

2 CORINTHIANS

AN INTRODUCTION

AUTHOR: Paul (1:1)

DATE: 56-57

Early Epistles:

Galatians (48-52) between 1st/2nd mssy journies

1-2 Thess (51-52) 2nd journey

1-2 Cor (55-57) 3rd journey

Romans (57-58) 3rd journey

Prison Epistles (first Roman imprisonment):

Colossians, Ephesians, Philemon, Philippians
(60-61)

Pastoral Epistles:

1 Tim & Titus (62-65) – during period of
release

2 Tim (67) (second Roman imprisonment)

History:

146 BC – Corinth destroyed by Roman Consul Lucius Mummius

44 BC – Julius Caesar decides to establish Roman colony on the site

This resettlement gave it a decidedly Roman character.

One-third (to half) of the population consisted of slaves.

Corinth was pretty prosperous.

Many temples – espec. Aphrodite (goddess of love). To

“corinthianize” came to mean to be sexually immoral.

Thus the makings of a church with a thorough mix of racial backgrounds, social status, etc.



PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

- City
- One of the "Seven Churches" (*Rev. 2-3*)
- ← Paul's route

STRATEGIC LOCATION

A major destination for traders, travelers and tourists

A good place for Paul to practice his trade as a tentmaker

Corinth was a magnet for immigrants

WHY WRITE 2 CORINTHIANS?

Paul's physical absence from Corinth apparently created a theological and administrative vacuum.

Paul had challenged them about ethical conduct and idolatry.

Paul's plans to visit them had to change (at least once) ... when he did visit, it was very "painful" ... and at some point he writes a hard letter to them.

Before his third visit, some other "super-apostles" move in who were more spiritual, eloquent and compelling than Paul (11:5,23; 12:11).

A FEW MORE OBSERVATIONS:

In 2 Corinthians Paul explains why he changed his travel plans and why he wrote them the severe letter instead of coming himself (1:15–2:1; 2:3–4; 7:8–12).

It is very different from 1 Cor which dealt with church problems. Here he is, even though very reluctant, giving an impassioned defense of his character and ministry.

Uses the word “boast” about 30 times.

It is the least systematic, and the most emotional, of his epistles.

GENERAL OUTLINE:

1-7, Paul's Defense of His Character and Ministry

8-9, Instructions for the Collection for the Saints

10-13, Warnings and Preparation for Paul's Next Visit

2 CORINTHIANS

Bruce Moyer

*What can we learn from the life & ministry of Paul
about living life (having a ministry)
that really matters (makes a difference)?*

2 Cor 1:1-11

A Comforting Ministry

It's easy to see what this section is all about:

“comfort/encouragement” used 10x - noun 6x; verb 4x
[bad news is ... directly related to suffering and stress]

“Suffering” – 10 basic words in Greek; Paul uses 5 of them in this letter: suffering; affliction; tribulation; trouble; distress; etc.

We will face this kind of stress or suffering because:

- we live in a fallen world – all of creation is affected by sin and satan is at work all around us.
- some pains are due to our own ignorance or foolishness – “we reap what we sow!”

- we sometimes face tribulations because God allows them (even causes them) for the purpose of disciplining and maturing us (Heb. 12).
- we may face persecution for our faith – for holding beliefs that run contrary to a godless society.

ANOINTED – *He anointed us ...*

Same word from the OT for consecrating a king, prophet, or priest.

It carries the idea of being furnished with the necessary powers for carrying out the task

SEALED – *set His seal of ownership on us!*

When something was “sealed” it was a mark of identification and security. A seal represented authenticity.

GIVEN AS A DEPOSIT – *put His Spirit in our hearts
as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come!*

Lit: the earnest of the Spirit – a business term;
the initial down payment.

So ... how does suffering contribute to our ability to bring comfort?

... 4 key words emerge from this section:

Strength

Solace

Selflessness

Sharing

1. STRENGTH (vs. 3-5)

It's the same word used for "Comforter" - the word used to describe the Holy Spirit – the one called alongside to help, to strengthen. The One who fills us up to withstand the pressures of life!

2. SOLACE (vs 6-7 – also v.4)

The pains, stresses, sufferings of life are not just to strengthen us inwardly – but to enable us to minister to others.

3. SELFLESSNESS (vs. 8-10)

***We were under great pressure!
Far beyond our ability to endure!
So that we despaired even of life!***

BUT, look at the results! Vs. 9-10,
***This happened that we might not rely on
ourselves but on God!***

Don't miss the blessing and result in v.10:

He has delivered us.

He will deliver us.

He continues to deliver us.

4. SHARING (v. 11)

Paul uses a word here that's not used anywhere else – **helping together** – it's actually a combination of 3 Greek words: with, under, work – it's a picture of laborers under the burden, working together to get the job done.

Verses 8-11 ... pressure ... purpose ... provision ...
partnership ... praise!

