

2 Corinthians 13 Commentary

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2 CORINTHIANS - PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT Click chart to enlarge Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission Another Chart from Charles Swindoll A Third Chart		
Overview of Second Corinthians		
2Co 1:1-7:16 Character of Paul	2Co 8:1-9:15 Collection for the Saints	2Co 10:1-12:21 Credentials of Paul
Testimonial & Didactic	Practical	Apologetic
Past: Misunderstanding & Explanation	Present: Practical Project	Future: Anxieties
Apostle's Conciliation, Ministry & Exhortations	Apostle's Solicitation for Judean Saints	Apostle's Vindication of Himself
Forgiveness, Reconciliation Gratitude	Confidence	Vindication
Ephesus to Macedonia: Change of Itinerary Explained	Macedonia: Preparation for Visit to Corinth	To Corinth: Certainty and Imminence of the Visit
2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21
2Corinthians written ~ 56-57AD - see Chronological Table of Paul's Life and Ministry		
Adapted & modified from Jensen's Survey of the New Testament (Highly Recommended Resource) & Wilkinson's Talk Thru the Bible		

- **IRVING JENSEN** - [Introduction and study tips](#) - excellent preliminary resource - scroll to page 1877 (Notes on both 1-2 Cor begin on p 1829)
- **JOHN MACARTHUR** [2 Corinthians Introduction - same as in the Study Bible](#)
- **JAMES VAN DINE** [2 Corinthians - Author, Purpose, Outline, Argument](#)
- **CHARLES SWINDOLL** - [2 Corinthians Overview](#)
- **MARK SEIFRID** - [The Message of Second Corinthians: 2 Corinthians as the Legitimation of the Apostle](#)
- **J VERNON MCGEE** - [2 Corinthians Introduction](#)
- **DAN WALLACE** - [2 Corinthians: Introduction, Argument, and Outline](#)
- **DAVID MALICK** - [An Introduction To Second Corinthians](#)

2 Corinthians 13:1 This is the third *time* I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES. (NAS95)

- **the third:** 2Co 12:14
- In: Nu 35:30 De 17:6 19:15 1Ki 21:10,13 Mt 18:16 26:60,61 Joh 8:17,18 Heb 10:28,29
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 12:14 Here for this **third time** I am ready to come to you, and I will not be a burden to you; for I do not seek what is yours, but you; for children are not responsible to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.

LET THE EVIDENCE BE CONFIRMED

Alfred Plummer summarizes this last section (2Cor 13:1-10) - The warnings connected with his approaching visit are continued, but there is not much more to be said, and he says it concisely. His concluding charges are given with Apostolic firmness and decision. He explains to them what they may expect from him (1–4), what they must do themselves (5–9), and why he writes before coming (10). 2Co 10:1

This is the third *time* I am coming to you - Paul mentions his forthcoming visit again (2Co 12:14) presumable to focus the Corinthians' attention on the importance of this visit. Acts 18:1+ records the first visit; the second was likely the "painful visit" (2 Cor. 2:1). Paul is no longer defending his apostleship but now confronts the Corinthians. This visit might call for an investigation of persistent sin in the members of the church, in which they might find it necessary to practice church discipline. The Corinthians might soon discover the erroneous accusation that Paul was "meek when face to face with you!" (2Co 10:1+). The time for warnings would soon pass if when he came would be forced to exercise his apostolic authority on this third visit.

Colin Kruse - The first visit was that of Paul's pioneer evangelism in Corinth, and the second the 'painful' visit made after the writing of 1 Corinthians (see Introduction, pp. 23–24). The third visit has already been foreshadowed several times in chs. 10–13 (10:2; 12:14, 20–21), and it is clear from these references and the present context that Paul is prepared for a showdown. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

Vincent - The third time. The great mass of modern expositors hold that Paul made three visits to Corinth, of the second of which there is no record.*

D A Carson - Paul's first visit to Corinth had been for the purpose of planting a church there (Acts 18:1–18; 1 Cor. 4:15; 9:1). His second visit was so painful both to him and to his converts that he resolved not to visit them again for a while (2 Cor. 1:23; 2:1). Now he contemplates his third trip: "This will be my third visit to you," he writes, resuming a point first introduced at 2 Corinthians 12:14. ([An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10-13](#))

Believer's Study Bible - Paul now contemplates a third visit to Corinth, hoping that it will not prove sorrowful as had the second visit. However, the visit will be made, regardless of the difficulties which must be encountered.

Homer Kent - Paul quoted a well-known Old Testament passage to show that his dealings with offenders at Corinth would be done with proper witnesses (Deut. 19:15; cf. Deut. 18:16; 1 Tim. 5:19). He would not take matters into his own hands, but would make certain that strict propriety would be maintained in every instance of discipline. The reference to "three witnesses" in close proximity to the mention of Paul's "third" coming leads some to imagine that the apostle regarded his comings as three separate testimonies

fulfilling the Old Testament requirement. It is extremely unlikely, however, that Paul imagined that testimony coming from one person (himself) on three different occasions satisfied the intent (and usual meaning) of the quoted passage. The explanation given above is therefore preferable. ([A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians](#))

EVERY FACT ([rhema](#)) IS TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY (lit. by the mouth) **OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES** - A quotation from Deut 19:15 which says "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed." The word **fact** ([rhema](#)) in this context refers to a charge or accusation against someone and is used this way in the context of church discipline in Mt 18:16 ("every **fact** [[rhema](#) = that which is spoken] may be confirmed")

MacArthur - That same requirement for multiple witnesses holds true in the process of church discipline. No one is to be put out of the church until a thorough four-step process has been completed. First, a person who knows of a sinning Christian is to reprove him in private (Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1). If he refuses to repent, the one who confronted him does so again, this time bringing one or two others along as witnesses (Matt. 18:16). If he still refuses to repent, the entire church becomes involved in calling him to repentance (Matt. 18:17). If he ignores the church's call to repent, he is to be put out of the church and treated as an unbeliever (Matt. 18:17). In 1 Timothy 5:19 Paul repeated the principle that multiple witnesses are required, this time in connection with allegations against church leaders: "Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses." The sins that trigger the discipline process include serious doctrinal error (1 Tim. 1:18–20), sins that threaten church unity (Titus 3:10), and issues of purity (1 Cor. 5). ([2 Corinthians](#))

R Kent Hughes - The apostle's judgments will be eminently measured and fair—a terrifying thought if taken to heart.

Ryrie - Paul warned that, if necessary, trials were going to be held when he came, in which Jewish rules of evidence-giving would be applied (Dt 19:15).

Murray Harris ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians - NIGTC](#)) summarizes the considerations of Paul's declaration **this is the third time I am coming to you**:

While all agree that the third anticipated visit is a personal visit, there is disagreement as to the nature of these two previous "comings," whether Paul speaks of coming in person or by letter or planning to come but not carrying out that plan. They could be reckoned as

1. two "epistolary" comings (previous letter and 1 Corinthians, or 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 1–9),
2. one personal and one "epistolary" visit (Acts 18:1 and 1 Corinthians),
3. a willingness to come on two previous occasions,
4. two earlier intentions or decisions to come which were never fulfilled,
5. preparations made on two previous occasions for visits which did not eventuate,
6. one actual and one intended visit (Acts 18:1 and 2 Cor. 1:15–16, 23) (Dockx 193), or
7. two previous actual visits (Acts 18:1 and the painful visit).

Although some slight textual and grammatical ambiguities exist in 2Co 12:14 and 2Co 13:1, all contextual considerations favor the last proposal, that these verses refer to two actual visits by Paul to Corinth. It would have been inept for Paul to reckon one or two letters as visits when his imminent third visit was decidedly personal.¹²⁷

Phillip E Hughes on **this is the third time I am coming to you**: - As Allo, Plummer, Lightfoot, Alford, Olshausen, Hodge, and others point out, the opening sentence of this verse is capable of only one natural and unforced meaning, namely, that Paul, having already visited the Corinthians on two occasions is now on the point of coming to them for the third time. An ambiguity of sense is apparent to those alone who approach the sentence with the preconception that Paul had previously paid only one actual visit to Corinth, so that it becomes necessary to understand him to mean: "This is the third time that I am coming to you in intention". An even more unsatisfactory interpretation is that of Beza and some others, who wish to explain the comings in question as being of an epistolary nature, so that the two previous comings should be understood of Paul's two earlier epistles to the Corinthians, and the third, impending, coming of this present letter. The question of the number of Paul's visits to Corinth has already been discussed in the commentary above on 12:14.

[Mormons Answered Verse by Verse](#) - David Reed

2 Corinthians 13:1 In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

Sometimes Mormons will use this verse, or others like it, to argue along these lines: At least two witnesses are needed to establish

something as truth. The Bible is only one witness, so a second witness was needed. God provided the Book of Mormon as that second witness, thus establishing the gospel of Christ.

The principal flaw in this argument is that it fails to recognize that the Bible itself is actually a collection of sixty-six books by dozens of writers. If more than one witness is needed to establish the gospel of Christ, then we have Matthew and Mark and Luke and John and Paul, and so on, each of whom wrote separate testimonies on separate scrolls. It was only years later that the accounts written by these different individuals were assembled together and bound into a single volume as the Bible.

There is no basis for claiming that the Book of Mormon was needed as a second witness in addition to the Bible.

QUESTION - [What does the Bible say about church discipline?](#)

ANSWER - Church discipline is the process of correcting sinful behavior among members of a local church body for the purpose of protecting the church, restoring the sinner to a right walk with God, and renewing fellowship among the church members. In some cases, church discipline can proceed all the way to [excommunication](#), which is the formal removal of an individual from church membership and the informal separation from that individual.

Matthew 18:15–20 gives the procedure and authority for a church to practice church discipline. Jesus instructs us that one individual (usually the offended party) is to go to the offending individual privately. If the offender refuses to acknowledge his sin and repent, then two or three others go to confirm the details of the situation. If there is still no repentance—the offender remains firmly attached to his sin, despite two chances to repent—the matter is taken before the church. The offender then has a third chance to repent and forsake his sinful behavior. If at any point in the process of church discipline, the sinner heeds the call to repent, then “you have gained your brother” (verse 15, ESV). However, if the discipline continues all the way through the third step without a positive response from the offender, then, Jesus said, “let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector” (verse 17, ESV).

The process of church discipline is never pleasant just as a father never delights in having to discipline his children. Sometimes, though, church discipline is necessary. The purpose of church discipline is not to be mean-spirited or to display a holier-than-thou attitude. Rather, the goal of church discipline is the restoration of the individual to full fellowship with both God and other believers. The discipline is to start privately and gradually become more public. It is to be done in love toward the individual, in obedience to God, and in godly fear for the sake of others in the church.

The Bible’s instructions concerning church discipline imply the necessity of [church membership](#). The church and its pastor are responsible for the spiritual well-being of a certain group of people (members of the local church), not of everyone in the city. In the context of church discipline, Paul asks, “What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?” (1 Corinthians 5:12). The candidate for church discipline has to be “inside” the church and accountable to the church. He professes faith in Christ yet continues in undeniable sin.

The Bible gives an example of church discipline in a local church—the church of Corinth (1 Corinthians 5:1–13). In this case, the discipline led to excommunication, and the apostle Paul gives some reasons for the discipline. One is that sin is like yeast; if allowed to exist, it spreads to those nearby in the same way that “a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough” (1 Corinthians 5:6–7). Also, Paul explains that Jesus saved us so that we might be set apart from sin, that we might be “unleavened” or free from that which causes spiritual decay (1 Corinthians 5:7–8). Christ’s desire for His bride, the church, is that she might be pure and undefiled (Ephesians 5:25–27). The testimony of Christ Jesus (and His church) before unbelievers is important, too. When David sinned with Bathsheba, one of the consequences of his sin was that the name of the one true God was blasphemed by God’s enemies (2 Samuel 12:14).

Hopefully, any disciplinary action a church takes against a member is successful in bringing about godly sorrow and true repentance. When repentance occurs, the individual can be restored to fellowship. The man involved in the 1 Corinthians 5 passage repented, and Paul later encouraged the church to restore him to full fellowship with the church (2 Corinthians 2:5–8). Unfortunately, disciplinary action, even when done correctly and in love, is not always successful in bringing about restoration. Even when church discipline fails to bring about repentance, it is still needed to accomplish other good purposes such as maintaining a good testimony in the world.

We have all likely witnessed the behavior of a youngster who is always allowed to do as he pleases with no consistent discipline. It is not a pretty sight. Nor is the overly permissive parent loving, for a lack of guidance dooms the child to a dismal future. Undisciplined, out-of-control behavior will keep the child from forming meaningful relationships and performing well in any kind of setting. Similarly, discipline in the church, while never enjoyable or easy, is necessary at times. In fact, it is loving. And it is commanded by God. [GotQuestions.org](#)

2 Corinthians 13:2 I have previously said when present the second time, and though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest as well, that if I come again I will not spare anyone,

Amplified - I have already warned those who sinned formerly and all the rest also, and I warn them now again while I am absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come back, I will not spare [them],

The Message On my second visit I warned that bunch that keeps sinning over and over in the same old ways that when I came back I wouldn't go easy on them. Now, preparing for the third, I'm saying it again from a distance. If you haven't changed your ways by the time I get there, look out.

The Living Bible I have already warned those who had been sinning when I was there last; now I warn them again and all others, just as I did then, that this time I come ready to punish severely and I will not spare them.

NLT I have already warned those who had been sinning when I was there on my second visit. Now I again warn them and all others, just as I did before, that next time I will not spare them.

ESV I warned those who sinned before and all the others, and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit, that if I come again I will not spare them--

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

- **I have previously said:** 2Co 1:23 10:1,2,8-11 12:20 1Co 4:19-21 5:5
- **though now absent:** 2Co 13:10
- **to those who have sinned in the past** 2Co 12:21
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 12:21 I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.

ANOTHER WARNING TO UNREPENTANT SINNERS

I have previously said when present the second time- A better translation in context (**I will not spare**) is the ESV "I warned those who sinned before and all the others"

Colin Kruse on previously said (warned) - Paul uses the perfect tense (proieirēka, lit. 'I have warned'), which locates the warning in the past while underlining its continuing applicability down to the present. In what follows, Paul both updates his warning and pinpoints for us the time when he first issued it: and I warn them now while absent, as I did when present on my second visit. The occasion of the original warning was the apostle's 'second visit', i.e. the 'painful' visit during which he had been attacked by the offender (cf. 2:5; 7:12). From the present context we learn that Paul did not conclude his second visit before uttering dire warnings to those who were still unrepentant for their previous sins. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

And though now absent I say in advance to those who have sinned in the past and to all the rest as well- Yes, Paul is **absent** and it appears he is fearful of the old adage being proven true in Corinth that [when the cat's away, the mice will play!](#)

That if I come again I will not spare ([pheidomai](#)) *anyone* - Paul is warning "[I will not go easy on them!](#)" This reminds me of the old saying "[spare the rod, spoil the child](#)." **Anyone** is not in the original Greek, but clearly in the context Paul is giving an all-inclusive, sweeping warning to the Corinthians! As noted below the verb [pheidomai](#) is a strong word, not an idle threat, but a clear warning that unrepentant Corinthians would receive what their sin called for!

Homer Kent - On his previous visit, Paul had said, "If I come again, I will not spare." The "if" was now about to be realized. Sufficient time had elapsed for these sins in the church to be dealt with. If they had not, no more delay could be expected. ([A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians](#))

MacArthur - The time for grace, mercy, and patience was over. There would be no more warnings; when he came again Paul would deal with the sinners at Corinth. If they failed to repent, they would find Paul not to their liking when he visited (12:20). As a faithful

parent (1 Cor. 4:14–15), Paul could not leave his spiritual children in a state of disobedience; he had to discipline them and bring to the place of obedience and blessing. Their persistent failure to repent would bring action on his part. For God's glory, the church's purity, and sinning believers' well-being, and gospel witness, Paul did not hesitate to confront sin in the churches under his care. As previously noted, he had already rebuked the Corinthians for their failure to discipline the man living in immorality (1Co 5:1-5+)....Paul loved the Corinthians too much to ignore the sin that ravaged the lives of individuals and destroyed the power and testimony of the church. ([2 Corinthians](#))

Kistemaker - Paul tells them that, if necessary, he will come to hold court and administer discipline. He would rather see people repent and change their ways than come and apply corrective measures.

