to better help and reach people for Christ? missed meals in order to get more done for Christ? Paul was faithful and endured many hardships for the sake of Christ and the church.

(2nd)6:6 By pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned,—Nine areas of Paul being consistent and enduring in spiritual growth and behavior are displayed:

1. Paul endured in "purity" (innocence, cleanliness; free from the dirt, filth and pollution of the world; free from immoral and unjust behavior and motive). This involves both heart and acts; both motive and behavior. It means to be spotless and stainless, holy and righteous, godly and just. The minister of God is to live a pure; chaste life.

2. Paul endured in "knowledge" (the study and understanding of God’s revelation and Word). Paul did not neglect the meditation and study of God’s Word and revealed Will. He learned all he could about how God wanted men to live, and he applied himself to living and teaching that way.

3. Paul endured in "longsuffering" (patience, bearing, and suffering a long time with people, especially when they were wrong, unjust, abusive, slanderous, and injurious). The minister of God must always suffer and bear a long time with people, even when they are ever so wrong.

4. Paul endured in "kindness" (goodness and benevolence of heart and behavior). It is being kind and good, gentle and sweet even when others are abusive and evil, severe and hurting, unappreciative and unthankful.

5. Paul endured in the "Holy Spirit" (in the presence, power, and gifts of the Spirit). The great proof that Paul was a true minister of God was the fact that the Spirit of God worked in and through him. Paul was able to live for Christ and to build the ministry because he walked in the presence and power of the Spirit of God.

6. Paul endured in "unfeigned love" (love that is not counterfeit or fake; love that is sincere, genuine, and http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html
pure; love that is unlimited, selfless, and sacrificial). No matter what a person does, unfeigned love forgets self and sacrifices whatever is necessary to reach out and help that person. The minister of God must always be consistent, and endure in sincere and genuine love.

(2nd) 6:7 By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left,—All for the spiritual growth and behavior of the minister.

7. Paul endured in the "Word of Truth" (the preaching and teaching of the truth, that is, of the gospel; the Word of God). Only the Word of Truth will endure. The minister must preach the truth of God’s Word, not the thinking, philosophies, and ideas of men. God has placed a calling on the minister to proclaim His Word in truth!

8. Paul endured in the "power of God." Only God has the power to deliver men from sin; create men anew, and give them eternal life. Therefore, Paul had to have the power of God upon his life and ministry if his labor was to be effective and bear genuine fruit.

9. Paul endured in "the armor of righteousness" (being spiritually equipped; weapons of righteousness—weapons of defense and weapons of attack). No matter what the attacks were or against Paul, he resorted to righteousness. He did not fight Satan’s kingdom with human resources, but with the spiritual weapons of righteousness (Ephesians 6:10-18), which are both offensive (such as the Sword of the Spirit—the Word of God—on the right, and the defensive weapon (such as the shield of Faith—on the left). He was equipped!

(2nd) 6:8 By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true;—Paul was consistent and enduring in disregarding the world’s reaction. Three contrasts are displayed:

1. Paul was honored by some and dishonored by others.” However, Paul stood and endured all dishonor done him.

2. Paul was "talked about: some spread evil reports, and others good reports.” Whatever the situation, Paul consistently endured and continued to minister for his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

3. Paul was "treated as a deceiver, yet he was as true as a person could be.” The word "deceiver" means to be an imposter, a false teacher, a quack. However, Paul stood fast: no matter the charge, he endured and continued right on preaching the truth and doing all he could to help and reach people for Christ.

(2nd) 6:9 As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed;—Paul was consistent and enduring in the face of social abuse and persecution.

1. Some treated Paul as an unknown, yet others treated him as well known. The word "unknown" means to dismiss, ignore, disregard. Some wanted nothing to do with the minister of God. But others loved Paul because of what he had done for them and was doing for people throughout the church. No matter the treatment, Paul endured for the sake of the gospel and the people.

2. Paul was treated Paul as dying, yet he lived. Some looked upon Paul as reckless and unwise. They saw Paul as a "fool" who was doomed; who was rapidly walking the road to death. But others understood and knew the truth—he was a new creature in Christ, a man who had found eternal life, and he was compelled to share the glorious news with the world no matter the threat to his own safety. Therefore, he endured the cross, dying to the world, in order to share the glorious news of eternal life.

3. Paul was chastened, yet he was never killed. Being "chastened" means suffering. Paul was constantly suffering for the cause of Christ, and he was willing to be chastened in order to help reach people for Christ.