2 Cor. 1:12-22

A Candid Ministry

BACKGROUND:

Paul said he would come in a certain way at a certain time and he didn't do it.

Paul doesn't keep his word.

If Paul's written words can't be counted on, then all of his epistles are subject to question.

If they're subject to question, they should not be viewed as having apostolic authority.

Conclusion: Paul's letters can be rejected.

A Candid Ministry is based on...

1. CONDUCT THAT IS IRREPROACHABLE (v. 12)

Sometimes, even when we're wrongly accused, misunderstood, or misjudged – we need to stop and ask ourselves: Is there anything I've done that God condemns?

holiness – moral purity; the character of God; in other places it's translated: integrity, simplicity, honesty. "All my life is being lived aboveboard".
(Phillips)

sincerity – almost always translated this way – the Greek work which means "tested by the light of the sun" – spotless.

2. A MESSAGE THAT IS UNDERSTANDABLE (vs. 13-14)

For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand ...

Phillips: Our letters to you have no double meaning – they mean just what you understand them to mean when you read them.

Do people really know and understand what we mean without having to figure out all the little hidden innuendos – secret meanings – etc.?

3. MOTIVES THAT ARE UNQUESTIONABLE (vs. 15-17)

Planned...planned...planned – When I planned this, did I do it lightly? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say, “yes, yes” and “no, no”?

Oh how easy it is, when people’s plans have to change, to begin judging their motives!

He uses strong language here:

“planned” = intention; desire; purpose

“worldly” = [*sarx*], out of selfish or carnal ambitions

4. WORDS THAT ARE BELIEVABLE (vs. 18-20)

(v. 18) But as surely as God is faithful, our message is not “yes” and “no.”

Jesus alluded to this when He said (Mt. 5:37), just say “yes” or “no” – you don’t have to make an oath to back it up. Just be true to your word!

5. MINISTRY THAT IS VERIFIABLE (vs. 21-22)

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ.

“Stand firm” = to confirm; to establish; to make firm; to verify.

A candid ministry (life) is one marked by ...

- conduct that is irreproachable
- message that is understandable
- motives that are unquestionable
- words that are believable
- ministry that is verifiable

**A LIFE THAT MATTERS IS
MARKED BY COMPASSION**

2 COR. 1:23-2:11

Characteristics of a ministry of compassion . . .

1. A Willingness to Focus on Others (1:23-24)

Notice his focus on their concerns, rather than his authority, position, and power – *it was in order to spare you!*

It's very difficult to minister with compassion when you are your own object of affection! Make sure your focus is on others.

2. A Willingness to Confront ... for love's sake (2:1-3)

v.3 – I wrote as I did so that when I came I should not be distressed by those who ought to make me rejoice.

He speaks a couple of times here about bringing them “sorrow” – a word that means: pain, sadness, an overwhelming sense of grief.

Eph 4:15, speaking the truth in love

Prov 27:6, Wounds from a friend can be trusted,

....

Heb 12:6, the Lord disciplines those he loves and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son.

v. 11, No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

3. A Willingness to Express Compassion (v. 4)

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

“Depth” = more abundantly; beyond measure; surpassing; uncommon; exceptional; more than is necessary!

Oh how we need God to work in our hearts so that we cry with people – in their pain – in their confusion – over their lost condition.

4. A Willingness to Forgive (vs. 5-11)

v. 7 – *you ought to forgive and comfort him*

v. 8 – *reaffirm your love for him*

v. 10 – “forgive” used 5 times

FORGIVE = to pardon; to give freely; to be gracious; to cancel a debt.

COMFORT = [same word as chap. 1] to encourage; to strengthen; called alongside to help.

REAFFIRM YOUR LOVE = agape love ... to validate or to confirm publicly; to show something to be real.

When it's time to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm our love:

v. 6 – the punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him.

“Sufficient” = meet; fitting; adequate

v. 7 – so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow

“Overwhelmed” = devoured; swallowed up; drowned

When it's time to forgive, comfort, and reaffirm our love:

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

“Outwit” = exploit; defraud

“Unaware” = ignorant; uninformed; fail to understand

“Schemes” = used only by Paul 6x; 5x in 2 Cor. – his devices, thoughts, and purposes.

A ministry that is effective is a compassionate ministry –

a ministry that is . . .

... willing to focus on others

... willing to confront ... for love's sake

... willing to declare and demonstrate compassion

... willing to forgive

2 Cor 2:12-17

A Conquering Ministry

A Conquering Ministry is one that . . .

1. Discerns God's timing and direction (vs 12-13)

... I found that the Lord had opened a door for me . . . So I said goodbye to them and went on to Macedonia.

This is typical in Paul's writings:

Acts 14:27, after his first missionary journey, he reports how "God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."

In Col 4:3 he asks for prayer that "God may open a door for our message."