Previously said ([4275](#))(**proeipon** from **pro** = before + **ereo** = to say) means to foretell, say before, speak of in advance, tell beforehand, say something in advance of an event. Zodhiates - (I) To say, speak, declare before or formerly. In the perf. (2 Cor. 13:2, with hóti [3754], that; Gal. 1:9 [cf. 1:8]; Heb. 10:15; 2 Pet. 3:2; Jude 1:17 [cf. Rom. 9:29]). (II) To say or tell before an event, to foretell. In the perf. (Rom. 9:29); with humín, to you (Matt. 24:25); humín pánta (humín [5213], dat. pl. of sú [4771], you; pánta, the neut. pl. of pás [3956], all), "unto you all things" (a.t. [Mark 13:23]); with hóti (3754), that (2 Cor. 13:2). In 2 Pet. 3:2, tón rhēmátōn (tón [3588], the; rhēmátōn [4487], words), of these sayings, proeirēmēnōn, foretold. See Jude 1:17. **Proeipon** - 12x in 12v - foretold(2), forewarned(1), previously said(1), said before(3), spoken beforehand(2), told...in advance(2), told...before(1). Matt. 24:25; Mk. 13:23; Acts 1:16; Rom. 9:29; 2 Co. 7:3; 2 Co. 13:2; Gal. 1:9; Gal. 5:21; 1 Thess. 4:6; Heb. 4:7; 2 Pet. 3:2; Jude 1:17

Spare ([5339](#))(**pheidomai** means to treat leniently, to forbear, to spare. To avoid or refrain from doing something. Pheidomai is a strong word, used in classical Greek to speak of sparing someone's life on the battlefield. It conveyed the idea of having mercy on an enemy. 9v in NT - Acts 20:29; Rom. 8:32; Rom. 11:21; 1 Co. 7:28; 2 Co. 1:23; 2 Co. 12:6; 2 Co. 13:2; 2 Pet. 2:4; 2 Pet. 2:5

2 Corinthians 13:3 since you are seeking for proof of the Christ who speaks in me, and who is not weak toward you, but mighty in you.

Amplified - Since you desire and seek [perceptible] proof of the Christ Who speaks in and through me. [For He] is not weak and feeble in dealing with you, but is a mighty power within you;

NLT - I will give you all the proof you want that Christ speaks through me. Christ is not weak in his dealings with you; he is a mighty power among you.

The Living Bible I will give you all the proof you want that Christ speaks through me. Christ is not weak in his dealings with you but is a mighty power within you

The Message You who have been demanding proof that Christ speaks through me will get more than you bargained for. You'll get the full force of Christ, don't think you won't.

- **Since you are seeking for proof** 2Co 10:8-10
- **Christ:** 2Co 2:10 Mt 10:20 18:18-20 Lu 21:15 1Co 5:4,5
- **Who:** 2Co 2:6 2Co 3:1-3 2Co 12:12 1Co 9:1-3
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

PROOF SEEKING CORINTHIANS

This verse continues the thought of the previous verse where he warns he will not spare the guilty parties. He now tells them why he will not spare them.

Homer Kent - Because the Corinthians had been led to doubt Paul's authority, and thus to act in contradiction to Christ's instruction, he would be forced to speak severely when he came. The Corinthians would certainly recognize at that time that the very authority of Christ would display itself through him. ([A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians](#))

Since you are seeking ([zeteo](#)) for proof ([dokime](#)) of the Christ Who speaks in me - This is amazing (that they still needed **proof** of his apostleship) in view of his letters and two previous visits, that the Corinthians have been so seduced by the false teachers to the point that they questioned Paul's authenticity and wanted proof that Christ was truly speaking through him. As **Robertson** adds the curt comment "He will give it to them!" The authority of Christ in him would soon be displayed to those who were disobedient. In their seeking of proof of Paul's apostolic authenticity, they soon (as the saying goes) may [get more than they bargained for!](#)

Guzik on **since you are seeking for proof** - Paul's opponents, the most eminent apostles among the Corinthian Christians (2 Corinthians 11:5 and 12:11), said they wanted to see more "power" from Paul. He seemed too weak and humble for their liking. So Paul addressed this thinking: "You want to see proof of Christ speaking in me? Fine. When I come the third time, you will see the power of God in my rebuke as I clean house. So clean it up before I come."

William MacDonald - The Corinthians had been deceived by the false teachers into doubting that Paul was a true apostle. In fact, they actually challenged him to give them some proof that he was an authentic spokesman for God. What were his credentials that Christ was really speaking through him? The apostle begins his reply by quoting their impertinent request: "since you seek a proof of Christ speaking in me ..." Then in a parenthesis, he reminds them that Christ had revealed Himself to them through him in a mighty way. There had been nothing weak about the tremendous revolution in their lives when they believed the gospel message.

And Who is (absolutely) **not weak** ([astheneo](#)) **toward you, but mighty** ([dunateo](#)) **in** (among) **you** (plural ~ congregation) - He is still referring to Christ Who is not going to be **weak** in dealing with them, but to the contrary is powerful to accomplish His purposes - He had saved them and was also sanctifying them. (Play upbeat song - [Mighty is Our God!](#))

Colin Kruse - Christ had worked powerfully by the Spirit among the Corinthians when Paul performed the signs of an apostle in Corinth (12:12; cf. Rom. 15:18-19), but in the present context Paul has in mind the power of Christ revealed in disciplinary action against those Corinthians who persisted in their sins. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

Proof ([1382](#)) [dokime](#), cf [dokimazo](#)) can describe a trial, test or ordeal (2Co 8:2). More commonly in the NT it describes the quality of having stood the test. **Dokime** in secular Greek was used to describe metals that had been tested and been determined to be pure. The idea of **dokime** is that when you put the metal through a fiery test and if it comes out on the other side "persevering and enduring", you call the metal proven, authentic or genuine. Dokime - 6v in NT - Ro 5:4; 2 Co. 2:9; 2 Co. 8:2; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 13:3; Phil. 2:22

Mighty ([1414](#)) [dunateo](#) from [dunatos](#) = one who possesses power; from [dunamai](#) = describes power in one by virtue of inherent ability and/or resources) means to show oneself to be able to accomplish what needs to be accomplished. Webster says mighty means having the necessary power, resources, skill, time, opportunity, etc., to do something. Ro 14:4 = "He will stand, for the Lord is (present tense - continually) **able** to make him stand." 2Co 9:8 = "God is (present tense - continually) **able** to make all grace abound to you."

2 Corinthians 13:4 For indeed He was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives because of the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, yet we will live with Him because of the power of God directed toward you.

- **he was:** Lu 22:43,44 Joh 10:18 1Co 15:43 Php 2:7,8 Heb 5:7 1Pe 3:18
- **yet He lives because of the power of God:** Ac 2:36 4:10-12 Ro 6:4,9,10 14:9 Eph 1:19-23 Php 2:9-11 1Pe 3:18,22 Rev 1:17,18
- **we also are weak in Him:** 2Co 4:7-12 10:3,4,10 1Co 2:3
- **in him:** Php 3:10 2Ti 2:11,12
- **we will live with Him:** Ac 3:16 Ro 6:8-11
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Romans 6:8-11 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. 11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

BECAUSE HE LIVES WE WILL LIVE

For (gar) - Term of explanation, explaining Christ's "weakness."

Indeed He was crucified ([stauroo](#)) **because of weakness** ([astheneia](#)), **yet He lives** ([zao](#)) **because of the power** ([dunamis](#)) **of God** - Jesus laid aside His divine prerogatives to become the humanly weak "Lamb of God" that He might be the perfect sacrifice on the Cross. **And yet He lives**, because **the power of God** resurrected Him from the dead.

Guzik - Just as Jesus displayed weakness yet now reigns in power, so Paul will come with similar power after showing the Corinthian Christians his weakness.

Colin Kruse - Paul reminds his readers that the Christ who now lives by the power of God was once crucified in weakness. This provides a paradigm by which they should understand the paradox of Paul's own apostolic ministry: For we are weak in him, but in dealing with you we shall live with him by the power of God. The many evidences of the apostle's weakness (cf. 1:3–11; 4:7–12; 11:23–29) should not blind the Corinthians to the fact that Christ's power is being manifested in his apostolate. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

For we also are weak ([astheneo](#)) in Him, yet we will live ([zao](#)) with Him because of the power of God directed toward you- Amplified = "And though we too are weak in Him [as He was humanly weak], yet in dealing with you [we shall show ourselves] alive and strong in [fellowship with] Him by the power of God." Paul affirms that he is fully confident that despite his weakness, he is in union with Christ (**in Him**) and like Christ, he will have the (resurrection) power of God manifest in and through him when he is before the Corinthians and deals with them.

Homer Kent - If it bothered the Corinthians that Paul did not always behave as a powerful, authoritarian leader, let them remember that Christ also had displayed this combination of weakness and strength. He had shown "weakness" by human estimation when He submitted meekly to His enemies without violence or retaliation, and endured the humiliation of crucifixion. That was not the whole story, however, for He also was resurrected by the power of God, showing that His "weakness" was no permanent nor degrading condition. ([A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians](#))

MacArthur - He (CHRIST) lives because of the power of God, who raised Him from the dead (Rom. 1:4; 7:4; 8:34; 10:9; 1Cor. 6:14; 15:4, 20; Gal. 1:1; Col. 2:12; 1 Peter 1:21). That was the triumphant message that the early Christian preachers boldly proclaimed (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15, 26; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30, 33, 37). Just as Christ's death showed His human weakness, so also did His resurrection demonstrate His divine power...Paul told the Corinthians that the power of God that raised him with Christ and gave him eternal life would be directed toward the Corinthians when he again visited Corinth. The apostle would come in the authority and divine power of Christ and deal firmly with those who persisted in their sinful rebellion. ([2 Corinthians](#))

MacDonald comments Christ's "followers are feeble in themselves, yet the Lord demonstrates His power through them."

Note short description of Gospel (except that it does not mention his burial nor does it clearly note the substitutionary atonement as in 1Co 15:3-4) - Jesus died as man but lives because of the resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4+ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died **for our sins** (SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT) according to the Scriptures, and that **He was buried**, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

Weakness ([769](#)) [astheneia](#) from a = without + sthénos = strength, bodily vigor) means literally without strength or bodily vigor = want of strength = lacking strength. Literally astheneia refers to bodily diseases or ailments (Lk 5:15, 13:11, 12, Jn 5:5, 11:4, 28:9). Another meaning of astheneia is incapacity to do or experience something, an inability to produce results, a state of weakness or limitation (1Co 15:43; 2Co 11:30; 12:5, 9, 10, 13:4; Ro 8:27; Heb 4:15; 5:2; 7:28; 11:34) Paul's use in 1Co 2:3 conveys the sense of weakness in terms of courage.

2 Corinthians 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?

- **Test** : Ps 17:3 26:2 119:59 139:23,24 La 3:40 Eze 18:28 Hag 1:5,7 1Co 11:28,31 Ga 6:4 Heb 4:1 12:15 1Jn 3:20,21 Rev 2:5 3:2,3
- **in the faith**: Col 1:23 2:7 1Ti 2:15 Tit 1:13 2:2 1Pe 5:9
- **Or do you not recognize**: 1Co 3:16 6:2,15,19 9:24 Jas 4:4
- **Jesus Christ**: 2Co 6:16 Joh 6:56 14:23 15:4 17:23,26 Ro 8:10 Ga 2:20 4:19 Eph 2:20-22 3:17 Col 1:27 2:19 1Pe 2:4,5
- **fail the test**: 2Co 13:6,7 Jer 6:30 Ro 1:28 2Ti 3:8 Tit 1:16 1Co 9:27 Heb 6:8
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- C H Spurgeon - [Self-Examination](#) or [listen to the audio](#)
- **CLICK HERE FOR IN DEPTH COMMENTS ON THIS VERSE**

Related Passages:

Psalm 26:1-2 ([see commentary from Spurgeon](#)) A Psalm of David. **Vindicate** me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity, And I have trusted in the LORD without wavering. 2 **Examine** me, O LORD, and **try** me; **Test** my mind and my heart.

A VERY IMPORTANT SELF-EXAMINATION

Test ([peirazo](#) in [present imperative](#)) yourselves to see if you are in the faith; **examine** ([dokimazo](#) in [present imperative](#)) yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test ([adokimos](#))? - See [link above](#) for **IN DEPTH** discussion of this verse. Note the emphasis on **yourselves**! You've been testing me dear Corinthians, now test **yourselves**!

Those who affirm the eternal security of the believer in Christ generally hold one of two popular interpretations of 2 Corinthians 13:5.

(1) **The Reformed view** assumes that Paul was addressing the possibility that some in the Corinthian church were not genuine believers—even though they claimed to be—and that Paul challenged them to test whether they had ever truly been born again. Therefore today those who profess Christ as Savior should examine themselves to be sure they really are Christians. MacArthur represents this view.

Doubts about one's salvation are not wrong so long as they are not nursed and allowed to become an obsession. Scripture encourages self-examination. Doubts must be confronted and dealt with honestly and biblically. In 2 Corinthians 13:5, Paul wrote, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" That admonition is largely ignored—and often explained away—in the contemporary church. (John F. MacArthur Jr., *The Gospel according to Jesus* - Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988, 190. Two other times in this book MacArthur refers to this verse to support the view that Christians should examine themselves to determine the validity of their conversion)

Buswell also supports the Reformed view and applies this verse when the behavior of a professing believer does not evidence an obedient walk with Christ.

But my point is that so long as a professing Christian is in the state of carnality, no pastor, no Christian friend, has the slightest ground for holding that this carnal person has ever been regenerated. We are not to judge in the sense of pronouncing eternal destiny. God's judgments are inscrutable. Nevertheless, it is a pastor's duty to counsel such a person. "You do not give evidence of being in a regenerate state. You must remember Paul's warning, 'Examine yourselves whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? You are not reprobate, are you?' (2Corinthians 13:5)." (James Oliver Buswell, *A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1962), 2:147) ([See related article by Sam Storms](#)).

(2) A second view of 2 Corinthians 13:5 is that Paul was not doubting the Corinthians' salvation, but was calling them to examine the quality of their walk with Christ. In other words Paul was addressing their **ongoing sanctification**, not their **once-for-all justification**.

Colin Kruse - The positioning of the reflexive pronouns (heautous, **'yourselves'**) shows that Paul is emphasizing that it is themselves that the Corinthians should be examining rather than him. He wants them to see whether they are holding to the faith, i.e. the gospel, and conforming their lives to it. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test! In a previous letter Paul had stressed the importance of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the congregation and the individual believer, and the moral implications of this (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19–20). In the present context, where the prospect of moral failure on the part of the Corinthians has stimulated Paul's concern (cf. 12:21), the ethical imperative of the presence of Christ by the Spirit is implicitly invoked by Paul's question. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? The Corinthians appear to have been quite confident that Christ was in them, so the purpose of Paul's question is to reawaken them to the moral implications of that great fact.

Swindoll - A more literal rendering might be: "**You yourselves test ... you yourselves prove ... that Jesus Christ is in you**" The emphasis is on each one of us examining ourselves to see whether Jesus is, in reality, in us. **Admittedly, this relates to our initial conversion and salvation, but it can also refer to Christ working in and through us in our daily walk with Him.** This test doesn't ask how faithful we are to church attendance, how well we say mealtime prayers, or how many Bible verses we have memorized. **The essential exam determines whether we genuinely stand within the circle of faith with Jesus Christ** Please note that Paul isn't urging the Corinthians to doubt their salvation, although this passage is often taken that way. Yes, Paul believed that false teachers among the Corinthians lacked true faith in Christ, so for them such a test would demonstrate their lack of

salvation. But for the most part, he regarded the Corinthians as brothers and sisters in Christ. The whole context of 2 Corinthians 13 pertains to their willingness to respond positively to Paul's correction—that is, spiritual growth or "sanctification." They would demonstrate the authenticity of their relationship with Christ when they responded positively to Christ's commands through Paul. When Paul encouraged the Corinthians to examine whether they were "in the faith," it was his way of saying, "Show me that you are a believer. Live like it! Obey the words of Christ! Do those things that demonstrate without a doubt the sincerity of your faith!"