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II CORINTHIANS
(2nd) 6:10 As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. Paul was consistent and enduring in being content—always. Three contrasts are again made.

1. Paul was looked upon as sorrowful, yet he was always rejoicing. The worldly and carnal saw him as seldom, if ever, having fun. He never joined the crowd in their worldly pleasures and activities, nor did he seek the comforts and possessions of the world. However, Paul was filled with joy, true joy—the joy that comes from knowing where he had come from; why he was here; and where he was going. He was gripped with the utmost security, confidence, and assurance of life.

2. Paul was considered as poor, yet he made many rich. He was a travelling missionary; a man who in the eyes of the world was homeless and without worldly possessions. Yet, he possessed the true wealth, the only wealth that can really make a man secure—the wealth of God’s presence and love and care. And Paul shared his wealth with others—sharing how men could possess the eternal treasures of heaven.

3. Paul was looked upon as having nothing, yet he possessed all things. He had no worldly goods, but he did have the promise of God: he was to possess all things very shortly, as soon as Jesus returned. He was an heir of God, even a joint-heir with Christ.

(2nd) 6:11 O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Paul’s heart is open and full of affection for he calls them by name; speaking directly to the church of Corinth as though face to face which shows strong feelings. “Our mouth is open unto you” meaning openly and honest; freely without hesitation or evasion able to speak frankly concerning the real situation they had been misled in. “Our heart is enlarged” meaning widen and open; able to embrace all believers regardless of their condition. This openness and enlargement meant that his mouth wasn’t saying one thing and his heart feeling another way; not a divided heart and mouth, but it is what was needed to reconcile, to bring back the misled or distracted believers of God.

(2nd) 6:12 Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. The word “straitened” means to be restricted, to lack room, to be pressed or distressed, to be in anguish or straits. Paul says there was no narrowness or stiffness in his heart for the church; no restrictions against them. He held nothing against them in spite of the problems and heartaches the church had caused him. His heart was wide open to receive them. “But they held restriction in their own affections.” Why were they withholding their love? – Because they were childish (v.13) and had divided hearts. They were like a daughter engaged to be married, but being seduced by an unworthy suitor. They were constrained in the inward parts toward the apostle. All children are very narrow in their affection and easily offended by those who correct them.

(2nd) 6:13 Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. Paul calls them his children, therefore, speaking to them as a father to his children. He begs them to receive him and his instructions with affection. “Recompense” meaning return to. Paul appeals to them to return with the same enlarged and open heart that he has shown before. To be enlarged requires growth and maturity in life, which the Corinthian believers lacked.

SUMMARY:

Paul makes a special plea for the Corinthians not to receive God’s grace in vain, reminding them that they

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were workers with Christ and that now is the time for salvation. He focuses on the "approved" nature of his ministry. He determined not to give offense or reason for blame with their ministry, but be acknowledged as servants of God. This is seen in their physical and mental sufferings endured. And have God's grace to endure was not in vain (6:1-4).

Even the conflicting reactions and reports by others, along with the various experiences described in a contrasting manner, helped to confirm that Paul's ministry is "approved" (6:5-10).

At this point, he begs for them to open wide their hearts to him, as his heart is wide opened to them, for he speaks with great boldness that he has not done them any wrong (6:11-13).

APPLICATION:

The time is now to get it straight with God and with others. God makes His appeal through this lesson, hoping He has touché someone.
II CORINTHIANS 7:1-16

(2nd) 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. God expects us to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Sins of the flesh would be such sins as immorality and drunkenness, and sins of the spirit would be such sins as hatred and jealousy. God expects us to perfect holiness in reverence unto Him. Perfecting is an aggressive word demanding aggressive action. Perfecting holiness means not only to practice but to finish and complete. The believer is to practice and pursue doing the things that will make him holy; set his mind and heart upon becoming holy, thereby, reverencing God.

(2nd) 7:2 Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man. All the hurt Paul had suffered from the Corinthians, and all the hours of prayers offered up on the Corinthian’s behalf, he again exclaims receive us; open your hearts. Why? – Because Paul had not wronged any man; had not corrupted any man, and had not defrauded any man. It is an appeal to them to get rid of their narrowness of heart and renounce those false teachers.