This is typical in Paul's writings:

In 1 Cor 16:9 he explained, "I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me."

Whatever an "open door" is – it does not necessarily mean that there will be no obstacles or opposition!

2. A Conquering Ministry is Defined by Victory (v14)

*But thanks be to God who always leads us in
triumphal procession in Christ*

He is not saying that we will always have circumstances that are triumphant.

... it doesn't mean we'll always have good health.

... it doesn't mean we'll always get the pay raise or the promotion.

... it doesn't mean that everything in life will be like a rose parade.

A third mark of a Conquering Ministry is that it Diffuses the “scent” [aroma] of Christ (vs 14-16)

NKJV: ... and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place.

NIV: “through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him.”

NLT: “He uses us ... to spread the Good News like a sweet perfume.”

To diffuse, to spread = to make manifest, to expose to view, to make visible or known, by words, deeds or in any other way, that which was previously hidden or unknown.

4. A Conquering Ministry is marked by a Delight to please God and not people (v 17)

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

“Peddle” = to engage in retail trade but carries the idea of trickery. The adjective with the same root means “deceitful” and “false.” So it means to sell or to hawk deceitfully (usually by misrepresenting something), for an illegitimate profit.

The enemy would love to get you fixated on the question, “Who is equal to such a task?” (v.16)

A conquering ministry will be marked by a “sincere” life that delights in pleasing Him.

A conquering ministry:

- discerns the direction of God
- defined by victory
- diffuses the “aroma” of Christ
- delights in pleasing God, rather than people

2 Cor 3:1-18

A Convincing Ministry

1. PRODUCES CHANGED LIVES (vs 1-3)

... you yourselves are our letter ... you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry

It might be supported by all kinds of other “credentials” – but without this one, the rest are worthless!

Keep in mind what God had been doing in Corinth –
1 Cor 6:9-11:

*Do not be deceived: neither the **sexually immoral** nor **idolaters** nor **adulterers** nor **male prostitutes** nor **homosexual offenders** nor **thieves** nor the **greedy** nor **drunkards** nor **slanders** nor **swindlers** will inherit the kingdom of God. **And that is what some of you were.** But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

A convincing ministry ...

2. PREFERS CHRIST ABOVE SELF (4-6a)

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

[Continuing to answer the question from 2:16]

A convincing ministry ...

3. PROMOTES LIBERTY OVER LEGALISM **(vs 6b-17)**

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom [liberty].
(v 17)

Letter

kills

ministry of death

engraved on stones

Spirit

gives life

ministry of the Spirit

engraved on our hearts

Letter

glorious but fading

ministry of condemnation

veil lies on their heart

Spirit

more glorious;

exceeds in glory;

glory that excels;

much more glory

ministry of righteousness

veil is taken away

A fourth characteristic of a convincing ministry:

PRACTICES WHAT IT PREACHES (v. 18)

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

If the Word of God does not continue to change you — how do you expect it, through you, to change the lives of others?

Marks of a convincing life and ministry ...

- produces changed lives
- prefers Christ above self
- promotes liberty over legalism
- practices what it preaches

2 Cor 4:1-16

An Effective Life & Ministry is Based on Consistency

Note how the passage begins and ends ...

1b – *we do not lose heart ...* 16a – *we do not lose heart*

MSG: *we're not about to throw up our hands and walk off the job*

NLT: *we never give up*

Literally – to grow faint; to be exhausted; to despair;
to be utterly spiritless

And, he says this in light of the fact that ...

... (v 2) others are apparently successful even though
they're using craftiness

... (vs 3-4) many are still not responding

... (vs 8-12) they're going through some pretty rugged
circumstances – to the point of saying “death is
working in us”

6 keys we need to understand if we're going to have a consistent ministry:

1. UNDERSTANDING THAT OUR MINISTRY IS FROM GOD (v 1)

... through God's mercy we have this ministry, ...

Consistent and effective life & ministry always flows out of a sense of “call” – a recognition that this is a gift of God.

2. UNDERSTANDING THAT TRUTH ALWAYS PREVAILS OVER GIMMICKS

(vs 2-4)

*. . . we have renounced secret and shameful ways;
we do not use deception, nor do we distort the
word of God. . . .*

Secret and shameful ways = that which is disgraceful and dishonest; anything that brings shame.

Craftiness = duplicity; trickery.

Distort = to adulterate, falsify, disguise, or corrupt.

Phillips: We use no hocus-pocus, no clever tricks, no dishonest manipulation of the Word of God.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST AND THE SERVANTHOOD OF THE MINISTER

(vs 5-6)

*For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ
as Lord, and ourselves as your [bond]servants for
Jesus' sake.*

Paul has already alluded to this truth several times – it's all about Jesus, not us!