Wilberforce - It pleased God to give me this morning an affecting sense of my own sinfulness, and a determination to live henceforth, by his grace, more to his glory. I was cold at first, yet moved afterwards by a sense of heavenly things, and determined to go to the important work of self-examination, and to set about a thorough change. Henceforth I purpose, by God's grace, to employ my faculties and powers more to his glory; to live a godly, diligent, useful, self-denying life. I know my own weakness, and I trust to God alone for strength.

Guzik - We are not to look for perfection—in ourselves or in others—but we should see real evidence of Jesus Christ in us.

Robert Gundry - **2Co 13:5–6: Be testing yourselves [to see] if you're in the faith. Be proving yourselves.**

Some Corinthians are seeking proof that the Christ is speaking in Paul (2Co 13:3). So Paul turns the tables on them by telling them to prove themselves. The proof will have to start with self-testing as to whether they're "in the faith," that is, as to whether their conduct proves or disproves the genuineness of their professed belief in Christ. If they fail this self-test, they'd better repent of their opposition to Paul and of their immorality (the latter listed in 2Co 12:21). Otherwise they face Paul's unsparing excommunication (2Co 13:2). The present tense of testing and proving puts a spotlight on Paul's commands (compare 2Co 2:9).

Or you recognize about yourselves, don't you, that Jesus Christ [is] in you unless indeed you're disproved [= disqualified, proved not to be a true believer]? The affirmative answer implied by this question compliments the Corinthians on their knowledge but leaves them without excuse. They know better than to assume they don't have to prove by their conduct that Jesus Christ is in them, which is the flip side of their being in the faith (compare Romans 8:10; Galatians 2:20). "**Or**," which introduces Paul's question, makes it an alternative to the preceding command, as though to say, "If you're not inclined to be proving yourselves because of my command that you do so, then be proving yourselves because of your knowledge that Jesus Christ is in you unless you're disproved." "**Indeed**" stresses the possibility of being **disproved** and thus unsaved despite a **profession of faith** (see the comments on 1 Corinthians 9:27, where the word translated "disproved" here in 2Co 13:5 is translated "disqualified" in accordance with the context there of athletic competition). Because of the frequency with which Paul portrays believers as "in Christ" we might have expected him to say here, "that you're in Christ." But he says, "that Jesus Christ [is] in you," for a parallel with the Corinthians' seeking proof of the Christ speaking "in" Paul (2Co 13:3). So the reversal of "in Christ" underlines Paul's turning the tables on the Corinthians by commanding them to prove themselves rather than seeking proof concerning him. Whereas the Christ is powerful in his dealings "among" the Corinthians as a body of believers (2Co 13:3), here he's present "in" believers individually unless they're disproved. ([Commentary on the New Testament](#))

Dr. S Lewis Johnson former professor at Dallas Theological Seminary offers somewhat of a **hybrid interpretation** that is not incompatible with the two most common interpretations (**#1**) and (**#2**) of 2 Corinthians 13:5...

The apostle now turns to the necessity of self-examination. He states in the fifth verse, "Test yourselves to see if you're in the faith. Examine yourselves." They had been testing him. He turns the table on them and twice and emphatically says, "Test yourselves." He uses that word in the emphatic position twice, "Yourselves test," "Test yourselves."

Now in stating this it's very plain why he says that. If they fail the test, they have no right to blame the apostle for anything. If they're not believers, if they fail the test and they don't even belong to the Lord, what right do they have to criticize an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ?

And turning it on the other side, if they pass the test, how can they blame the apostle because the apostle is the one who brought them the knowledge that they claim that they have. So the apostle has them on the horns of a dilemma.

The irony is obvious, if they pass they cannot blame Paul, if they fail they cannot blame Paul.

The fact that they are a Christian Assembly is testimony ultimately to the faithfulness and the authenticity of the preaching of the Apostle Paul. So if they fail, they cannot blame him. If they pass, they cannot blame the

evangelist who brought them to the condition in which they are passing the test. (Ed: This interpretation is more in line with interpretation #2).

(Ed: Now Dr. Johnson seems to apply 2Cor 13:5 in a manner that is more in keeping with interpretation#1)

When we say, “**Test ourselves or examine yourselves**,” we’re saying something that we need in the United States of America, and in fact, in the Western world.

There are literally millions of professing Christians who need to pay attention to this statement of the apostle.

They have entered into a shallow commitment to Christianity, they’ve joined the church, they’ve been baptized or they’ve done other things that might make them think that they are genuine believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. They’ve been encouraged to think that, by men who’ve not been careful to point out that there is more to becoming a Christian than subscribing to a statement.

They don’t hate sin.

They don’t love holiness.

They do not pray.

They do not study the word of God.

They do not walk humbly with God.

(Ed comment: Could Christ be in such individuals? I think not!)

These individuals, so many of them stand in the same danger in which the Corinthians stood. And the apostle’s words, “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith, examine yourselves,” are valid words that each of us should ponder. ([The Place of Self-Examination - 2 Corinthians 13:1-14](#))

Let not soft slumber close your eyes,
Before you’ve collected thrice
The train of action through the day!
Where have my feet chose out their way?
What have I learnt, where’er I’ve been,
From all I’ve heard, from all I’ve seen?
What have I more that’s worth the knowing?
What have I done that’s worth the doing?
What have I sought that I should shun?
What duty have I left undone,
Or into what new follies run?
These self-inquiries are the road
That lead to virtue and to God.

Bishop Hopkins If your state be good, searching into it will give you that comfort of it. If your state be bad, searching into it cannot make it worse; nay, it is the only way to make it better, for conversion begins with conviction.

IS ASSURANCE OBJECTIVE OR SUBJECTIVE? “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!” 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5

True believers will see the glory of Christ reflected in their lives when they examine the genuineness of their salvation.

Assurance of one’s salvation has been a key issue throughout the history of the church, especially the Reformers’ reaction to the Roman Catholic Church’s assertion that since salvation is a joint effort between man and God, the outcome is in doubt until the end. John Calvin, the leading sixteenth-century Reformer, taught that believers can and should be assured of their salvation. He made the grounds for assurance objective, urging believers to look to the promises in God’s Word to gain a sense of personal assurance.

Later Reformed theologians (including the seventeenth-century English Reformers known as Puritans), however, recognized that genuine Christians often lacked assurance. So they emphasized the need for practical evidences of salvation in a believer’s life. Thus they tended to emphasize a subjective means of establishing assurance, counseling people to examine their attitudes and actions for evidence of their election.

The question is: Should Christians derive assurance through the objective promises of Scripture or through subjective self-examination? The Bible teaches that both will lead to assurance. The objective basis for salvation is the finished work of Christ on our behalf, including the promises of Scripture (2 Cor. 1:20). The subjective support is the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in the lives

of Christians, including His convicting and sanctifying ministries. Romans 15:4 refers to both aspects of assurance: "Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance [subjective] and the encouragement of the Scriptures [objective] we might have hope."

The Holy Spirit applies both grounds of assurance to believers: He "bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16). Are you sure of your salvation? Ask yourself the objective question: "Do I believe?" If you truly believe, you can be sure you are saved (John 3:16; Acts 16:31). The subjective question is: "Is my faith real?" That's why Paul said, "Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves!" (2 Cor 13:5). Use the remaining days of this month as an opportunity to take the test. (John MacArthur - [Strength for Today](#))

John MacArthur - SPIRITUAL SELF-EXAMINATION Many professed believers go through life with an indifferent attitude toward their sins. Yet the Lord tells His people to examine their lives each time they come to His table (1 Cor. 11:28). And the apostle Paul admonished the Corinthian church, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5). If you do this regularly and with a positive attitude, you will make sure your inner motives and desires are set toward pleasing God, even though you often fail Him (see Rom. 7:14-25). ([Truth for Today: A Daily Touch of God's Grace](#))

Robert Morgan - The Candle Burns Out September 29

Evangelist George Whitefield longed to die preaching, and he almost did. In 1770, on a final tour through the American colonies, he ignored the pleas of doctors and friends to rest. When too tired to preach, he lifted his voice all the more. When asthmatic colds caused breathing cramps, he ignored them. He claimed that a good "pulpit sweat" was beneficial. But the vomiting, diarrhea, and shivering increased as autumn arrived.

On Saturday, September 29, 1770, Whitefield rode to Exeter, New Hampshire, where someone, seeing his appearance, told him he was more fit to go to bed than to preach. "It's true," Whitefield replied, then he burst into prayer: "Lord, I am weary in Thy work, but not of it. If I have not yet finished my course, let me speak for Thee once more and come home and die."

A crowd assembled and Whitefield stood precariously atop a barrel. **He quoted 2 Corinthians 13:5—Test yourselves and find out if you really are true to your faith—then began to preach.** "He rose up sluggishly and wearily," reported an eyewitness, "as if exhausted by his labors. His face seemed bloated, his voice hoarse, his enunciation heavy. But then his mind kindled, and his lionlike voice roared to the extremities of his audience." He told the crowd he would rather climb to the moon by a rope of sand than try to achieve heaven by works. Whitefield kept his audience spellbound for two hours. Then he suddenly cried, **"I go! I have outlived many on earth but they cannot outlive me in heaven. My body fails, my spirit expands."**

Finishing his sermon, he was helped from the barrel to his horse and he continued to Newburyport. That evening a group of friends gathered and asked Whitefield to speak to them. He begged off, citing asthma. But then he rose and took a lighted candle, starting up the steps. Turning, he delivered a brief but moving message. When the candle died out, he continued up the stairs and went on to his bed where he died during the night. ([On This Day: 365 Amazing and Inspiring Stories about Saints](#))

John MacArthur - What are the evidences that I am genuinely a Christian? What are the marks of true salvation? What do I look for? And I reminded you that you don't look for an event in the past - a past prayer, walking an aisle, responding to an invitation, being baptized, attending church, having good feelings about Jesus Christ. It has nothing to do with past events. It has nothing to do with feelings. It has nothing to do with church ordinances or attendance. If you want to truly take a spiritual inventory, and find out whether you're genuinely and authentically a Christian, I want to suggest five marks that you look for.

(Here is a summary of his 5 points - [see the original sermon for exposition of each point](#))

(1) Number one is repentance.....People in the kingdom of heaven are poor in spirit, and we remember that that basically means they have a sense of their own bankruptcy; a sense of their own spiritual poverty; a sense of their own overwhelming sinfulness....As a true believer, there will be an ongoing resentment of sin in your own life, as well as other sins that dishonor the God whom you love.....

(2) Secondly, righteousness. In those same Beatitudes, in Mt 5:6, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." In the true believer, there is not only an aversion to sin, but there is an attraction to righteousness....You love righteousness. And your righteousness is inside, not outside....There is an aversion to wickedness, and a love of holiness.....Do you have a desire for what is right? Do you have a longing in your heart to honor God? Do you love what is right, what glorifies Him, what honors Him?

(3) Thirdly, this is a test that I think is very, very important. It's the test of submission....Is there a compelling in your heart to

submit to divine authority? Do you find yourself a willing servant of God, an eager servant of Jesus Christ?

(4) There's a fourth mark that you look for in your life... and that's obedience (Note - [see his lengthy explanation of this point](#))

(5) Number five in this brief list is love; love. What do you love? (Note - [see his lengthy explanation of this point](#))

Comment - Dr MacArthur has a related message entitled [Examine Your Faith](#) and in this message he looks at 7 points that DO NOT prove saving faith and then looks at 9 points that he feels are valid tests to prove one's faith.

QUESTION - [What are some of the signs of genuine saving faith?](#)

ANSWER - This is one of the most important questions in the Christian life. Many believers doubt their salvation because they don't see signs of genuine faith in their lives. There are those who say we should never doubt our decision to follow Christ, but the Bible encourages us to examine ourselves to see if we are truly "in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5+). Thankfully, God has given us ample instruction for how we can know for sure that we have eternal life. The first epistle of John was actually written for that purpose, as it states in 1 John 5:13+, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

There is a series of tests in 1 John that we can use to examine ourselves and our faith. As we look at them, remember that no one will perfectly fulfill all of them all the time, but they should reveal a consistent trend that characterizes our lives as we grow in grace.

1. Do you enjoy having fellowship with Christ and His redeemed people? (1 John 1:3+)
2. Would people say you walk in the light, or walk in the darkness? (1 John 1:6-7+)
3. Do you admit and confess your sin? (1 John 1:8+)
4. Are you obedient to God's Word? (1 John 2:3-5+)
5. Does your life indicate you love God rather than the world? (1 John 2:15+)
6. Is your life characterized by "doing what is right"? (1 John 2:29+)
7. Do you seek to maintain a pure life? (1 John 3:3+)
8. Do you see a decreasing pattern of sin in your life? (1 John 3:5-6+) [**Note:** this refers to not continuing in sin as a way of life, not a total absence of sin.]
9. Do you demonstrate love for other Christians? (1 John 3:14+)
10. Do you "walk the walk," versus just "talking the talk"? (1 John 3:18-19+)
11. Do you maintain a clear conscience? (1 John 3:21+)
12. Do you experience victory in your Christian walk? (1 John 5:4+)

If you are able to truthfully answer "Yes" to these questions (or a majority of them, and are working on the others), then your life is bearing the fruit of true salvation. Jesus said that it is by our fruits that we are known as His disciples (Matthew 7:20+). Fruitless branches—**professing believers** who do not display the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23+) are cut off and thrown into the fire (John 15:6). A genuine faith is one that not only believes in God (the demons themselves do that - James 2:19+), but leads to open confession of sin and obedience to Christ's commands. Remember, we are saved by grace through faith, not by our works (Ephesians 2:8-9+), but our works should display the reality of our salvation (James 2:17-18+).

**Genuine saving faith will always produce works;
a faith that is perpetually without works is no faith at all and saves no one.**

In addition to these confirmations, we need to remember God's promises and the reality of the war we are in. Satan is just as real as Jesus Christ, and he is a formidable enemy of our souls. When we turn to Christ, Satan will look for every opportunity to deceive and defeat us. He will try to convince us that we are unworthy failures or that God has given up on us. When we are in Christ, we have the assurance that we are kept by Him. Jesus Himself prayed for us in John 17:11 that the Father would "protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one." Again in verse 15, He prayed, "keep them from the evil one."

In John 10:27-29+, Jesus said, "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand." If you hear and obey the voice of Jesus, then you are one of His sheep, and He will never let you go. Jesus gave a wonderful word picture here of Christians securely held within His loving hands and the Father's almighty hands wrapping themselves around His, giving us a double assurance of eternal security. [GotQuestions.org](#)

2 Corinthians 13:6 But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test.

- 2Co 13:3,4,10 12:20
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Resources:

1 Corinthians 9:27+ (THIS IS NOT REJECTED IN REGARD TO THE FAITH BUT LOSS OF REWARDS) but I discipline (buffet) my body and make it my slave, so that (lest possibly), after I have preached to others, I myself will not be (or "should be") **disqualified** ([adokimos](#)).

2 Timothy 3:8 (THESE ARE UNBELIEVERS) Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, **rejected** ([adokimos](#)). in regard to the faith.

Titus 1:16+ (THESE ARE UNBELIEVERS) They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and **worthless** ([adokimos](#)). for any good deed.

PAUL PASSES THE TEST

But I trust ([elpizo](#)) **that you will realize** ([ginosko](#) know by experience) **that we ourselves do not fail the test** ([adokimos](#)) - **Amplified** = "But I hope you will recognize and know that we are not disapproved on trial and rejected." The Corinthians have been lied to by the "super apostles," but here Paul is expressing his hope that they will come to their senses and recognize that he is the one who is really a true apostle and not these false apostles! In other words after being tested, he has stood the test. The Living Bible although a relatively free paraphrase gives a good sense of the passage - "I hope you can agree that I have stood that test and truly belong to the Lord."

Barnett writes that Paul "will show them that their verdict about themselves will likewise be their verdict about him. That is, however they fare in their self-examination is how he also fares, because they owe their existence in Christ to him" ([The Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#) 607).