(2nd) 7:3 I speak not this to condemn you: for I have said before, that ye are in our hearts to die and live with you. Note how softly and tenderly Paul spoke to the church; to those who opposed him by saying that “they were in their hearts to die and live with.” This could not be true if they were not believers. This also shows how far he would go to forgive them.

(2nd) 7:4 Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation. "Boldness" can be translated confidence. Paul was confident in his speech and God’s ongoing work in their lives. He’s filled with comfort and overflowing joy even in spite of all the tribulation they had gone through.

SUMMARY:
Paul talks to them as if they were his children. He makes an appeal to them not to condemn them, but return, for it would greatly make him joyous in spite of the afflictions they had gone through (7:1-4).

SYNOPSIS:
(2nd) 7:5-7 When Paul and the others with him arrived in Macedonia, they could not find rest because there was outside trouble upon them, trouble within, and trouble around them, causing dread and fear which discouraged them. But God the Comforter refreshes them with the arrival of Titus; not only with his arrival, but also with his news of his time of being with the Corinthians. They had warmly received him. Paul was overjoyed by Titus’ coming for Titus reported that the Corinthians had fully repented; turned back to serving God properly, and desired to be reconciled to Paul, for they had accepted his letter. He had been harsh in his letter toward them, but they realized it was because he loved them. Paul’s rebuke resulted in their repentance. Then they were able to convey their earnest desires, their mourning, and their fervent mind toward Paul. Upon hearing this news, he rejoiced even more so. This brought him and the others so much joy.
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One of the most difficult things to do in life is to rebuild a shattered relationship. Unfortunately, there are many broken relationships today in homes, churches and ministries, which can only be repaired when people face problems honestly and deal with them biblically and lovingly. This is what Paul is trying to do in 2 Corinthians and especially in Chapters 6 and 7. Paul had written a very severe letter of rebuke to the Corinthians and at times had regretted it (7:8), but is now not sorry he sent the letter. Now, Paul’s heart rejoiced that they had accepted his message and had acted upon it (7:9). When God makes you feel sorry enough to turn to Him and be saved, you don’t have anything to feel bad about (7:10-11). When he wrote, it wasn’t to accuse the one who was wrong or to take up for the one who was hurt, but for God to show them how much they cared for Paul and his helpers (7:12). And this greatly encouraged Paul (7:13). In Paul’s discussions with Titus, he was convinced that the opposition in Corinth came only from a small group of dissenters and the vast majority of the congregation wanted to do what was right. Now this conviction is confirmed by the report Titus gives to Paul (7:14-16).

7 http://www.family-times.net/commentary/godly-sorrow-produces-repentance/
http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html
Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;—Paul now turns to a different subject. He gives the Corinthian church seven challenges. The first challenge is to know of the grace God bestowed upon the Macedonian churches—the spirit of the Macedonians. The Roman province of Macedonia included all of northern Greece. The known churches of the region were Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. At one time the Macedonian province had been known for its natural resources. But down through the centuries the area had been ravaged by war, and Rome had stripped it of its wealth. Because of this the churches of the area were somewhat poor in material wealth. But note a glorious fact: they were extremely wealthy in the grace of God.—so much grace that Paul is able to use them as a dynamic example of God’s grace. “Grace” means the favor and blessings of God—all the good things of life which God gives—the greatest of which is salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. The churches throughout Judea were suffering great poverty and needed help badly. However, in a great trial of affliction four dynamic facts were apparent.

1. They gave help despite terrible trial and deep poverty to others and they gave liberally. “Liberality” means singleness of mind, sincerely, with an open and free heart. The churches of Macedonia decided to do just that. When they accepted Christ and took their stand for Him, they were heavily persecuted. However, knowing Christ filled these believers with abundance of joy. For out of the depths of their poverty, resulted in a flood of generosity.

For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;—Paul was able to bear witness, meaning he was able to testify of their power; according to their means, and beyond their means to give.

2. They gave beyond their ability. They gave willingly—no special appeal had to be made; no pressure had to be executed.

Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. They begged urgently to accept their gifts and share in the honor of supporting their brothers in Christ.

3. They gave insistently begging for the privilege to share. Apparently, they were giving so much that Paul felt it was just beyond their means. Why? Because they wanted to share in the fellowship of ministering to the saints.

And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. “And this they did, not as we hoped” literally meant not as had expected. Such giving was totally unexpected in light of their own needs. They made a complete dedication of themselves.