1:9 – he didn't trust in himself

3:1-5 – he didn't commend himself

4:5 – he didn't preach himself

4. UNDERSTANDING THAT I AM A “CLAY POT”

(vs 7-12)

But we have this treasure in jars of clay . . .

MSG: We carry this precious Message around in the unadorned clay pots of our ordinary lives.

Why would God commit such a precious treasure (v.6, *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*), to such fragile, breakable vessels?

In order *to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us!*

In order to demonstrate how fragile we are (and how powerful God is), he sets up a series of contrasts:

THIS

BUT NOT

THIS

hard pressed

perplexed

persecuted

struck down

crushed

in despair

abandoned

destroyed

He emphasizes this further in vs. 10-12:

v. 10, we always carry around in our body the death of Jesus

v. 11, we're always being given over to death for Jesus' sake

v. 12, death is at work in us

Do you ever complain to God that He hasn't given you a better clay pot?

Ever get jealous of the color, style, and shape of the other pots you see walking around?

A clay pot has to focus on only one thing – to be clean and available for service.

5. UNDERSTANDING THAT FAITH IS ESSENTIAL TO CONSISTENCY

(vs 13-15)

*... with that same spirit of faith we also believe
and therefore speak ...*

Paul quotes from Psa 116:10, and then makes it clear that one of the things that keeps him consistent is what he believes.

What he believes:

v 14, even if we suffer death for the cause of Christ, we will be resurrected with Christ in eternity! These clay pots have a tremendous future after all!

v 15, in the end, all of this will cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God!

6. UNDERSTANDING THAT DAILY RENEWAL IS ESSENTIAL TO LONG-TERM SUCCESS

(v 16)

... Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

What are you doing to be renewed every day?

A life that matters is based on consistency, which means understanding:

- . . . our ministry is from God
- . . . truth always prevails over gimmicks
- . . . the Lordship of Christ and the Servanthood of the minister
- . . . we are clay pots
- . . . faith is essential
- . . . daily renewal is essential to long-term success

2 COR 4:17-5:21

An Effective Life is a “Compelled” Life

Key vs: *For Christ's love compels us!* (5:14)

COMPELS . . .

Literally: to hold something together so it won't fall apart; to enclose; to hold in custody; to press hard . . .

but in the NT . . .

to be claimed; totally controlled; completely dominated; to be governed by something.

In this passage Paul reveals for us at least 5 factors that compel him. They are the things that “hold him together” so he won’t fall apart!

**1. Effective Ministry is Compelled by
PERMANENCE (4:17-18)**

v. 17 momentary vs. eternal

v. 18 temporary vs. eternal

Don't miss the other contrasts here: between "light" and "weighty"; between "troubles" and "glory."

It sounds a lot like what he wrote to the church at Rome (8:17-18) . . . *we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory . . . our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

2. Effective Ministry is Compelled by PERSPECTIVE

(5:1-8)

(verse 7) *We live by faith, not by sight.*

GOOD NEWS: *For our life is a matter of faith, not of sight.*

MSG: *It's what we trust in but don't yet see that keeps us going.*

PHILLIPS: *We have to live by trusting Him without seeing Him.*

4 times in this passage Paul makes reference to “that which is seen” vs. “that which is unseen.”

Paul refers to our bodies (and, in general, to our visible life) in chap 4 as a “clay pot.”

Now in chap 5 he refers to it as a “tent.”

3. Effective Ministry is Compelled by PLEASURE

(5:9-10)

So we make it our goal to please Him . . . for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, . . .

NASB: our ambition

NKJV: our aim

MSG: pleasing God is the main thing

GOOD NEWS: More than anything else, we want to please him

The word for “we shall appear” is the word used generally for “revelation” or to disclose.

We shall be made manifest . . . we shall be unveiled.

Our motives are going to be made public.

Matt 8:17, For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light.

1 Cor 4:5, Judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts.

Someday our motives will be revealed.

Will it be seen that we were motivated by pleasing God?

Have we even taken the time to study His Word to discover what it is that pleases Him?

4. Effective Ministry is Compelled by PASSION (5:11-17)

verse 14, For Christ's love compels us!

Remember what “compels” means: to be claimed; totally controlled; completely dominated; to be governed by something.

Thus, the various translations:

NASB: *the love of Christ controls us*

GOOD NEWS: *We are ruled by the love of Christ*

PHILLIPS: *the very spring of our actions is the love of Christ*

MSG: *Christ's love has moved me to such extremes. His love has the first and last word in everything we do.*

In the next 3 verses he demonstrates some of the ways in which this drastically transforms our lives and ministry . . .

Verse 15, we no longer live for ourselves but for Him!

Verse 16, it changes our whole perspective of people.

Verse 17, we view Christians differently

What would happen to our ministry if we really allowed the sacrificial love of Christ to become what claims us – controls us – completely dominates us and governs us!!??

5. Effective Ministry is Compelled by PARTNERSHIP (5:18-21)

He gave us the ministry of reconciliation . . . He has committed to us the message of reconciliation . . . We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.