MacArthur - If they doubted Paul's apostleship, they would have to doubt his message. But if they doubted his message, they would also have to doubt their own conversion. The most convincing proof of Paul's apostleship was the Corinthians' own transformed lives; if they were truly saved, then he had to be a true apostle. Paul knew the majority of the Corinthians were genuine believers and would therefore realize that he did not fail the test. ([2 Corinthians](#))

Colin Kruse - Just as Paul emphasized in the previous verse (by the use of reflexive pronouns) that the Corinthians should test themselves to ensure that they are holding to the faith, so he stresses here (by the inclusion of the emphatic pronoun hēmeis, we) his hope that he and his colleagues will be found not to have failed the Corinthians' test. This comes as a surprise, for the context leads us to expect that Paul's hope would be that the Corinthians would be the ones who would pass the test. The explanation of this is: by testing themselves and reaching the conclusion that they do hold to the faith and that therefore Christ is in them, the Corinthians will at the same time be acknowledging that Paul and his colleagues have not failed. For if they hold the true faith and are indwelt by Christ, that is so because of what they received through the ministry of Paul and his fellow workers, and that in turn proves that Paul is a true apostle, one who has not failed the test. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

D A Carson - If the Corinthians declare they have failed the test (2Co 13:5), then doubtless Paul will be humiliated (cf. 2Co 12:21); but in that case the Corinthians are in no position to point the finger at anyone. If on the other hand, they feel they have passed the test, then since Paul did all the initial evangelization among them he is the last person they are in a position to condemn. (From *Triumphalism to Maturity*)

MacDonald - If they concluded that they were genuinely saved, then it must follow that the Apostle Paul was genuine and not disqualified. The wonderful transformation that took place in the lives of the Corinthians could scarcely have come through a false teacher.

Homer Kent - If the Corinthians would concur that they were a genuine part of the household of faith—and how could they do otherwise?—they should be hard-pressed to deny that Christ was speaking in the one who had brought them to faith! Consequently a recognition of the evidence that Christ was in them should also make them sensitive to the same evidence that Christ was in Paul. If they passed the test of their own scrutiny, so should Paul. ([A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians](#))

Hodge - "This passage is of special interest as fixing the limits of all ecclesiastical power, whether ordinary or miraculous ... The promise of our Lord, that what the church binds on earth shall be bound in heaven, is limited by the condition that her decisions be in accordance with the truth."

I trust (hope) (1679) **elpizo** from **elpis** - hope) means to look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial. To express desire for some good with the expectation of obtaining it. Often the sense in the NT is that it looks forward with absolute certainty that some future good will come about. Some of the NT uses of **elpizo** convey the sense of "to expect" (to look forward, to consider as probable, or even as obligated) (Lk 6:34, 2Co 8:5).

Fail the test (96) **adokimos** from **a** = without + **dokimos** = tested and thus reliable or acceptable) refers to that which is rejected after a trial or examination because it fails the test. It means to put to the test for the purpose of being approved, but failing to meet the requirements. The basic meaning of **adokimos** is that of *failing to meet the test* or *not standing the test*. It describes that which does not prove itself to be such as it ought and which is therefore disapproved and useless. **Adokimos** was commonly used of metals that were rejected by refiners because of impurities. The impure metals were discarded, and **adokimos** therefore came to include the ideas of worthlessness and uselessness. 8v in the NT - Ro 1:28; 1Co. 9:27; 2Co. 13:5; 2 Co. 13:6; 2Co. 13:7; 2Ti 3:8; Titus 1:16; Heb. 6:8

2 Corinthians 13:7 Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved, but that you may do what is right, even though we may appear unapproved.

Amplified - But I pray to God that you may do nothing wrong, not in order that we [our teaching] may appear to be approved, but that you may continue doing right, [though] we may seem to have failed and be unapproved.

- **Now we pray to God** 2Co 13:9 1Ch 4:10 Mt 6:13 Joh 17:15 Php 1:9-11 1Th 5:23 2Ti 4:18
- **approved:** 2Co 6:4 10:18 Ro 16:10 1Co 11:19 2Ti 2:15 Jas 1:12
- **you may do what is right:** 2Co 8:21 Ro 12:17 13:13 Php 4:8 1Ti 2:2 1Pe 2:12
- **unapproved:** 2Co 6:8,9 10:10 1Co 4:9-13
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Now we pray (**euchomai**) **to God that you do no wrong** (**kakos**); **not that we ourselves may appear approved** (**dokimos**) - **Pray** in this context conveys the sense of Paul's wish for the Corinthians. Paul was not looking for the good behavior of the Corinthians so that it might be a **feather in his cap** or as evidence of his authenticity. He was not dependent on the Corinthians good behavior as a factor determining whether he "passed the test" as a true apostle. He knew who he was and that bad behavior on their part would not detract from his status as an apostle.

As **Robertson** explains "Paul wishes them to do no wrong (**κακον μηδεν** [kakon mēden]). He has no desire to exercise his apostolic authority and "appear approved". He had far rather see them do "the noble thing" (to kalon) even if it should make him appear disapproved after all that he has said."

MacDonald - He does not pray this in order that he himself might appear approved, or might be seen in a better light. He does not want them to do it simply because he could then point to their obedience as an evidence of his authority. That is not the thought at all. He wants them to do it because it is right and honest. And he would rather have them do that, even though it meant that he might seem disqualified.

Homer Kent - Paul's prayer was that the Corinthians might correct their conduct in all respects. He and his associates did not want to act as disciplinarians when they came. They would much prefer to see the evidence that true spiritual growth was taking place in the Corinthians' lives. Paul's desire was not primarily vindication of himself and his helpers ("not that we ourselves may appear approved"), although that would certainly be one result if the Corinthians complied fully with his counsel. His real aim was the spiritual development of the Corinthians themselves, regardless of what it may have implied for Paul. "Even though we should appear unapproved" probably refers to the possibility that Paul and his helpers would lose their opportunity to speak severely and thus display a "proof" of apostolic authority (13:3). Nevertheless, Paul was quite willing to appear less lordly if it meant that the Corinthians were progressing. ([A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians](#))

But that you may do what is right (**kalos**), **even though we may appear unapproved** (**adokimos**) - He was so selfless and cared so little about apostolic acclaim that he would rather the Corinthians manifest godly behavior, even if he himself might seem to others as if he himself had failed.

Colin Kruse - Though he hopes they will find out that their apostle has met the test (v. 6), this is not his main concern. He wants them to avoid wrongdoing, not because his own reputation would suffer, but simply because he wants them to be found doing what is right....as far as Paul is concerned, the true legitimization of his apostleship belongs not with such displays of power but is seen in the changed lives of his converts. When they pass the test of holding the faith, and that finds expression in moral renewal in their

lives, then the genuineness of Paul's apostolate will be confirmed (cf. 2Co 3:1–3). ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

MacDonald - Here again we have an evidence of the unselfishness of Paul. In his prayer life his thoughts were constantly on what was for the good of others and not for his own recognition. If Paul went to Corinth with a rod, asserted his authority, and succeeded in gaining obedience to his instructions concerning discipline, then he could use this as an argument against the false teachers. He could say this was evidence of his lawful authority. But he would rather that the Corinthians take the necessary action themselves, in his absence, even if that might put him in an unfavorable light as far as the legalists were concerned.

Vincent - The sense of the verse is this: We pray God that you do no evil, not in order that your good conduct may attest the excellence of our teaching and example, so that we shall be approved; but in order that you may do what is good, thus rendering it impossible for us to prove our apostolic authority by administering discipline. In that case we shall be as men unapproved.

Pray (wish) (2172) **euchomai** from **euche** = a vow in Acts 18:18, a prayer in Jas 5:15) literally meant to speak out or utter aloud and came to mean as used by to express a wish. The idea can be to desire something, with the implication of a pious wish. o pray, but in the NT the derivative **proseuchomai** is the more common verb for pray. 6v in NT - pray(3), wish(1), wished(1), would wish(1). Acts 26:29; Acts 27:29; Rom. 9:3; 2 Co. 13:7; 2 Co. 13:9; 3 Jn. 1:2

Approved (1384) **dokimos** from **dokime** = test, proof, trial = idea is that when you put metal through a fiery testing and it comes out on the other side enduring it "proven", "authentic" or "genuine"

Right (2570) **kalos** describes that which is inherently excellent or intrinsically good, providing some special or superior benefit. **Kalos** is good with emphasis on that which is beautiful, handsome, excellent, surpassing, precious, commendable, admirable.

2 Corinthians 13:8 For we can do nothing against the truth, but only for the truth.

P E Hughes - "For we have no power against the truth, but for the truth.

- 2Co 13:10 10:8 Nu 16:28-35 1Ki 22:28 2Ki 1:9-13 2:23-25 Pr 21:30 Pr 26:2 Mk 9:39 16:17-19 Lu 9:49-56 Ac 4:28-30 5:1-11 13:3-12 Ac 19:11-17 1Co 5:4,5 1Ti 1:20 Heb 2:3,4
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For (gar) introduces an explanation of what he has just stated.

Charles Hodge - This verse is connected with the last clause of the preceding. 'We shall, in one sense, be δόκιμοι (without evidence) if you do what is right, for we can do nothing against the truth, but are powerful only for the truth.' That is, 'We can exercise the apostolic and supernatural power which is the evidence of Christ speaking in us, only in behalf of the truth.'

We can do (dunamai) (absolutely) **nothing against the truth, but only for the truth** - This is not an easy verse to interpret. One thought is that Paul says he can do nothing outside of the sphere of truth.

P E Hughes has a cogent explanation - The conjunction "**for**" indicates that there is a close logical connection with what precedes. The train of thought is as follows: Should Paul come to Corinth and find everything in order, then he will have no occasion for giving the threatened proof of his apostolic authority by the adoption of stern measures, for there can be no power (in the sense of display of authority) **against the truth, but only for** (on behalf of) **the truth**. That is to say, a powerful demonstration of authority when the truth is established in a church would be a perversion of authority; for such a display of power is justified only when serious error and misconduct are present and require to be driven out so that the cause of the truth may be vindicated. It will be a matter of rejoicing to Paul, therefore, if the state of the church when he arrives in Corinth is such that he may be "weak", that is, under no necessity to enforce authority; for this will mean that the Corinthians are "powerful"—not merely in the sense that they give evidence of spiritual power (though this is inevitably involved), but more precisely in the sense that they have disciplined themselves, and thus obviated the necessity for him to come to them with a rod.

THOUGHT - Great point by P E Hughes - What Paul writes here throws particular light upon the office of the Christian pastor. He must not be so timid as to shrink from openly imposing discipline when circumstances demand it. But at the same time he must always remember that, in contrast to the great ones of this world who exercise their authority as tyrannical and domineering overlords, it is not his part to be overbearing. He must not allow authority to degenerate into authoritarianism. He must never forget that, in conformity with the

teaching and example of Him who is the Head of the Church, he who would be great must be the minister and servant of all (Mk. 10:42ff.). An overbearing spirit, ambition for preferment, and notions of superiority must be shunned by him as the marks of hirelings and false leaders. Like Paul, he will rejoice when the spiritual well-being of his people is such that, so far as the display of his authority is concerned, he can move among them in "weakness".

Colin Kruse - The **truth** is best understood here as the gospel, and what Paul asserts is that he could never act in a way that is contrary to the gospel or its implications. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

Murray Harris - This verse, which has the appearance of being proverbial, may in this context bear one of two meanings. (1) Paul's concern was that truth, especially the truth of the gospel (cf. 4:2; 6:7), should prevail at all costs—even if it involved his exposure as a false apostle and counterfeit Christian (vv. 6, 7). He would never be able to bring himself to hinder the advance of the truth or to propagate falsehood, such as a "different gospel" (11:4), without first changing his identity as an apostle. (2) Paul did not need to exercise his apostolic authority where "truth" already existed, but was able and willing, if necessary, to act decisively to establish "truth," i.e., to restore the Corinthians to wholeness (v. 9b).

2 Corinthians 13:9 For we rejoice when we ourselves are weak but you are strong; this we also pray for, that you be made complete.

- **when:** 2Co 13:8 11:30 12:5-10 1Co 4:10
- **this we also pray for, that you be made complete:** 2Co 13:7,11 2Co 7:1 Eph 4:13 Php 3:12-15 Col 1:28 4:12 1Th 3:10 2Ti 3:17 Heb 6:1 12:23 13:21 1Pe 5:10
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 7:1+ (SPIRITUALLY "COMPLETE") Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, **perfecting holiness** (COMPARE "BE MADE COMPLETE") in the fear of God.

PAUL'S SELFLESS LOVE FOR THE CORINTHIANS

For we rejoice ([chairo](#)) **when we ourselves are weak** ([astheneo](#)) **but you are strong** ([dunato](#))- Here we see Paul's selfless, pastor's heart to be filled with joy when the Corinthians were living obedient lives. **Weak...strong** in context would be figurative senses, of spiritual weakness. He desires that the Corinthian church be **strong** in the sense manifesting spiritual power, prowess and ability in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation like the city of Corinth. If the Corinthians are **strong**, he is perfectly content with being **weak** (in sense he had not need to exercise authority) before them.

A T Robertson on **rejoice when we ourselves are weak** - Paul had far rather be weak in the sense of failing to exercise his apostolic power because they did the noble thing. He is no Jonah who lamented when Nineveh repented.

Colin Kruse - This statement reinforces that of v. 7, and recasts it in general terms. Paul is prepared, as he said in v. 7, to appear to have failed as long as the Corinthians do what is right. Now in more general terms he says that he is prepared, even glad, to be weak if that means strength for his converts. During his ministry, Paul had discovered that very often weakness in himself was the concomitant of power at work in others (cf. 2Co 4:11–12; 2Co 12:7–10), a fact which rested upon God's decision to use the weak things of this world to achieve his purposes (cf. 1Co 1:26–29). The sort of strength Paul looked for in his converts was the strength of commitment to the gospel and the outworking of that commitment in moral renewal in their lives. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

Marvin Vincent on **we ourselves are weak** - Practically the same as unapproved. When your good conduct deprives us of the power of administering discipline, we are weak.

P E Hughes (continues [his previous note](#)) - It will be a matter of rejoicing to Paul, therefore, if the state of the church when he arrives in Corinth is such that he may be "**weak**", that is, under no necessity to enforce authority; for this will mean that the Corinthians are "powerful"—not merely in the sense that they give evidence of spiritual power (though this is inevitably involved), but more precisely in the sense that they have disciplined themselves, and thus obviated the necessity for him to come to them with a rod.

Alfred Plummer - Jonah was angry because the repentance of the Ninevites caused his prediction of their overthrow to be unfulfilled; but the Apostle is delighted whenever his Corinthians repent, or prove themselves to be in no need of repentance, and thus cause his promised demonstration of Apostolic power (vv. 3, 4) to be unfulfilled. The γάρ indicates that this verse is a confirmation of v. 8.

Homer Kent - Therefore, Paul could rejoice whenever the situation in the churches was healthy. When the church at Corinth showed itself to be "strong" in the sense of spiritual maturity in dealing with sin and rejecting false teachers, then Paul and the other apostles were happy to desist from displays of strong authority. Being "weak" in that sense was no disgrace. Rather, it was an indication that things were going well. Paul found no pleasure in figuratively wielding a club. In fact, he was praying for this matter of their restoration. "Made complete" ("perfection," (KJV, NIV) translates a word (katartisin) that occurs only here in the New Testament. Some of its cognates convey the idea of restoring, mending, equipping, bringing to a suitable state, or making complete. The apostle's concern was not to show power, but to mend broken lives and bring them to an appropriate level of Christian maturity. ([A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians](#))

This we also pray (euchomai) for, that you be made complete - Even though Paul is in somewhat of a "defensive mode" (in defending his apostleship), his prayers are other centered, not self centered. Paul's desire for his spiritual children in Corinth was that their spiritual lives might be characterized by adequacy and maturity, that they might be fully qualified as it were.

Be made complete (2676) is a noun **katartisis** (from [katartizo](#) - to be made fully ready, equipped, in order) is used only here ([hapax legomen](#)) in the NT. The idea is of bringing them to completion and fit for godly purposes. Growing in holiness is the idea. Some translations favor the interpretation "that you might be **restored**" (2Co 13:9ESV), which in the context of the significant spiritual turmoil is clearly one of Paul's goals for the Corinthians.

Plummer - This is an additional thing that we pray for, even your perfecting.' To pray that they may go on to perfection is a great deal more than merely praying that they may do nothing evil (2Co 13:7)...The original idea (of **katartisis**) is that of 'fitting together,' whether of setting bones or reconciling parties, and hence in N.T. the verb is often used of setting right what has previously gone wrong, rectifying and restoring, rather than merely bringing onwards to perfection.