4. They gave themselves to the Lord first. They used this occasion, the occasion of an offering—the occasion when they were asked to help others—to rededicate their lives and possessions to Christ. This involved:
   • The dedication of their lives to Christ: all they were.

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The dedication of their possessions to Christ: all they had.

The dedication of themselves to the minister, Paul, in order to serve by his side and to allow them all to serve Christ together.

Paul stressed the giving of the Macedonians. Believers must be examples joining hand in hand as a giving church.

(2nd)8:6 Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also. Paul says two things can apply to every church.

1. The grace of giving is to be completed in you—the act or evidence of love because of the favor of God. The second challenge is to excel in the same spirit of giving as the Macedonians. Sometime earlier the Corinthian church had begun to take up an offering for the poor churches of Judea, but something happened that caused the church to stop the project. Titus, a faithful servant, was the acting evangelist at the time in Corinth when Paul’s first epistle went out. So he is urged, the one who initiated the work, to receive from the people and complete it in the same grace.

(2nd)8:7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

2. The other graces must abound in you. The third challenge is to abound in this grace also. Yes, they were gifted, and proud of those gifts, and Paul named the gifts the Corinthians abound and excelled in: faith, utterance, knowledge, diligence, and love. But Paul wanted them to remember and not neglect that giving is also a grace-gift and abound in it also. It is not as spectacular as the miraculous gifts, but just as important.

(2nd)8:8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. The fourth challenge is to prove the sincerity of your love. Paul does not command the Corinthians to give. If giving is forced or coerced, it benefits nothing; it does not please God. God is pleased with gifts that are willingly and cheerfully given. Giving must be based upon two things:

1. Giving must be based upon love for those who are lost and needy. And that love is based upon the love for the Lord Jesus who commanded us to go into all the world to reach and help the people of the world. We’re all His creations.

2. Giving must be based upon the example of those who give sacrificially. In the case of the Corinthians, they had the dynamic example of the Macedonians. The Corinthians should have been stirred to follow the example of such sacrificial giving. In our case, we thereby prove the sincerity of our love by freely giving because He freely gave! Christ is our example!

(2nd)8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. The fifth challenge is to know the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. By now we should know the grace of our Lord; we should be aware of His grace. His grace was given to us.

1. Though He was rich…
   • He dwelt in the glory and majesty, dominion and power of the Godhead (Jude 24-25).
   • He possessed every good and perfect thing that can be possessed (Jam.1:17).
   • He had all worship and adoration of heavenly beings (Rev.4:6; 5:11).

2. He became poor.
   • God became an humble man.
• Our Lord took on flesh and blood.
• Our Holy God took the place of the lowest.
• The Beloved became the rejected.
• The Perfect One became the Sacrifice for sin.
• His Life became the Substitute for death.

3. That through His poverty we might be rich.
   • We can receive the adoption of sons—become sons and daughters of God.
   • We can live eternally with Him in the new heaven and earth.

His ownership brought poverty to Him—His Godhead became a man—His purpose was for our sakes—He gave to us what He possessed from the beginning—richness of eternal life, eternal joy—And His eternal love brought sons and daughters! Knowing His grace brought all of this causes me to rejoice!, for He gave it all away for us!

(2nd) 8:10 And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago. The fifth challenge is to remember your own past. Paul remembers their past situation and gives his advice, not a command, knowing that the Corinthians had undertaken a mission project of meeting the needs of the poor, yet they wasted a whole year of not committing themselves. Paul is saying that it is expedient; it's beneficial; it's to their advantage personally and for their ministry to complete the mission that had stirred within them a year ago—giving. We, the body of Christ are thereby stirred to go forward and God is stirred to bless the church. Whatever we commit to do that's in God's Will, He is well able to continue with us.

(2nd) 8:11 Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have. Paul is saying now go forth with it. He reminds them that there was a readiness of the Will to do; an eagerness to show forth and perform and complete the task out of whatever means they had to finish doing it.

(2nd) 8:12 For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. The sixth challenge is to give readily and willingly. Four points between verses 11 and 12 give clear directions on missions to any church that is willing to listen.
1. Give yourselves to missions. After a mission need has been met, there is always another need to meet—a need just as critical. Literally thousands die prematurely and without Christ every day—die because no one cared enough to help them. The call of missions is the constant call of Christ.
2. Finish the mission. The task begins when you reach out, but it also has to be completed.
3. Give readily and willingly—lay hold first with "a willing mind."
4. God is going to judge us for what we give—what we gave and what we kept back. If you have it (according to what you do have), give it. Will He approve? Will it be accepted? Yes, that that you do have and is able to give, not what you don’t have. God is far more interested in the love in your heart than in the amount of your gift. “…I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: But she of her penny hath cast in all the living that she had” Lk.21:3-4.