MSG: We're Christ's representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women

PHILLIPS: as though God were appealing direct to you through us

When we speak, it's to be as if God Himself is making the appeal.

Two things I know about ambassadors:

- 1) Authority – they speak with authority, because of the one they represent.
- 2) Accountability – they must deliver the message of the one by whom they were sent.

So, let's return to the beginning ... what is it that compels you, motivates you?

An effective life and ministry is compelled by ...

Permanence (eternal vs. temporary)

Perspective (faith vs. sight)

Pleasure (God's pleasure vs. my pleasure)

Passion (the sacrificial love of Christ)

Partnership (His ambassadors for reconciliation!)

6:1-13

A “Commended” Life/Ministry

As servants of God we commend ourselves in every way! [v 4]

COMMEND = to present or mention as worthy of confidence or notice; to recommend.

Synonyms: to praise, laud, extol, applaud

What “commends” you? Me?

An Effective Life/Ministry is commended by . . .

1. The Partnerships it Forms (vs 1-2)

As God's fellow workers . . .

[Phillips] *as cooperators with God Himself*

[NLT] *As God's partners*

[MSG] *Companions as we are in this work with you*

[Good News] *In our work together with God*

2. The Purposes for which it exists (v 3)

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

Now we come to the heart of this passage – where Paul reveals some things about what really commends (recommends, applauds) our ministry – and they aren't the things we usually look for.

In the next 7 vs. Paul outlines 3 sets of 9 things each –

9 kinds of circumstances

9 traits of character

9 sets of contrasts

. . . and he says we do this “in great endurance” –
the word means to stand up under –
steadfastness; unwavering.

3. The Problems it victoriously endures (vs 4-5)

Tough Circumstances (brought on by life)

- troubles: afflictions, hard times, burdens; physical, mental, and spiritual pressures [lit: to be pressed together].
- hardships: sorrow, disappointment, discouragement; the inevitable and inescapable pains of life [lit: the necessities of life].

3. The Problems it victoriously endures (vs 4-5)

– distresses: [lit: narrowness of space; lack of room], calamities, “dire straits”; to be in such a narrow space you can’t break loose.

3. The Problems it victoriously endures (vs 4-5)

Tough Opposition (brought on by others)

- beatings: (5 x he received 39 stripes = 195!), wounds, floggings
- imprisonments: (at least 7 x, both before and after Corinthian letters)

3. The Problems it victoriously endures (vs 4-5)

Tough Opposition (brought on by others)

– riots: [lit: instabilities], state of disorder, confusion, tumults, disturbance and confusion – Antioch (Acts 13:50); Lystra (14:19); Phillipi (16:19); Jerusalem (25:30).

3. The Problems it victoriously endures (vs 4-5)

Tough Commitments (choices we make) – disciplines

– hard work: labors; working so as not to be a burden to others; includes the idea of working to the point of weariness and fatigue.

3. The Problems it victoriously endures (vs 4-5)

Tough Commitments (choices we make) – disciplines

– sleepless nights: staying awake when you'd rather be asleep

– hunger: usually translated fasting – going without food for religious purposes.

4. The Principles by which it is characterized (vs 6-7)

- purity: uprightness; without moral defect; a life without hypocrisy – how we behave when no one else is looking
- understanding/knowledge: comprehension; perception; moral wisdom which is exhibited in right living - the “renewing of our mind” in God’s Word (Rom 12) – having a worldview that comes from saturation with the Word.

4. The Principles by which it is characterized (vs 6-7)

– patience: calm; longsuffering; forbearance; slow to avenge wrongs – ignoring and forgiving the irritating ways of others!

– kindness: goodness; gentleness; thoughtfulness – courtesy in our words and our actions

4. The Principles by which it is characterized (vs 6-7)

- Holy Spirit: none of the rest of this is possible apart from Him – they are the fruit of walking in the Spirit
- sincere love: agape love; genuine love; Christlike love
- truthful speech: language; conversation; more exact
- the Word of Truth

4. The Principles by which it is characterized (vs 6-7)

- power of God: [*dunamis*] – resurrection power at work in us and through us
- weapons of righteousness: armor of God (right hand and left = both offense and defense)

5. The Perceptions which it adopts (vs 8-10)

The last set of 9 is a series of contrasts . . . they contrast a human worldview vs. that of God:

dishonor

glory

bad report

good report

impostors

genuine

unknown

known

5. The Perceptions which it adopts (vs 8-10)

The last set of 9 is a series of contrasts . . . they contrast a human worldview vs. that of God:

dying

living

beaten

but not killed

sorrowful

yet rejoicing

poor

making many rich

having nothing

possessing everything

A real Christian is an odd number anyway. He feels supreme love for one whom he has never seen; talks familiarly every day to someone he cannot see; expects to go to heaven on the virtue of another; empties himself in order to be full; admits he is wrong so he can be declared right; goes down in order to get up; is strongest when he is weakest; richest when he is poorest; and happiest when he feels the worst. He dies so he can live; forsakes in order to have; gives away so he can keep; sees the invisible, hears the inaudible, and knows that which passes knowledge.