Colin Kruse - It is a mark of the apostle's Christian maturity and commitment to the purposes of God that in the face of the defection of his converts, and their calling into question of his own apostolate, his overriding concern is not self-justification, but rather their improvement. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

Hughes offers an excellent comment on **made complete** - He longs to see them fully integrated in the communion of the Church as their proper sphere of life and function, harmoniously and fruitfully articulated as members together in the body of Christ. The active force of the Greek noun which Paul uses here is brought out by the rendering "perfecting" of our English version. The word denotes a correct articulating of limbs and joints in the body, a resetting of what has been broken and dislocated, and hence a restoration of harmonious and efficient functioning. It carries no suggestion of what is known theologically as "perfectionism".

Rejoice (5463) chairo means to be "cheer" full, calmly happy, well-off, and general feeling of delight and well-being. **Chairo** implies and imparts joy. **Chairo** is used in a whole range of situations in which the emotion of joy is evoked. To be in a state of happiness and well being (often independent of what is happening when the Source of the joy is the Spirit!). **Chairo** was used in greetings. Predominant in the usage of **chairo** is the focus on rejoicing over the redemptive deeds of God that come to fruition in the gospel in the person of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. I like **Webster's** definition of **rejoice** as "to give joy to"! **Does your presence in the room bring joy to others? I hope you are convicted because I am!** Chairo in Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 7:30; 1 Co. 13:6; 1 Co. 16:17; 2 Co. 2:3; 2 Co. 6:10; 2 Co. 7:7; 2 Co. 7:9; 2 Co. 7:13; 2 Co. 7:16; 2Co. 13:9; 2Co. 13:11

Weak (770) astheneo from [asthenes](#) = without strength, powerless from **a** = without + **sthenos** = strength, bodily vigor) means to be feeble (in any sense), to be diseased, impotent, sick, to lack strength, to be infirm, to be weak. In the Corinthian letters - 1 Co. 8:11; 1 Co. 8:12; 2 Co. 11:21; 2 Co. 11:29; 2 Co. 12:10; 2Co. 13:3; 2Co. 13:4; 2Co. 13:9

Strong (mighty, possible) (1415) [dunatos](#) from [dunamai](#) = referring to power one has by virtue of inherent ability; cf [dunamis](#)) means powerful, able, strong. **Dunatos** in Corinthians - 1Co. 1:26; 2Co. 10:4; 2Co. 12:10; 2Co. 13:9

2 Corinthians 13:10 For this reason I am writing these things while absent, so that when present I need not use severity, in accordance with the authority which the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.

according to the authority which the Lord gave me for building up, and not for casting down.

- **I am writing** 2Co 2:3 10:2 12:20,21 1Co 4:21
- **so that when present I need not use severity.** 2Co 13:2,8 Titus 1:13
- **in accordance with the authority** : 2Co 10:8
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passage:

2Co 10:8+ (**PAUL'S PRIMARY PURPOSE - BUILD UP**) For even if I boast somewhat further about our **authority** ([exousia](#)), which **the Lord gave for building you up** ([oikodome](#)) and **not for destroying you** ([kathairesis](#)), I will not be put to shame,

PAULS' PRIMARY PURPOSE TO BUILD UP THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

This passage will conclude the Paul's defense which began in 2Co 10:1.

For this reason - "For this cause" **Plummer** says "It is because he desires their restoration and perfecting that he sends this letter before coming himself."

I am writing these things while absent, so that when present (when I arrive) **I need not use severity** ([apotomos](#)), **in accordance with the authority** ([exousia](#)) **which the Lord gave me for building up** ([oikodome](#)) **and not for tearing down** ([kathairesis](#)) - Paul is hopeful his stern words in 2Co 10:1-13:10 prove to bring the Corinthians to their senses, for then he will not have to be severe when he comes. Notice how this statement refutes the charge of the false teachers that he was "meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!" (2Co 10:1). He will not be "meek when face to face with" them if they fail to receive his loving warnings! As **Plummer** says "he writes sharply, that he may not have to act sharply." If he has to use his apostolic authority, he will, but even then he uses it not to tear them down but to build them up. **Plummer** adds "Chastisement, if needed, would, of course, be for their building up; but at the moment it would look like demolition."

Colin Kruse on I am writing these things - This statement of purpose fits well with the content of chs. 10–13, in which Paul has repeatedly threatened a severe use of authority (10:5–6, 11; 12:20; 13:1–4). Despite these repeated threats Paul hoped all along that it would not prove necessary to carry them out (10:2; 12:19–21). We may say, then, the purpose of chs. 10–13 was to recall the Corinthians to their senses so that they would reject the false gospel and false claims of Paul's opponents and also live out in their lives the moral implications of the gospel and so forestall a severe use of authority by Paul. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

P E Hughes - Paul is saying that if he writes with sharpness when absent it is with the purpose of obviating the need for acting with sharpness when present. There is, however, no renunciation of authority on his part, but his conduct is governed by the principle that (as he has previously stated in 10:8) his authority has been entrusted to him by the Lord to be used for constructive, not destructive, ends. And so the Corinthians must understand that all that he does and says, whether present or absent, is directed towards the building up of themselves (12:19). His opponents in Corinth have in effect challenged him to come and give a display of force such as might impress the secular world, but which he well knows would do more to cast down than to build up the church there. He has indeed made it perfectly plain that this time he will come and exhibit his authority by inflicting stern punishment on any who deserve it; but he will be much happier (and so will they) if the effect of this strongly worded letter is such that when he comes he finds them "such as he would" (12:20), so that he may be with them in gentleness rather than severity. If there is punishment, it will be because it is merited; if there is no punishment, it will be because they have purged themselves of offences. In either case his authority will be acknowledged and their edification will be promoted. The decision now rests with them as to whether he is to come to them "with a rod or in love and a spirit of meekness" (cf. 1 Cor. 4:21).

Plummer concludes the stern warning section commenting that "Throughout the passage the Apostle's mind hovers between hope and fear, hope that the condition of the Corinthian Church may be better than he has been led to believe, and fear that he may have to use very drastic measures. There has been wrongdoing; of that there can be no doubt; he witnessed it himself during his second visit. But they may have repented, and there may have been no recurrence of grievous evils. On the other hand, the wrongdoers may be still impenitent, and others may be following their bad examples. He has no prejudice against any of them, and it will be a great delight to him to find that his misgivings are now baseless. But it is fair to them to declare plainly, that there will be a thorough investigation, and that impenitent transgressors, if they exist, will be severely dealt with. That unwelcome thought is now dismissed, and with a few affectionate sentences the Apostle brings his storm-tossed letter into a haven of love and peace.

Homer Kent asks a great question - Did this letter achieve its purpose? Christian readers sincerely hope so, although direct

evidence is lacking. Murray J. Harris has suggested several indications that it was successful. First, Romans was written after Paul arrived at Corinth on this visit, and no particular difficulties are reflected. Second, his plans to visit Rome and then Spain would hardly have been so well-formed if the church from which he was writing was in complete disarray. Third, the Corinthians did complete the collection as Paul was urging (Rom. 15:26–27). Fourth, the preservation of 2 Corinthians by that congregation argues for the acceptance of Paul's mission. ([A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians](#))

Severity (664) **apotomos** from **apo** = from, a preposition indicating separation or dissociation + **temno** = to cut as with a knife or ax) is an adverb which means literally "in a manner which cuts off". Figuratively **apotomos** means abruptly, curtly, sharply, precipitously, harshly, rigorously. Only 2Cor 13:10 and Titus 1:13.

2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, rejoice, be made complete, be comforted, be like-minded, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

The Message And that's about it, friends. Be cheerful. Keep things in good repair. Keep your spirits up. Think in harmony. Be agreeable. Do all that, and the God of love and peace will be with you for sure.

AMP Finally, brethren, farewell (rejoice)! Be strengthened (perfected, completed, made what you ought to be); be encouraged and consoled and comforted; be of the same [agreeable] mind one with another; live in peace, and [then] the God of love [Who is the Source of affection, goodwill, love, and benevolence toward men] and the Author and Promoter of peace will be with you.

The Living Bible I close my letter with these last words: Be happy. Grow in Christ. Pay attention to what I have said. Live in harmony and peace. And may the God of love and peace be with you.

KJV 2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

NET 2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice, set things right, be encouraged, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

BGT 2 Corinthians 13:11 Λοιπ ν, δελφο , χα ρετε, καταρτ ζεσθε, παρακαλε σθε, τ α τ φρονε τε, ε ρηνε ετε, κα θε ς τ ς γ πη ς κα ε ρ νη ς σται μεθ μ ν.

NLT 2 Corinthians 13:11 Dear brothers and sisters, I close my letter with these last words: Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you.

ESV 2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

NIV 2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

GNT 2 Corinthians 13:11 Λοιπ ν, δελφο , χα ρετε, καταρτ ζεσθε, παρακαλε σθε, τ α τ φρονε τε, ε ρηνε ετε, κα θε ς τ ς γ πη ς κα ε ρ νη ς σται μεθ μ ν.

YLT 2 Corinthians 13:11 Henceforth, brethren, rejoice; be made perfect, be comforted, be of the same mind, be at peace, and the God of the love and peace shall be with you;

CSB 2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Become mature, be encouraged, be of the same mind, be at peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

NKJ 2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

NRS 2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

NAB 2 Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brothers, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

NJB 2 Corinthians 13:11 To end then, brothers, we wish you joy; try to grow perfect; encourage one another; have a common mind and live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

GWN 2 Corinthians 13:11 With that, brothers and sisters, I must say goodbye. Make sure that you improve. Accept my encouragement. Share the same attitude and live in peace. The God of love and peace will be with you.

BBE 2 Corinthians 13:11 Let this be my last word, brothers; be glad; be complete; be comforted; be of the same mind; be at peace with one another: and the God of love and peace will be with you.

- **Finally, brethren:** Lu 9:61 Ac 15:29 18:21 23:30 Php 4:4 1Th 5:16 *Gr:
- **be made complete:** 2Co 13:9 Mt 5:48 Joh 17:23 Jas 1:4 1Pe 5:10
- **be comforted:** 2Co 1:4 Mk 10:49 Ro 15:13 1Th 4:18 2Th 2:16,17
- **be like-minded:** Ro 12:16,18 15:5,6 1Co 1:10 Eph 4:3 Php 1:27 2:1-3 3:16 4:2 1Pe 3:8
- **live in peace:** Ge 37:4 45:24 Mk 9:50 Ro 12:18 14:19 1Th 5:13 2Ti 2:22 Heb 12:14 Jas 3:17,18 1Pe 3:11
- **the God:** Ro 15:33 Ro 16:20 Php 4:9 1Th 5:23 Heb 13:20 1Jn 4:8-16
- **with:** 2Co 13:14 Mt 1:23 2Th 3:16 Rev 22:21
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

Romans 15:33 Now the **God of peace** be with you all. Amen.

Romans 16:20 The **God of peace** will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

Philippians 4:9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the **God of peace** will be with you.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the **God of peace** Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 13:20 Now the **God of peace**, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,

PAUL'S PARTING COMMANDS AND PRAYER FOR LOVE AND PEACE

2 Corinthians 13:11-13 are Paul's final exhortations and benediction.

Finally ([loipos](#) lit, as to what remains), **brethren** ([adelphos](#)) - After all the turmoil they have caused Paul, he still sees them as his brethren.

Brethren in Corinthians (much more frequent in first letter) - 1 Co. 1:1; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 1:11; 1 Co. 1:26; 1 Co. 2:1; 1 Co. 3:1; 1 Co. 4:6; 1 Co. 5:11; 1 Co. 6:5; 1 Co. 6:6; 1 Co. 6:8; 1 Co. 7:12; 1 Co. 7:14; 1 Co. 7:15; 1 Co. 7:24; 1 Co. 7:29; 1 Co. 8:11; 1 Co. 8:12; 1 Co. 8:13; 1 Co. 9:5; 1 Co. 10:1; 1 Co. 11:33; 1 Co. 12:1; 1 Co. 14:6; 1 Co. 14:20; 1 Co. 14:26; 1 Co. 14:39; 1 Co. 15:1; 1 Co. 15:6; 1 Co. 15:31; 1 Co. 15:50; 1 Co. 15:58; 1 Co. 16:11; 1 Co. 16:12; 1 Co. 16:15; 1 Co. 16:20; 2 Co. 1:1; 2 Co. 1:8; 2 Co. 2:13; 2 Co. 8:1; 2 Co. 8:18; 2 Co. 8:22; 2 Co. 8:23; 2 Co. 9:3; 2 Co. 9:5; 2 Co. 11:9; 2 Co. 12:18; 2 Co. 13:11

Plummer points out that "The change to an affectionate tone here, after the vehemence and severity of 2Co 10:1–13:10, is as natural and intelligible as the change in the opposite direction between 2Co 9 and 2Co 10 is unnatural and perplexing.

Rejoice ([chairō](#)), **be made complete** ([katartizo](#)), **be comforted** ([parakaleō](#)), **be like-minded**, ([phroneō](#) - agree with one another-**NET**, live in harmony - NLT) **live in peace** ([eireneuo](#)) - Paul signs off with a barrage of commands in the [present imperative](#) none of which can be obeyed without relying on the [Spirit to give the desire and power to obey](#). Continue to do **all** these things.

Rejoice ([chairō](#)) "In the classics used both at meeting and at parting. Lit., hail!" See James 1:1 [Greetings =[chairō](#)] (Vincent) In parting the idea may be "joy be with you."

Be made complete ([katartizo](#)) (**NET** = "set things right"; **NRSV** = "put things in order;" **NAB** = "mend your ways;" **NLT** = "grow to maturity"; **NIV** = "aim for perfection;" **Plummer** = Work your way onwards to perfection.) could be rendered be restored or "mended" like the fishing nets in Mt 4:21+, which will enable them as a church to be better "fishers of men" (wordplay intended). It should also be noted that this verb links this section with the previous one by use of the related noun [katartisis](#), substantiating that this is a unit and that 2Co 10:1-13:10 was not a separate letter as some propose.

Colin Kruse on **be made complete** - What Paul required by way of amendment is clear enough. He wanted the Corinthians to reject the different gospel brought by his opponents (2Co 11:1–6), to recognize his rightful claims to be their apostle (2Co 10:13–18; 11:21–23; 12:11–13), and to make sure no immoral practices were allowed in their midst (2Co 12:20–21). Paul's appeal to the Corinthians is that they should examine themselves and amend their ways so that when he comes he will not have to be severe in the use of his authority (2Co 13:5–10).. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

Kent - "**Be made complete**" is a command using the verb that is cognate to the noun in 2Co 13:9. Paul had prayed that this completeness or restoration might occur, but the Corinthians themselves could assist the accomplishment by submitting to God's guidance and Paul's instruction. ([A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians](#))

Plummer adds "There is much that requires to be amended; many deficiencies remain to be made good, even if those who have been in sin are now penitent."

Vincent on **be made complete** - Paul speaks both of individual perfection and of the perfection of the Church through the right adjustment of all its members in Christ. Compare 1Co 1:10+ ("that you **be made complete** [[katartizo](#) - perfect tense] in the same mind and in the same judgment.") The verb is kindred with perfecting, 2Co 13:9.

Be comforted ([parakaleo](#)) - **ESV** = "Comfort one another." **NIV** seems to be a better translation as there is no Greek for "one another" = "Listen to my appeal."

Kent - "Be comforted" may be telling the Corinthians not to lose heart over the past situation, but to be encouraged by the amount of correction already achieved and look forward to better days ahead. It is possible, however, to translate the verb as "let yourselves be exhorted," that is, "listen to my exhortation." If this was Paul's meaning, he was urging his readers to heed his advice. ([A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians](#))

Be like-minded (*to auto phroneite* - [phroneo](#)) - **Plummer** = 'Be harmonious in thought and aim.' This is the great need in EVERY church! It was part of the power of the early [Spirit filled church](#) as shown by the frequent use of the great word "one accord" ([homothumadon](#)) in Acts. This would be a particular significant command (as would the next one) in a church that had experienced quarrels, disputes and divisions.

Kent - This was not a demand for absence of individuality, but a plea for unity arising out of the essential principles of Christian action. ([A Heart Opened Wide: Studies in 2 Corinthians](#))

Uteley - This refers to unity for the sake of the gospel. This is not asserting that believers must agree about every issue, but that they must disagree in love and that the gospel should always have priority over personal opinions or preferences!