(2nd) 8:13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:— Paul is not implying that other men be relieved and the Corinthians carry the load and hardship. Or that the rich become poor and the poor become rich. It is certainly unbalanced and unequal.
But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: – The seventh challenge is to meet the needs of one another equally. It eliminates the principle of hoarding and keeping back of goods beyond our needs. Are we hoarding back clothes we can’t wear? Are we hoarding back food we can share? Are we hoarding back money for a rainy day that right now someone is in need of? God wants the needs of the starving and lost masses met. The only way they can be met is by giving out of their abundance, they might supply others' lack, so there can be equality.

As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack. Paul goes back to what was written in scripture (Exodus 16:18) when they gathered the manna, they were to gather as much as needed. So, those that gathered much, had nothing left over. And those who gathered less had no lack. Each home had just enough.

SUMMARY:

Paul writing from Macedonia hoped that news of the generosity of these churches would encourage the Corinthian believers and motivate them to solve their problems and unite their fellowship. Paul uses the Macedonian churches as an example. They were in poverty and yet they gave. Despite affliction and deep poverty, they gave liberally; gave willingly; beyond their ability, insistently for the privilege to share, and they gave themselves first to the Lord and then unto Paul as God willed. (8:1-5).

Titus was sent to complete this grace in them. As the Corinthians abounded in many other things, Paul encourages them to abound in this grace also. He did not command them to give, but by the example of others Paul seeks to test their love. We are to remember the example of Jesus, through whose poverty we became rich (8:6-9).

It is to their advantage to complete what they started a year before, so that there is not only a desire to do it, but the completion of it as well. There must first be a willing mind; then according to what one has, not to what he does not have. Paul does not desire that they burden themselves to ease others, but that their abundance might supply others' lack, so there can be equality. Each is to have what is needed. Paul goes back to what was written in scripture (Exodus 16:18) when they gathered the manna. So, those that gathered much, had nothing left over. And those who gathered less had no lack. Each home had just enough. (8:10-15).

APPLICATION:

Everyone needs help from time to time, therefore, within the body of Christ, God places needs before us to fulfill.

TOP

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(2nd) 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Paul’s attention is turned to some positive instructions and encouragement regarding giving. One’s return is determined in his investment. If we look at a farmer who plants few seeds, he will have a small harvest, but if he plants a lot, he will have a large harvest. In our day to day life if we give little with regret, we get little. However, Paul assures the Corinthians that if they give generously, they will reap generously. God is the provider and makes every provision. The person who gives only a little will receive only a little in return. Don’t let a lack of faith keep you from giving freely and generously.

(2nd) 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. Paul tells them to purposely decide in their hearts how much to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a person who gives cheerfully. Four things to consider:

1. The giver must give as he purposes in his heart. This does not mean that people are not to be encouraged to give nor that they cannot be stirred to give. It means that a person is…
   • to think about the need.
   • to think about what he should give sacrificially.
   • to make a deliberate decision about what he should sacrifice in order to give what he should.
   • to give exactly what he should give.

2. The giver must not give grudgingly; nor out of sorrow, not with reluctance or regret.

3. The giver must not give out of necessity. A person’s gift is not acceptable to God when he…
   • is forced to give.
   • gives because he fears what others will think.
   • gives just to please others.
   • gives to keep others from pestering him.
   • gives out of a desire for personal honor and recognition.

4. The giver must give cheerfully if he wishes God to accept his gift. The giver is delighted to give just as Jesus Christ who willingly and cheerfully gave all He was and had, to meet the needs of the world.

(2nd) 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:— God possesses an infinite amount of grace, and He gives it lavishly without holding back. When the believer generously and wisely gives of his material resources, God graciously replenishes them so one would always have plenty, and will not be in need.

SUMMARY:

Paul tells the Corinthians that those who give only a little will receive only a little in return, and those that generously give, will reap generously. Paul tells them to purposely decide in their hearts how much to give, not grudgingly, or of necessity because God loves a cheerful giver. God possesses an infinite amount of grace to abound toward us so that we will have all sufficiency in all things, and abound in every good work (9:6-8).