The man who has met God is not looking for anything, he has found it. He is not searching for light, for upon him the light has already shined. His certainty may seem bigoted, but his assurance is that of one who knows by experience. His religion is not hearsay. He is not a copy, not a facsimile. He is an original from the hand of the Holy Spirit.

*[A.W. Tozer, *That Incredible Christian*]*

6. The Practices by which it lives (vs 11-13)

We have spoken freely to you and opened wide our hearts to you. We are not withholding our affection from you

So, a life and ministry that really matters is “commended” by:

- The partnerships it forms
- The purposes for which it exists
- The problems it victoriously endures
- The principles by which it is characterized
- The perceptions which it adopts
- The practices by which it lives

6:14-7:1 A CONSECRATED MINISTRY

*Let us prove our reverence for God by
consecrating ourselves to him completely.*

[7:1b, Phillips]

1. UNDERSTANDING OUR RESPONSIBILITY

(6:14-16a)

Do not be yoked together with unbelievers!

MSG: *Don't become partners with ...*

GNT: *Do not try to work together as equals ...*

NASB: *Do not be bound together with ...*

NRSV: *Do not be mismatched ...*

Phillips: *Don't link up with ...*

Look at the five questions and contrasts Paul uses to explain the rationale for this concept (vs 14b-16a):

Righteousness vs. Wickedness (lawlessness)

Light vs. Darkness

Christ vs. Satan (Belial)

Believer vs. Unbeliever

Temple of God vs. Idols

What do righteousness and wickedness have in common?

Common [*metoche*] = participation together, to have shared purposes.

What fellowship can light have with darkness?
[*Koinonia*]

What harmony is there between Christ and Belial (Satan)?

Harmony = concord, to form an agreement.

What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?

[*meris*] - a different word than in v.14. This one has to do with a part, a share, a portion of the whole.

What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?

Lit: means “a putting down together.” – to form a union.

2. UNDERSTANDING OUR ROLE (v.16b)

For we are the temple of the living God!

We are His sanctuary! It comes from a verb that means to inhabit or to dwell in.

A consecrated life is all about God possessing us – abiding in us – filling us up with His presence.

3. UNDERSTANDING OUR RELATIONSHIP (6:17-7:1)

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

He begins by quoting parts of Isaiah (52:11), Ezekiel (20:41), and 2 Sam 7:14,
Come out from them and be separate!

Come out = [from *erchomai*] to come out from the loins of; to come to an end of; to forsake, escape.

Be separate = basic mng: to set apart for a purpose; to mark off by boundaries; to distinguish, determine, define!

A life that really matters begins with an understanding of our responsibility to the world – we don't have common purposes, intimate communion, play the same tune, fit together like pieces of a puzzle, or have a compromising alliance.

It moves to understanding our role as the dwelling place of God. He is with us everywhere, all the time.

And it recognizes the wonderful privilege of becoming His sons and daughters, and the intimacy and privileges of that kind of relationship.

*Lord, prepare me, to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true,
and with thanksgiving,
I'll be a living sanctuary for you.*

7:2-16 A CONFRONTING MINISTRY

*Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter,
I do not regret it. (v.8)*

Living a life that matters means learning to confront biblically:

1. A SPIRIT TO HELP (v.2)

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

we have wronged no one = to act unjustly; to act with intent to injure or damage

we have corrupted no one = to destroy, ruin, spoil, pervert – often by false teaching or misleading tactics

we have exploited no one = to take advantage of,
to outwit, cheat or defraud; literally, “to increase
the number of something by fraudulent means”

2. A SPIRIT OF HUMILITY AND LOVE (v. 3)

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

This goes all the way back to 2:4 where he made clear the purpose for writing to them in the first place: *I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears (if we have those three attitudes – it will change everything!), not to grieve you, but to let you know the depth of my love for you.*

3. A SPIRIT OF HOPE (CONFIDENCE)

(vs. 4, 14-16)

I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; . . . I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

Phillips: “To your face I talk to you with utter frankness; behind your back I talk about you with deepest pride.” (v.4)

4. A SPIRIT OF HONOR (vs. 5-7, 13)

... He [Titus] told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever (7). By all this we are encouraged. . . . his [Titus] spirit has been refreshed by all of you.

5. A SPIRIT OF HONESTY (vs. 8-11)

Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it —

He says ...

“your sorrow led you to repentance” (9)

- MSG: “you were jarred into turning things around”

- GNT: “your sadness made you change your ways.”