Colin Kruse on **be like-minded** - This too must be included as part of Paul's appeal to the Corinthians, and it reminds us that the disharmony which marred the church when 1 Corinthians was written (cf. 1Co 1:10–12; 1Co 3:1–4) was still a source of trouble in the church (cf. 2Co 12:20).. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

Live in peace means they are to exhibit and experience harmonious relationship and freedom from disputes. In short they are to cultivate or keep peace (harmony). Plummer says this is "the crown of all." Ultimately this would be evidence of the fruit of the Spirit and in turn evidence of a [Spirit Filled Church](#)!

Uteley - Paul commands peace, not by compromise, but by Christlikeness.

And the God of love ([agape](#)) and **peace** ([eirene](#)) **will be with you** - Note this is [antithesis](#) of what Paul fears in 2Co 12:20+! This is a prophetic promise that seems to be conditioned on their obedience. Don't misunderstand, for God's love and peace are not earned or merited, but are given by sovereign grace. The pattern in Scripture however is that God blesses obedience (cf. Php 4:9). Such an obedient body of believers will be experiencing and dispensing God's supernatural **love** and **peace** to a community and world filled with hatred and war! Notice it is not the love of God or the peace of God (both of which are wonderful) but the actual Person Himself in communion with them, manifesting His infinite **love** and surpassing **peace** in their hearts as a Body ("**you**" is plural)!

MacDonald - If they do this (THE COMMANDS), the God of love and peace will be with them. Of course, in one sense the Lord is always with His people. But this means He will manifest Himself to them in a special nearness and dearness if they are obedient in these regards.

MacArthur - The wonderful promise that attends obedience to these exhortations is divine blessing by the presence of the God of love and peace. He is called the God of love only here in Scripture but is several times referred to as the "God of peace" (Rom. 15:33; 16:20; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:20). As such, He is the source of both for His obedient children. When the church pursues spiritual wholeness, it will experience the powerful and enriching presence of God. On the other hand, churches that lack joy, submission, truth, and unity will find themselves lacking God's blessing. (cf. Rev 2:5, Rev 2:16, Rev 3:3).....It is not, of course,

only perfect churches that enjoy the blessings of God's presence. There are no perfect churches, because all are made up of imperfect sinners. But those who diligently pursue completeness will enjoy the rich reward of God's presence in love and peace. ([2 Corinthians](#))

This is the only use of the phrase **God of love** in the Bible.

Live in peace (1514) [eireneuo](#) from [eirene](#) = peace) means to bring peace, to be at peace, to live in harmony or accord. [Eirēneuō](#) can signify in non-biblical Greek "to bring to peace" (transitive use [i.e., needing a direct object]) or "to live peaceably" (intransitive use). The Septuagint version demonstrates both meanings. The Septuagint translators also used the term intransitively of internal peace in translating the Hebrew word *shālāh* "be at ease" (Job 3:26). The papyri used the term intransitively to mean "to be at peace" as in an inscription found at Halicarnassus describing the peaceful age of Augustus: "Earth and sea are at peace."

Used 4x in NT - Mk. 9:50 = "be at peace with one another."; Ro 12:18 = "be at peace with all men"; 2Co. 13:11; 1Th. 5:13 = "Live in peace with one another." Much more common in the Septuagint - 1 Ki. 22:44; 2 Chr. 14:5; 2 Chr. 14:6; 2 Chr. 20:30; Job 3:26; Job 5:23; Job 5:24; Job 15:21; Job 16:12; Da 4:4

[Complete Biblical Library](#) - New Testament Usage - The noun "peace" (*eirēnē*) in the New Testament can refer to external security (Luke 14:32; Acts 24:2), harmony among men (Acts 7:26), and especially to salvation (Luke 1:79). God's peace is equal to God's salvation. *Eirēneuō* is used four times in the New Testament, all intransitively. Paul used the term three of the four times in sections containing admonitions on Christian living, and evidently he echoed the words of Jesus in Mark 9:50. In Paul's three admonitions (Romans 12:18; 2 Corinthians 13:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:13) Christians must live in peace with themselves and with all men. Because the salvation of God gives peace, Christians must demonstrate their new status by living harmoniously.

Be made complete (2675) ([katartizo](#) from **katá** = with + **artizō** = to adjust, fit, finish, in turn from **ártios** = fit, complete) means to fit or join together and so to mend or repair. **Katartizō** conveys the fundamental idea of putting something into its appropriate condition so it will function well. It conveys the idea of making whole by fitting together, to order and arrange properly. When applied to that which is weak and defective, it denotes setting right what has gone wrong, to restore to a former condition, whether mending broken nets or setting broken bones. 13v in the NT - Mt. 4:21; Mt. 21:16; Mk. 1:19; Lk. 6:40; Ro 9:22; 1 Co. 1:10; 2 Co. 13:11; Gal. 6:1; 1Th 3:10; Heb. 10:5; Heb. 11:3; Heb. 13:21; 1Pe 5:10

Minded (5426) [phroneo](#) from **phren** = literally the diaphragm and thus that which curbs or restrains. Figuratively, **phren** is the supposed seat of all mental and emotional activity) refers to the basic orientation, bent, and thought patterns of the mind, rather than to the mind or intellect itself (that is the Greek word **nous**). **Phroneo** includes a person's affections and will as well as his reasoning. In other words **phroneo** refers not simply to intellectual activity but also to direction and purpose of heart.

Live in peace (1514)(*eireneuo* from *eirene* = peace) means to means "to cause others to live in peace, reconcile" or "to be at peace" (BDAG) It calls for ending a state of enmity or hostilities. Live in peace, be at peace, keep the peace.

Peace (1515) [eirene](#) from verb **eiro** = to join or bind together that which has been separated) literally pictures the binding or joining together again of that which had been separated or divided and thus setting at one again, a meaning convey by the common expression of one "having it all together". It follows that peace is the opposite of division or dissension. Peace as a state of concord and harmony is the opposite of war. Peace was used as a greeting or farewell corresponding to the Hebrew word *shalom* - "peace to you". **Eirene** in Corinthian letters - 1Co. 1:3; 1Co. 7:15; 1Co. 14:33; 1Co. 16:11; 2Co. 1:2; 2Co. 13:11

2 Corinthians 13:12 Greet one another with a holy kiss.

- Ro 16:16 1Co 16:20 1Th 5:26 1Pe 5:14
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

A GREETING KISS

Greet ([aspazomai](#) in [aorist imperative](#)) **one another with a holy kiss** - Paul ends both Corinthian letters calling for a "holy kiss," which is amazing grace considering the oftentimes unholy behavior of the saints at Corinth. Note it is not a "profane" kiss but a **holy** ([hagios](#)) **kiss** (set apart from what is common, as with a kiss expressing physical attraction/affection)

Plummer - Salutations at the close of the letter are found in all four groups of the Pauline Epistles; those in 1 Cor. 16:19–21 are specially full; still more so those in Rom. 16:3–23. Cf. 1 Thess. 5:26; Col. 4:10–15; Philem. 23; Tit. 3:15; 2 Tim. 4:19–21. Papyri show that such salutations at the close of a letter were a common feature in ordinary correspondence, and σπάζομαι is commonly the verb used. No salutations to individuals are needed, because St Paul is so soon coming himself.

A T Robertson - In the Jewish synagogues where the sexes were separated, men kissed men, the women, women. This apparently was the Christian custom also. It is still observed in the Coptic and the Russian churches. It was dropped because of charges made against the Christians by the pagans. In England in 1250 Archbishop Walter of York introduced a “pax-board” which was first kissed by the clergy and then passed around. Think of the germ theory of disease and that kissing tablet! (AMEN!)

One another's in NT - Matt. 24:10; Matt. 25:32; Mk. 4:41; Mk. 8:16; Mk. 9:10; Mk. 9:34; Mk. 9:50; Mk. 12:7; Mk. 14:4; Mk. 16:3; Lk. 2:15; Lk. 4:36; Lk. 7:32; Lk. 8:25; Lk. 12:1; Lk. 20:14; Lk. 23:12; Lk. 24:17; Lk. 24:32; Jn. 4:33; Jn. 5:44; Jn. 6:52; Jn. 7:35; Jn. 11:56; Jn. 12:19; Jn. 13:22; Jn. 13:34; Jn. 13:35; Jn. 15:12; Jn. 15:17; Jn. 16:17; Jn. 19:24; Acts 2:12; Acts 4:15; Acts 7:26; Acts 15:39; Acts 19:38; Acts 21:5; Acts 26:31; Acts 28:4; Acts 28:25; Rom. 1:27; Rom. 12:10; Rom. 12:16; Rom. 13:8; Rom. 14:13; Rom. 14:19; Rom. 15:5; Rom. 15:7; Rom. 15:14; Rom. 16:16; 1 Co. 6:7; 1 Co. 7:5; 1 Co. 11:33; 1 Co. 12:25; 1 Co. 16:20; 2 Co. 13:12; Gal. 5:13; Gal. 5:15; Gal. 5:17; Gal. 5:26; Eph. 4:2; Eph. 4:25; Eph. 4:32; Eph. 5:19; Eph. 5:21; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:9; Col. 3:13; Col. 3:16; 1 Thess. 3:12; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Thess. 4:18; 1 Thess. 5:11; 1 Thess. 5:13; 1 Thess. 5:15; 2 Thess. 1:3; Tit. 3:3; Heb. 3:13; Heb. 10:24; Heb. 10:25; Jas. 4:11; Jas. 5:9; Jas. 5:16; 1 Pet. 1:22; 1 Pet. 4:8; 1 Pet. 4:9; 1 Pet. 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:5; 1 Pet. 5:14; 1 Jn. 1:7; 1 Jn. 3:11; 1 Jn. 3:23; 1 Jn. 4:7; 1 Jn. 4:11; 1 Jn. 4:12; 2 Jn. 1:5; Rev. 6:4; Rev. 11:10

Greet (salute, embrace, take leave, pay respects) (782) **aspazomai** from **a** + **spao** = draw out as a sword, pull, breathe) means to enfold in arms, to welcome, to embrace. To salute one (not in a military sense), greet, bid, wish well to. In classical literature aspazomai can also be used of physical expressions of welcome, such as “embrace” and “kiss.” It is spoken of those who meet (Mt. 10:12; Mk 9:15; Lk 1:40; 10:4; Acts 21:19; Lxx = Ex. 18:7) or separate (Acts 20:1; 21:6). This is one final expression of Paul's paternal love. A salutation on meeting; an expression of good wishes at the opening (or in Hellenistic times times also the close) of a letter. Aspazomai is constantly used in the papyri for conveying the greetings at the end of a letter

Plummer adds "The sexes being separated in the synagogues, the men would kiss men, and the women would kiss women, and Christian assemblies would follow the same practice as a security that the φίλημα was γίον. Nowhere in N.T. is the holy kiss connected with public worship.

QUESTION - [What exactly is a holy kiss?](#)

ANSWER - There are four places in the New Testament that refer to the “holy kiss”—Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; and 1 Thessalonians 5:26. In each instance, the Greek words denote a kiss which is sacred—physically pure and morally blameless. It was a common custom in most nations for people to kiss each other at meeting or parting to display their love, sincere affection, and friendship for each other. The kiss is called “holy” to distinguish it from a sexual one and from a hypocritical and deceitful one, such as Joab gave to Amasa (2 Samuel 20:9) or such as Judas gave to Jesus when he cried, “Hail Rabbi,” and betrayed Him into the hands of His enemies (Matthew 26:49).

In New Testament times, the holy kiss was a sign of greeting, much like the modern handshake. For Christians, it further expressed brotherly love and unity. The holy kiss was especially precious to the new believers during the early church years, because they were often outcasts from their own families because of their new faith. These new believers gloried in the new spiritual kinship they had found among other Christians. Furthermore, the holy kiss from a Jewish Christian to a Gentile believer was evidence that the Gentiles were accepted fully into Christian fellowship, despite the teachings of the Judaizers, those who would return to the Mosaic law as their source of justification. So prominent were these false teachers in the early church that they even temporarily drew such a prominent Christian as Peter into their web of deceit (Galatians 2:11-13). The holy kiss between the Jewish and Gentile believers was done righteously in recognition that all believers are brothers and sisters in the family of God.

Whether or not the holy kiss should be a tradition we carry on today is not clear in Scripture. Whether or not our salutations to our brothers and sisters in Christ include the holy kiss, the important thing is that our greetings spring from real love and friendship, be characterized by sincerity, and represent true Christian fellowship. GotQuestions.org

- Ro 16:16,21-23 Php 4:21,22 Philemon 1:23,24 Heb 13:24 1Pe 5:13 2Jn 1:13 3Jn 1:14
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

MACEDONIANS SENT THEIR MONEY NOW SEND THEIR LOVE

All the saints greet ([aspazomai](#) **you** - These saints would be those in the churches in Macedonia. Paul is confident that **ALL** with whom he is in touch in Macedonia will desire to will send the greeting. Holy **saints** ([hagios](#)) and **holy** ([hagios](#)) kisses.

2 Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

- **The grace:** Nu 6:23-27 Mt 28:19 Joh 1:16,17 Ro 1:7 16:20,24 1Co 16:23 Rev 1:4,5
- **the love:** Ro 5:5 Ro 8:39 Eph 6:23 1Jn 3:16 Jude 1:21
- **the fellowship:** John 4:10,14 Jn 7:38 Jn 14:15-17 Ro 8:9,14-17 1Co 3:16 6:19 12:13 Ga 5:22 Eph 2:18,22 5:9 Php 2:1 1Jn 1:3 3:24
- **Amen** (SEE **NET NOTE** BELOW): Mt 6:13 28:20 Ro 16:20,27 1Co 14:16
- [2 Corinthians 13 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

2 Corinthians 8:9+ For you know **the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ**, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

A TRINITARIAN FAREWELL

Vincent - The most complete benediction of the Pauline epistles. In most of the epistles the introductory benedictions are confined to grace and peace. In the pastoral epistles mercy is added. In the closing benedictions uniformly grace.

The grace ([charis](#)) **of the Lord Jesus Christ** - God the Son's amazing grace to live the Christian life. 2Ti 2:1+ = "be strong in the **grace** that is in Christ Jesus." 2Co 12:9+ = "My (CHRIST) **grace** is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."

Full Name **Lord Jesus Christ** in Corinthians letters -1 Co. 1:2; 1 Co. 1:3; 1 Co. 1:7; 1 Co. 1:8; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 6:11; 1 Co. 8:6; 1 Co. 15:57; 2 Co. 1:2; 2 Co. 1:3; 2 Co. 8:9; 2 Co. 13:14

And the love ([agape](#)) **of God** - God the Father's supernatural love - unconditional, amazing, forgiving, etc.

Lord Jesus Christ, God and Holy Spirit are all subjective genitive, indicating "the **grace** which comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, the **love** which God inspires in the hearts of His children (cf. v. 11), the sense of membership which the **Holy Spirit** imparts to those who are united in one Body." (Plummer) A smaller number of writers favor objective genitive for the latter two - love towards God, communion with the Spirit.

And the fellowship ([koinonia](#)) **of the Holy Spirit** - The communion of believers with the Spirit of the living God. **Tyndale Bible Dictionary** says "**Communion** with God results in common participation with other believers in the Spirit of God and God's blessings."

Colin Kruse on the fellowship ([koinonia](#)) **of the Holy Spirit** - The word **fellowship** is a translation of [koinonia](#), which means essentially 'participation'. The expression **fellowship of the Holy Spirit** can be construed so as to mean participation in the Holy Spirit where the Holy Spirit is understood as the object in which Christian people share (objective genitive construction). Alternatively it can be construed so as to mean a fellowship created by the Holy Spirit (subjective genitive construction). Both ideas are true and are found elsewhere in Paul's letters (e.g. 1Co 12:13 where Christians are said both to have been baptized by one Spirit into one body, and to have been made to drink of one Spirit). In any case Christians can share 'objectively' in the Spirit only if the Spirit Himself as subject makes that participation possible. ([Tyndale NT Commentary online - 2 Corinthians 13](#))

be with you all - Even after all the grief the Corinthians have caused him, Paul bestows a final farewell blessing on them.

Murray Harris has a great comment that "Paul grounds his pastoral appeal for unity of spirit and for the rejection of discord (2Co 13:11, 12) in the theological doctrine of the Trinity. The grace of Christ banishes self-assertiveness and self-seeking, the love of God

puts jealousy and anger to flight, while the fellowship created by the Spirit (see note) leaves no room for quarreling and factions (cf. 2Co 12:21)."

A T Robertson - This benediction is the most complete of them all. It presents the persons of the Trinity in full form. From 2 Thess. 3:17 it appears that Paul wrote the greeting or benediction with his own hand. We know from Rom. 15:19 that Paul went round about unto Illyricum before, apparently, he came on to Corinth. When he did arrive (Acts 20:1–3) the troubles from the Judaizers had disappeared. Probably the leaders left after the coming of Titus and the brethren with this Epistle. The reading of it in the church would make a stir of no small proportions. But it did the work.

NET NOTE - Most witnesses, especially later ones (2x D Ψ lat sy bo), conclude this letter with μὴν (amēn, "amen"), while several early and important MSS (46 x* A B F G 0243 6 33 630 1175 1739 1881 pc sa) lack the particle. Such a conclusion is routinely added by scribes to NT books because a few of these books originally had such an ending (cf. Rom 16:27; Gal 6:18; Jude 25). A majority of Greek witnesses have the concluding μὴν in every NT book except Acts, James, and 3 John (and even in these books, μὴν is found in some witnesses). It is thus a predictable variant. That so many diverse witnesses lacked the word here is strong testimony to its absence for the original text of 2 Corinthians.

Grace (favor) (5485) **charis** from **chairo** = to rejoice. English = charity. **Adrian Rogers** says the best definition of grace that he has ever heard is that God's grace is "both the **desire** and the **ability** to do the will of God." It is striking that almost the same words occur in Php 2:13NLT-note "**For** (term of explanation - explains how it is possible to Work out our salvation - Php 2:12-note) God is working in you, giving you the **DESIRE** and the **POWER** to do what pleases Him."

Love (26) **agape** is unconditional, sacrificial love and Biblically refers to a love that God is (1Jn 4:8,16), that God shows (Jn 3:16+, 1Jn 4:9) and that God enables in His children (fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22+). **Agape** love does not depend on the world's criteria for love, such as attractiveness, emotions, or sentimentality. Believers can easily fall into the trap of blindly following the world's demand that a lover **feel** positive toward the beloved. This is not **agape** love, but is a love based on impulse. **Impulsive love** characterizes the spouse who announces to the other spouse that they are planning to divorce their mate. Why? They reason "I can't help it. I fell in love with another person!" Christians must understand that this type of impulsive love is completely contrary to God's **decisive love**, which is decisive because He is in control and has a purpose in mind. There are many reasons a proper understanding of the truth of God's word (and of the world's lie) is critical and one of the foremost is Jesus' declaration that "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have **love** (agape) for one another." (John 13:35). Ro 5:5+ - he **love** of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Agape in Corinthians letters - 1 Co. 4:21; 1 Co. 8:1; 1 Co. 13:1; 1 Co. 13:2; 1 Co. 13:3; 1 Co. 13:4; 1 Co. 13:8; 1 Co. 13:13; 1 Co. 14:1; 1 Co. 16:14; 1 Co. 16:24; 2 Co. 2:4; 2 Co. 2:8; 2 Co. 5:14; 2 Co. 6:6; 2 Co. 8:7; 2 Co. 8:8; 2 Co. 8:24; 2 Co. 13:11; 2 Co. 13:14;

Fellowship (sharing, contribution) (2842) **koinonia** from **koinos** = that which is in common, belonging to several or of which several are partakers) describes the experience (in contrast to koinonia as an **act**) of having something in common and/or of sharing things in common with others. It describes a **close association involving mutual interests** and sharing or to have communion (Which Webster defines as "intimate fellowship") It denotes the **active, joint participation, cooperation and/or sharing in a common interest or activity**. Believers have **fellowship** vertically with the Triune God through His Son Christ Jesus and horizontally with other saints. The "vertical fellowship" precedes and makes possible the "horizontal fellowship" between believers. **Koinonia in NT** - Acts 2:42; Rom. 15:26; 1Co. 1:9; 1Co. 10:16; 2Co. 6:14; 2Co. 8:4; 2Co. 9:13; 2Co. 13:14; Gal. 2:9; Phil. 1:5; Phil. 2:1; Phil. 3:10; Phlm. 1:6; Heb. 13:16; 1 Jn. 1:3; 1 Jn. 1:6; 1 Jn. 1:7

F B Meyer - The Communion of the Holy Ghost.

How often these words are uttered without any real appreciation of their depth of meaning! The word communion signifies having in common. It is used of our fellowship with one another (1 Corinthians 10:16) and with God (1Jn 1:3). The bond of such fellowship is always through the Holy Spirit. As the ocean unites all lands, and is the medium through which they are able to exchange commodities, so does the blessed Spirit unite the Persons of the Blessed Trinity to each other, and us to them, and secures that oneness for which our Savior prayed.

How wonderful it is to have the privilege of this Divine fellowship! That we need never be alone again; that we can at any moment turn to Him for advice and direction; that we may draw on his resources for the supply of every need; that it is impossible to exhaust or even tax his willingness to counsel and succour; that there is no kind of service or suffering into which He is not prepared to enter with us! Surely, if we would but give ourselves time to realize this marvellous fact, there would be no room for the despondency which at times threatens to deprive us of heart and hope.

Of course, we must be very careful of the tender sensibilities and holy disposition of our divine Confederate. We cannot ruthlessly grieve Him by our harshness or impurity at one moment, and turn to Him for his succor and direction at the next. Such divine union

as lies within our reach certainly demands on our part watchfulness, a tender conscience, a yielded and pliant will, a heart which has no other love, no affection nor idol inconsistent with the Spirit's fellowship.

Norman Geisler - [When Cultists Ask](#) - 2 CORINTHIANS 13:14—Does this verse support the doctrine of the Trinity?

MISINTERPRETATION: Second Corinthians 13:14 records a benediction of the apostle Paul: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all" (NIV). Though Trinitarians often cite this verse in support of the Trinity, the [Jehovah's Witnesses](#) believe it is " 'insufficient' to prove the Trinity." It does not prove "that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are coequal or coeternal or that all are God" (Reasoning from the Scriptures, 1989, 415).

CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION: This verse provides supportive evidence—not conclusive evidence—for the doctrine of the Trinity. Trinitarians base their understanding of God on the accumulative evidence of the whole of Scripture, not on any isolated verse. While it is true that 2 Corinthians 13:14 by itself does not prove the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity, when taken with other Scriptures there is no doubt that the doctrine is true.

Scripture declares that there is only one true God (Deut. 6:4). In the unity of the Godhead, however, there are three distinct persons. Each of the three persons is called God in Scripture: the Father (1 Peter 1:2), the Son (John 20:28), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3–4). Moreover, each possess the attributes of deity. For example, each of the three are everywhere-present (Ps. 139:7; Matt. 19:26; 28:18), all-knowing (Rom. 11:33; Matt. 9:4; 1 Cor. 2:10), and all-powerful (Matt. 28:18; Rom. 15:19; 1 Peter 1:5). Finally, there is three-in-oneness within the Godhead. Just prior to his ascension, Jesus told the disciples, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19 NIV). The word name is singular in the Greek, indicating that there is one God. But there are three distinct persons within the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This three-in-oneness is reflected in 2 Corinthians 13:14.

QUESTION - [What does the Bible teach about the Trinity?](#)

ANSWER - The most difficult thing about the Christian concept of the Trinity is that there is no way to perfectly and completely understand it. The Trinity is a concept that is impossible for any human being to fully understand, let alone explain. God is infinitely greater than we are; therefore, we should not expect to be able to fully understand Him. The Bible teaches that the Father is God, that Jesus is God, and that the Holy Spirit is God. The Bible also teaches that there is only one God. Though we can understand some facts about the relationship of the different Persons of the Trinity to one another, ultimately, it is incomprehensible to the human mind. However, this does not mean the Trinity is not true or that it is not based on the teachings of the Bible. The Trinity is one God existing in three Persons. Understand that this is not in any way suggesting three Gods. Keep in mind when studying this subject that the word "Trinity" is not found in Scripture. This is a term that is used to attempt to describe the triune God—three coexistent, co-eternal Persons who are God. Of real importance is that the concept represented by the word "Trinity" does exist in Scripture. The following is what God's Word says about the Trinity:

- [See related video on Trinity](#)

1) There is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4; Galatians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:5).

2) The Trinity consists of three Persons (Genesis 1:1, 26; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8, 48:16, 61:1; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14). In Genesis 1:1, the Hebrew plural noun "Elohim" is used. In Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7 and Isaiah 6:8, the plural pronoun for "us" is used. The word "Elohim" and the pronoun "us" are plural forms, definitely referring in the Hebrew language to more than two. While this is not an explicit argument for the Trinity, it does denote the aspect of plurality in God. The Hebrew word for "God," "Elohim," definitely allows for the Trinity.

In Isaiah 48:16 and 61:1, the Son is speaking while making reference to the Father and the Holy Spirit. Compare Isaiah 61:1 to Luke 4:14-19 to see that it is the Son speaking. Matthew 3:16-17 describes the event of Jesus' baptism. Seen in this passage is God the Holy Spirit descending on God the Son while God the Father proclaims His pleasure in the Son. Matthew 28:19 and 2 Corinthians 13:14 are examples of three distinct Persons in the Trinity.

3) The members of the Trinity are distinguished one from another in various passages. In the Old Testament, "LORD" is distinguished from "Lord" (Genesis 19:24; Hosea 1:4). The LORD has a Son (Psalm 2:7, 12; Proverbs 30:2-4). The Spirit is distinguished from the "LORD" (Numbers 27:18) and from "God" (Psalm 51:10-12). God the Son is distinguished from God the Father (Psalm 45:6-7; Hebrews 1:8-9). In the New Testament, Jesus speaks to the Father about sending a Helper, the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17). This shows that Jesus did not consider Himself to be the Father or the Holy Spirit. Consider also all the other times in the Gospels where Jesus speaks to the Father. Was He speaking to Himself? No. He spoke to another Person in the Trinity—the Father.

4) Each member of the Trinity is God. The Father is God (John 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Peter 1:2). The Son is God (John 1:1, 14; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20). [The Holy Spirit is God](#) (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16).

5) There is subordination within the Trinity. Scripture shows that the Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Father and the Son, and the Son is subordinate to the Father. This is an internal relationship and does not deny the deity of any Person of the Trinity. This is simply an area which our finite minds cannot understand concerning the infinite God. Concerning the Son see Luke 22:42, John 5:36, John 20:21, and 1 John 4:14. Concerning the Holy Spirit see John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, and especially John 16:13-14.

6) The individual members of the Trinity have different tasks. The Father is the ultimate source or cause of the universe (1 Corinthians 8:6; Revelation 4:11); divine revelation (Revelation 1:1); salvation (John 3:16-17); and Jesus' human works (John 5:17; 14:10). The Father initiates all of these things.

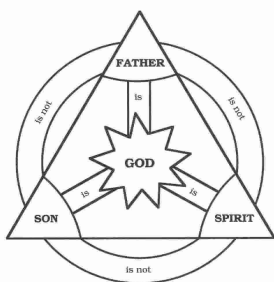
The Son is the agent through whom the Father does the following works: the creation and maintenance of the universe (1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17); divine revelation (John 1:1, 16:12-15; Matthew 11:27; Revelation 1:1); and salvation (2 Corinthians 5:19; Matthew 1:21; John 4:42). The Father does all these things through the Son, who functions as His agent.

The Holy Spirit is the means by whom the Father does the following works: creation and maintenance of the universe (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalm 104:30); divine revelation (John 16:12-15; Ephesians 3:5; 2 Peter 1:21); salvation (John 3:6; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:2); and Jesus' works (Isaiah 61:1; Acts 10:38). Thus, the Father does all these things by the power of the Holy Spirit.

There have been many attempts to develop [illustrations of the Trinity](#). However, none of the popular illustrations are completely accurate. The egg (or apple) fails in that the shell, white, and yolk are parts of the egg, not the egg in themselves, just as the skin, flesh, and seeds of the apple are parts of it, not the apple itself. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not parts of God; each of them is God. The water illustration is somewhat better, but it still fails to adequately describe the Trinity. Liquid, vapor, and ice are forms of water. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not forms of God, each of them is God. So, while these illustrations may give us a picture of the Trinity, the picture is not entirely accurate. An infinite God cannot be fully described by a finite illustration.

The doctrine of the Trinity has been a divisive issue throughout the entire history of the Christian church. While the core aspects of the Trinity are clearly presented in God's Word, some of the side issues are not as explicitly clear. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God—but there is only one God. That is the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. Beyond that, the issues are, to a certain extent, debatable and non-essential. Rather than attempting to fully define the Trinity with our finite human minds, we would be better served by focusing on the fact of God's greatness and His infinitely higher nature. "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" (Romans 11:33-34). [GotQuestions.org](#)

Below is the best symbol for the Trinity we are aware of:



James Smith - THE APOSTOLIC BLESSING 2 COR. 13:14 "Amen" Study No. 7.

Introduction

1. This verse is most familiar to us, as it is used universally in the dismissal of congregations.
2. We have all repeated "Amen" after the preacher, and it is good to so respond.
3. But what an "Amen" this is.
4. This "Amen" practically amounts to two things:

I. Our Acceptance of the Trinity.

1. If Jesus is not God the Son, and if the Holy Spirit is not a Personality, it were blasphemous to associate the names thus.
2. It does not mean that we understand the Trinity.

3. But we can accept that Doctrine.
4. It was Henry Ward Beecher who said it was easier for him to believe in the Trinity than the Unity of God.
5. Science has something to say in favour, for in nature the highest organisms are the most complex.
6. Philosophy teaches that love demands love; that Eternal Fatherhood implies Eternal Sonship.

II. Our Wish for Blessings to be Bestowed by the Trinity. What a splendid wish and prayer this is for a congregation about to leave, or for that matter, for all our friends.

1. THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST ... "Be with you."
 - a. Note, not Jesus, but Lord Jesus. How reverently that peerless Name is uttered.
 - b. Not only the blessings that come to us through Jesus.
 - c. Or the blessings that are bestowed by Him.
 - d. But there is a further meaning—the refinement and gracefulness of the Lord Jesus.
 - e. Jesus Christ was always graceful in His deportment and manners.
2. THE LOVE OF GOD ... "Be with you."
 - a. A constant realisation of the love of God.
 - b. His own love constantly dwelling within us.
3. THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY GHOST ... "Be with you."
 - a. God has only one Vicar on earth—the Holy Spirit.
 - b. He is here now right by our side.
 - c. We can have partnership, oneness, with Him in all His wishes and desires.

Note the ascending scale.

First: Grace.

Second: Love.

Third: Fellowship.

When I get grace I am made to know of the fact that He loves me, and, most marvellous of all, we then can have communion.

Rick Renner - [The Holy Spirit—A Partner Who Wants To Take Responsibility For You in This Life!](#) 2 Corinthians 13:14

Most all of us would say we want to live a victorious Christian life. But without daily communion with the Holy Spirit, it's impossible to attain that goal. Communion with the Holy Spirit is the launching pad for a life of supernatural power and consistency.

In Second Corinthians 13:14, Paul says, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." I want you to notice the word "communion" in this verse, because communion with the Spirit is what we are talking about today. The word "communion" is the Greek word *koinonia*, a word that has a whole flavor of meanings, but one primary meaning is that of partnership.

An example of *koinonia* conveying the idea of partnership can be found in Luke 5:7 after Jesus supplied a miraculous catch of fish. After the fishermen had fished all night and caught nothing, Jesus told them to cast their nets on the other side. When they obeyed, they caught such a massive amount of fish that the nets began to break!

Peter knew he couldn't handle this miraculous catch by himself, so he called to other fishermen in nearby boats to come and assist him. Luke 5:7 says, "And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink."

Do you see the word "**partners**" in this verse? It is a form of this word *koinonia*. However, in Luke 5:7 it refers to real, legitimate business partners. One scholar says that this word used in this context lets us know that Peter was no small-time fisherman. He owned an entire fishing enterprise, and those men in the other boats were his business associates or his company partners. Whether these other fishermen were co-owners or employees who worked for Peter, they were all working together on the same job and were focused on a joint venture to catch and sell fish.