“Godly sorrow brings repentance” (10)

“See what this godly sorrow has produced in you”

(11)

Paul speaks the truth knowing that it will HURT
... but never with the intention of doing HARM.

v. 8 – I see that my letter HURT you

That's the same word that's used four more
times and translated as “sorrow” or “sorrowful.”

BUT notice what he says in v. 9, *and so were not HARMED in any way.*

He changes words!

HURT = to grieve, to distress, to make sorrowful

HARM = to be punished; to suffer loss; to sustain injury; to be cast away

Effective life and ministry means learning that sometimes we will be called upon to confront in love. There are a couple of vital lessons here that we learn from Paul:

FIRST, he was willing to endure the pain of confronting fellow believers who were making allowances for sin. He didn't delight in causing them pain, but he knew it was the right thing to do.

So he confronted them with a spirit . . .

... to help

... of humility

... of hope

... of honor

... of honesty

SECOND, and don't miss this – he not only was willing to confront those who were going astray, but he was willing to receive them back into the fellowship when they repented of their sin.

John Maxwell, *Developing The Leaders Around You*, 125-128:

Care Enough to Confront

- 1. Confront ASAP**
- 2. Separate the person from the wrong action.**
- 3. Confront only what the person can change.**
- 4. Give the person the benefit of the doubt.**

John Maxwell, *Developing The Leaders Around You*,
125-128: Care Enough to Confront

5. Be specific.

6. Avoid sarcasm.

7. Avoid words like *always* and *never*.

8. Tell the person how you feel about what was done wrong.

9. Give the person a game plan to fix the problem.

10. Affirm him or her as a person and a friend.

Chapters 8-9 A CONTAGIOUS MINISTRY

For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. (9:2)

CONTAGIOUS = first def. is usually something like: *capable of being transmitted by contact* (usually in reference to disease); further down you'll find something like this: *tending to spread from person to person*. The synonym is "catching."

So what we'll see in this passage today are the marks of a life that is catching – one that spreads from one person to another.

Five marks of a “contagious” life ...

1. GRACE

9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all you need, you will abound in every good work.

8:1 the grace that God has given

8:6 *this act of grace*

8:7 *this grace of giving*

8:9 *you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*

9:14 *the surpassing grace God has given you*

No wonder Paul ends this section by
proclaiming: *Thanks be to God for His
indescribable gift!*

2. GENEROSITY

9:6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

Notice that this generosity “welled up” – “overflowed” - “abounded” from their extreme [deep] poverty!

8:2 *welled up in rich generosity [extremely generous; overflowed in the wealth of their liberality; abounded in the riches of their liberality]*

8:3 *they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability*

9:5 *the generous gift you had promised. . . . a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. [GNT: “you give because you want to, not because you have to.”]*

The words “generous” or “generosity” are used at least 3 more times in chap. 9.

There are three significant truths here about a life lived with generosity ...

Generous ministry follows the law of sowing and reaping.

You will reap what you sow.

You will reap more than you sow.

You will reap later than you sow.

Generous ministry is an act of faith.

The principle here is ... after I have sown generously, God will cause me to reap an abundance. And that takes faith!

Generous ministry is a matter of the heart.

“Generosity is gauged not by the size of the gift but by the size of the heart.”

3. GLADNESS / ENTHUSIASM / JOY

8:2 *out of . . . their overflowing joy*

8:4 *they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing [begged us; imploring us with much urgency]*

8:10 *you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so*

8:11 *your eager willingness to do it*

8:17 *he [Titus] is coming to you with much enthusiasm*

8:19 to show our eagerness to help

9:2 I know your eagerness to help

9:2 your enthusiasm has stirred most of them

9:7, God loves a cheerful giver

MSG: God loves it when the giver delights in the giving.

[Gk - *hilaron*] “Cheerful” = hilarious!

4. GIVING / SHARING

8:4 *sharing [fellowship] in this service to the saints*

8:14 *your plenty will supply what they need*

9:1 *this service to the saints*

9:10 [God] will enlarge the harvest of your
righteousness

9:12 *this service is . . . supplying the needs of God's
people*

9:13 *your generosity in sharing with them and with
everyone else.*

5. GRATEFULNESS [GLORY TO GOD]

A ministry that is contagious is one that always brings praise to God.

8:19 *the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself*

9:11 *your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God*

9:12 *This service is . . . also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.*

MSG: “It produces abundant and bountiful thanksgivings to God.”

GNT: “... produces an outpouring of gratitude to God.”

9:13 *men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ.*

A life that matters is a contagious life – and a contagious life is always marked by ...

... grace

... generosity

... gladness

... giving

... gratefulness

10:1-18

**Effective Life and Ministry is Characterized by
CONFIDENCE**

You are looking only on the surface of things. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as he. (v.7)

In this section, Paul demonstrates for us how we can have a confident, yet humble ministry in the Lord.

1. DIVINE ARSENAL (vs 1-6)

... we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. (vs 3b-4)

GNT: *we do not fight from worldly motives*

NRSV: *we do not wage war according to human standards*

NKJV: *we do not war according to the flesh*

Phillips: *The truth is that, although of course we lead normal human lives, the battle we are fighting is on the spiritual level. The very weapons we use are not those of human warfare but powerful in God's warfare.*

This arsenal includes:

Eph 6:17, TRUTH [The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God]

Eph 4:15, LOVE [Speak the truth in love]

Eph 6:18, PRAYER [Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.]

Heb 11, FAITH

And much more!

These are the weapons that Paul says “have divine power to demolish strongholds!”

The words used here are that of a mighty fortress with high walls, a moat, and drawbridge.

These are the weapons through which “we demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.”

Other translations refer to these as “warped philosophies, proud obstacles” and “speculations.”

These are the weapons that allow us to “take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

Envy, lust, fantasies, worldly dreams and ambitions will never be conquered by worldly weapons.

2. DIVINE AUTHORITY (vs. 7-11)

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

If we're ministering with divine authority it will result in edification rather than destruction – building up, rather than pulling down.

Those operating under divine authority are leaders. Those operating under human authority act like bosses.

H. Gordon Selfridge points out the differences:

LEADER

Says “let’s go!”

Shows how it is done.

Inspires enthusiasm.

Fixes the breakdown.

Says “we.”

BOSS

Says “go!”

Knows how it is done.

Inspires fear.

Fixes blame for the
breakdown.

Says “I.”

3. DIVINE APPROVAL (vs. 12-18)

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

Phillips: It is not self-commendation that matters; it is winning the approval of God.

How can we know if we have divine approval?
Three questions emerge in this last part of the chapter:

**What are my standards for ministry assessment?
(v.12)**

Paul's accusers were "measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves with themselves."

In effect, they had no standard at all!

Am I where God wants me to be? (vs. 13-16)

We will confine our boasting to the field God has assigned to us!

Paul had an assignment to go to the Gentiles. That ministry took him to Corinth. He was to go where others had not yet labored – to be a church planter.

Is God glorified by my ministry? (vs. 17-18)

Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord!

NKJV: He who glories, let him glory in the Lord!

Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom, or the strong man boast of his strength, or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me

(Jer 9:23-24)

If we learn anything here from Paul's life, we learn that a life that matters is a life lived in confidence because we have:

- a divine arsenal
- divine authority
- divine approval

1:3-11	A Comforting Ministry
1:12-22	A Candid Ministry
1:23-2:11	A Compassionate Ministry
2:12-17	A Conquering Ministry
3:1-18	A Convincing Ministry
4:1-16	A Consistent Ministry
4:17-5:21	A Compelled Ministry
6:1-13	A Commended Ministry
6:14-7:1	A Consecrated Ministry
7:2-16	A Confronting Ministry
8-9	A Contagious Ministry
10:1-18	A Confident Ministry

Chapters 11-13 A Caring Ministry

So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. (12:15)

Four marks of a deeply caring life:

1. A GODLY JEALOUSY

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

(11:2-3)

Jealous = earnest concern; deeply devoted zeal – that’s in stark contrast to our general perception of it.

“Godly jealousy” – Ex 20:5

My jealousy over you is the right sort of jealousy, for in my eyes you are like a fresh, unspoiled girl whom I am presenting as a fiancée to your true husband, Christ himself. I am afraid that your minds may be seduced from a single-hearted devotion to him by the same subtle means that the serpent used toward Eve.

[Phillips, 11:2-3]

2. AN HONEST WORD

I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. (11:6)

We have been speaking in the sight of God as those in Christ. (12:19)

I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier (13:2)

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. (13:5)

Prov 25:11 (and many others): *A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver.*

3. AUTHORITY UNDER CONTROL

This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in the use of my authority – the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down. (13:10)

For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those “super-apostles.” (11:4-5)

4. A SERVANT'S HEART

*... what I want is not your possessions but you. . .
So I will gladly spend for you everything I have
and expend myself as well. (12:14-15)*

*... everything we do, dear friends, is for your
strengthening. (12:19)*

... by God's power we will live with him to serve you. (13:4)

I was not a burden to anyone (at least 5 times)

Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more.

[Look at all of 11:23-28!]

Son leaves a note on the table for his mother ...

Mowing the lawn	\$2
Drying dishes	\$1
Raking leaves	\$3
Cleaning garage	\$4
You owe me	\$10

Mother didn't say anything, but laying beside his dinner plate he found a note that said:

Ironing clothes	nothing
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Mending socks	nothing
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Cooking meals	nothing
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Bandaging cuts	nothing
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Baking cookies	nothing
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Love, Mother

A caring ministry is marked by ...

... a godly jealousy

... an honest word

... an authority under control

... a servant's heart