Keeping this in mind, Second Corinthians 13:14 could convey the following idea:

"... and the **PARTNERSHIP** of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

If you stop and think about it, this really makes a lot of sense. When Jesus' earthly ministry was in operation, He and the Holy Spirit always worked together (**ED: SEE RELATED ARTICLE ON SITE - [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)**). Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35); empowered by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16); and led by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:1).

Jesus also healed people by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:38); cast out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:28); was resurrected from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11); and was seated at God's right hand in the heavenly places through the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:19, 20).

Every time we see Jesus in the Gospels, He is working hand in hand with the Holy Spirit. In fact, Jesus even said He wouldn't initiate anything by Himself, indicating His total dependence on the Spirit of God (John 5:30). Well, if Jesus needed this kind of ongoing partnership with the Holy Spirit in order to accomplish His divine role in the earth, we certainly have to have it as well!

But there is yet another idea conveyed by the word **"communion"** (koinonia)—that is, the idea of taking responsibility for someone. An example of this is found in Philippians 4:14, when Paul wrote to the Philippians and commended them for the generous gift they sent for his ministry. He told them, "Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction." The word "communicate" here is another use of the word koinonia.

At the time Paul wrote the Philippian letter, he was in prison in Rome. Over the years, he had traveled and preached, raised up churches, worked with leaders, and given his life for the Church. But of all the churches Paul had poured his life into, none of them helped him financially the way they should have.

In order to cover his expenses, Paul worked as a tentmaker during the day; then he preached and trained leaders during the evenings. This wasn't the best plan, but because no one would support him, it was what he had to do. He was pouring his heart and soul into churches that were not financially helping him bear his load.

Paul was in prison in Rome when he received a special delivery letter from the Philippians. In that package, he found a sizable offering that the Philippian church had sent to support him during his time of difficulty. In other words, the Philippian church didn't just say, "We'll pray for your situation, Brother," and then forget about Paul. Instead, they understood their responsibility to help him, so they took up an offering to support him and to communicate their love for him. In other words, they took responsibility for him. Paul uses the Greek word koinonia to convey this meaning—the same word he uses in Second Corinthians 13:14 when he writes about the "communion of the Holy Spirit."

Thus, Second Corinthians 13:14 could also be read this way:

"... and the RESPONSIBILITY of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

This means that just as the Holy Spirit wants to become your Partner, He also wants to assume great responsibility for you in this world. If you wish, He'll stand by and watch you try to do it all alone. But if you'll open your heart to the Spirit of God, He will assume a more active role in your life. He wants you to know that you are not alone—and that He will take responsibility for you!

If the cry of your heart is to know the partnership and the responsibility of the Holy Spirit—not merely as mental doctrines, but as constant, daily realities in your life—then decide today to get to know the Holy Spirit as your intimate Friend. Make Him your Partner. Allow Him to help you fulfill the responsibilities of your calling in Christ.

Begin today to develop a walk of daily communion with the Greater One within. Let Him be all He wants to be in your life—your Source of wisdom, power, and strength to launch you forth into victory!

MY PRAYER FOR TODAY

Holy Spirit, I want to thank You for being my Partner in this world. I need Your partnership. I know that without You, I am so limited in what I am able to do. You see what I can't see; You know what I don't know; You have wisdom and insight that I don't have. I simply must have Your help if I am going to do what God has asked me to do. I ask You to please forgive me for all the times I have gotten in such a hurry that I didn't take time to fellowship with

You. From this moment on, I promise I will do my best to consult You before I make a decision or take a single step!

I pray this in Jesus' name!

MY CONFESSION FOR TODAY

I confess that I am led by the Spirit of God. I am careful not to make big decisions without consulting Him first. The Holy Spirit is my Leader, my Teacher, and my Guide; therefore, I look to Him to help me make the right decisions and take the right actions in every sphere of my life—my family, my business, and my ministry. Every day I experience more and more victory because I allow the Holy Spirit to direct all my steps.

I declare this by faith in Jesus' name!

QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

1. Have you asked the Spirit of God to be your Partner in life and to take responsibility for all your cares and concerns?

2. What can you do to make the Holy Spirit a closer, more active Partner in every area of life?
3. Have you spent quality time in communion with the Holy Spirit today, being still and simply knowing that He is your God?

A W Pink - A Prayer of Benediction - 2 Corinthians 13:5

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14 "THE GRACE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen." This threefold invocation is familiarly known as the Christian benediction. God authorized this Old Testament formula of blessing to be used in the assemblies of Israel: "Speak unto Aaron and his sons, saying, On this wise shall ye bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The LORD bless thee and keep thee: The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall [thus] put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them" (Numbers 6:23-27).

But there is nothing to indicate that God required the benediction of Corinthians 13:14 to be employed in the Christian churches; yet there is certainly nothing to show that it is incongruous to do so. As a fact, it has been made wide use of because of its deep importance doctrinally and because of its appropriateness, for those words are both a confession of the Christian faith and a declaration of Christian privilege.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD The benediction in 2 Corinthians 13:14 contains a brief summary of the Christian doctrine of God. We say the Christian doctrine of God in contradistinction not only from the horrible delusions of the idolatrous heathen but also from the inadequate conception of Deity which was present in Judaism. By the Christian doctrine of God we mean the revelation which is given of Him in the New Testament more particularly.

And that brings us to ground where we need to tread very carefully lest we disparage or underestimate what was revealed of Him in the Old Testament. If on the one hand we must guard against the fearful error that the God of the Old Testament is a very different character from the God of the New, on the other hand we need to be careful that we do not too fully read the clearer teaching of the New into the Old. At any rate we must not conclude that those under the legal dispensation perceived the same significance in some of those things in their Scriptures which we now interpret in the brighter light of the evangelical economy. Such a statement is "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:8) needs to be remembered in this connection.

It has been erroneously and blasphemously asserted by those who deny the real inspiration of the Scriptures that Jehovah was but a tribal God and that what is said of Him in the New Testament mirrors the views which the Hebrews entertained of Him. But it is greatly to be feared that many who reject such a Satanic crudity as that and who regard the Old Testament as being equally the Word of God with the New nevertheless hold the idea, with varying degrees of consciousness, that the revelation which we have of the divine character in the New Testament is much to be preferred above that in the Old. Such is a serious misconception. The severity of God appears as plainly in the book of Revelation as it does in Joshua. In fact, the vials of His wrath there are more fearful in their nature than the plagues which He inflicted upon Egypt and Canaan. On the other hand, the goodness of God as made known in the epistles in no wise surpasses His benevolence as depicted in the Psalms. The God of Sinai and Calvary is one and the same, as He is also the Author of both the law and the gospel.

As has been said, we need to be careful not to read too fully into the Old Testament Scriptures the clearer teaching of the New. We who now have the completed Word of God in our hands are thereby enabled to recognize more plainly that the substance of the truth of the Triunity of God is found in the earlier books of the Bible. Yet it has to be granted that there is no statement in them which is quite as explicit as the one in Matthew 28:19. Certainly it is much to be doubted if the Jewish nation recognized that there were three distinct Persons in the Godhead. The grand truth made known under the old economy was rather the unity of God: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

This truth was in sharp contrast with the polytheism of the idolatries of the heathen. On the other hand, we have no doubt that individual saints in those times had a saving knowledge of the triune God, yet not so fully perhaps as we have. Concerning this Calvin said, "As God afforded a clearer manifestation of Himself at the advent of Christ, the three Persons became better known." We add, especially in Their covenant offices and distinct operations.

OLD TESTAMENT REVELATION "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18).

These words have a corporate fulfillment as well as a personal; they apply to the Church collectively as well as individually. The light of divine revelation broke forth "here a little and there a little" and did not shine in midday splendor until Emmanuel Himself tabernacled among men. The degree in which the doctrine of the Trinity was made known in the Old Testament Scriptures no doubt bore a proportion to the discovery of other mysteries of the faith. It was definitely revealed from the beginning, yet hardly with the same explicitness and perspicuity as now. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by

the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2).

This is the first contrast given in Hebrews, the theme of which is the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. Under the former era God's revelation of Himself was fragmentary and incomplete, but in this final dispensation His mind and heart have been fully revealed. There it was through such instruments as the prophets; now it is by the person of His own Son.

Christian revelation comes to us through the Lord Jesus Christ. God is manifested in and by the incarnate Son, for He can be approached only through the Mediator. God can be vitally known only in Him. Only through Him can we have a saving knowledge of God. The grand mission of Christ as the Prophet of His Church was to make known the character and perfections of God. This is signified by His title "the Word." "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:1,14).

A word is a medium of manifestation. I have a thought in my mind, yet others do not know it. But the moment I clothe that thought in words it becomes cognizable. Words then make unseen thoughts objective. This is precisely what the Lord Jesus has done; He has made manifest the invisible God. A word is also a means of communication. By my words I transmit information to others. By words I express myself, make known my will, and impart knowledge. So Christ, as the Word, is the divine Transmitter, expressing to us God's full mind and will, communicating to us His life and love.

CHRIST REVEALS THE ATTRIBUTES AND PERFECTIONS OF GOD A word is also a means of revelation. By his words a speaker or writer exhibits both his intellectual caliber and his moral character. Out of the abundance of our hearts our mouths speak, and our very language betrays what we are within. By our words we shall be justified or condemned in the judgment, for they will reveal and attest what we were and are. And Christ as the Word reveals the attributes and perfections of God. How fully Christ has revealed God! Christ displayed God's power, illustrated His patience, manifested His wisdom, exhibited His holiness, showed forth His faithfulness, demonstrated His righteousness, made known His grace, and unveiled His heart. In Christ, and nowhere else, is God fully and finally manifested. That is why He is designated the "image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15). He has set before our eyes and hearts a visible, tangible, and cognizable representation of Him. Though "no man hath seen God at any time," yet "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). That is, Christ has faithfully and fully proclaimed Him. The same Greek word that is translated "declared" here is translated "told" in Luke 24:35.

CHRIST THE REVEALER OF THE FATHER It was infinitely suitable that He who was in the bosom of the Father, even when He walked this earth, should declare Him, for only One who was God's coequal could tell Him forth. So perfectly did Christ reveal God the Father that at the close of His ministry He said to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). And to the Father He affirmed, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world:... I have declared unto them thy name" (John 17:6,26).

By the name of God is meant all that He is in a demonstrative and communicative way. For what God is essentially in His absoluteness, in His ineffable majesty, in His incomprehensible boundlessness, in His selfexisting essence, as three in one and one in three, the infinite Jehovah, He cannot be made fully known to any finite intelligence, however spiritual.

No, not until eternity. In His love to His Church, in His covenant relationship to His people in Christ, in His everlasting delight to them in His Beloved, as the Medium and Mediator of all union and communion with them, God has been graciously pleased to reveal and make Himself known.

God is revealed to us in and by and through the Lord Jesus Christ. The writer of Hebrews declared Him to be "the brightness of his [the Triune God's] glory, and the express image of his person" (Hebrews 1:3).

He was certainly speaking of Christ as the God-man, that is, of the Son as incarnate as the same verse goes on to show: "When he had by himself purged our sins." By that blessed statement we understand that through Christ a clear and full exhibition has been made of the Father's personality.

In the Mediator all the glory of the Godhead is realized and manifested in order for it to be reflected on the Church and thereby be made known and enjoyed and in order for God to be glorified. Manifestation consists in revealing, so our Lord revealed and made known the "name" of God. He did so by His incarnation, by His holy life, by His magnifying the law, by His preaching, by His miracles, by His sufferings and death, by His triumphant resurrection, by His ascension. He did so by His Spirit, for it was more than an external manifestation of God which Christ made to His own — namely, an internal — by supernatural revelation, just as He "opened... their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:45).

We are grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ for the revelation of the Christian doctrine of God which we have dwelt on above. We deemed it best to make clear what we owe to our Redeemer in making known to us the character of God Himself and the relations which He sustains to us instead of entering at once into a detailed exposition of 2 Corinthians 13:14. As Christ averred. "All things

are delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matthew 11:27). No one can approach the Father except by Christ's mediation and none can have any vital and spiritual knowledge of the Father except by Christ's supernatural revelation of Him to the soul.

When our Lord declared, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father", He uttered words with a far deeper significance than appears on the surface.

Locally they were spoken more by way of reproof, for Philip had said to Him, "Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us" (John 14:8). To this the Savior replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" His life, His teaching, His works revealed plainly enough who He was. And then Jesus added, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, Shew us the Father?" But remember that the Spirit was not then given as He is now and that the hearts of these apostles were troubled at the prospect of Christ's death and His subsequent departure from them (John 14:1). But in its deeper meaning "he that hath seen me" refers not to any physical sight of Him but to a spiritual view of Him which one can see with the eyes of a divinely-enlightened understanding. Such an one is enabled to recognize His oneness with the Father and to exclaim, "My Lord and my God!"

GOD CLEARLY REVEALED IN CHRIST The two things we have mentioned above are brought together in that familiar statement, "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" (2 Corinthians 4:6).

First , the clearest revelation that God is and what He is, is made in the person of Christ, so that those who refuse to see God in the Redeemer lose all true knowledge of Him.

Second , as the glory of God is spiritual, it can only be spiritually discerned.

Only in God's light can we see Him who is light, and therefore God must shine in our hearts to give us a real and experimental knowledge of Himself. Such knowledge of Him is not by mental apprehension nor that which one man can communicate to another. Our reception of that light is not the result of our will or any effort put forth by us but is the immediate effect of a divine fiat, as when at the beginning of this world God said, "Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). God created light, and He awakens the dead souls of His elect, thereby calling them out of darkness into His own marvelous light, whereby they behold Himself shining in the perfection of grace and truth in the face or person of Jesus Christ. Nothing but the exercise of omnipotence can produce a miracle so wondrous and so blessed. God shines in our hearts by the power and operation of the Holy Spirit.

Here then is found the answer to that all-important question, "How may I obtain a better, deeper, fuller, and more influential knowledge of God?" By the heart's occupation with the Lord Jesus. By studying and meditating upon all that is revealed in the Bible concerning His wondrous person and work. By realizing my complete dependence upon the Holy Spirit and begging Him to take of the things of Christ and show them to me (John 16:14) and thereby abstaining from everything which grieves the Spirit and would (morally) hinder Him from performing this work of His. Nothing can make up for or take the place of personal intercourse with the Redeemer. It is only as we behold, with the eyes of faith and love, the glory of the Lord in the mirror of the Word that we are "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Let us then emulate the apostle and make it our chief ambition and endeavor that we may know Him, for in knowing Him we arrive at the knowledge of the triune God.

CHRIST ANOINTED FOR HIS PRIESTLY WORK The Christian benediction stands closely linked with both the baptism of Christ and the baptismal formula which He gave to His disciples. The former presents to us a most remarkable scene, for at the baptism of Christ the three Persons of the Godhead were openly manifested together in connection with that which gave a symbolical showing forth of the work of redemption. John the Baptist had come preaching repentance toward God and faith in His Lamb who should take away the sin of the world. But he also made definite mention of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). When the Savior presented Himself for baptism in the Jordan at the hands of His forerunner, He came as our Surety acknowledging that death was His due.

It was there He entered upon that path which was to terminate at the cross.

As Christ rose from that symbolical grave the heavens were opened and the Spirit of God in form as a dove descended and alighted on Him, thereby anointing Him for His priestly work (Acts 10:38). At the same time the Father's voice was audibly heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again" (John 10:17).

At Christ's baptism while He emblematically pledged Himself to death on the cross, the Father attested His pleasure in the Son and the acceptance of His offering.

Christ's reception of the Spirit at the Jordan was the equipment for His Messianic ministry. As He was sent and anointed by the

Spirit, so He commissions and endows His ambassadors: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John 20:21-22).

Later Christ gave the great commission to His disciples: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them [after they have been taught and have become disciples or Christians] in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:18-20).

Baptism into "the name" means baptism unto God, and the names of God in the New Covenant are "the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

The triune God is now fully revealed. That was the consummation and culmination of Christ's teaching concerning God. He ordained baptism for all time to be the initiating avowal of faith for all who enter His kingdom.

And the names of God, in which believers are to be baptized, set forth the Trinity of God, a fundamental doctrine of the Christian Church.

THE DIVINE TRINITY The Christian benediction, then, enunciates one of the foundational doctrines of Christianity, for no one is entitled to be regarded as a Christian who does not believe and acknowledge the triune God. That is why Scripture bids all who avow themselves Christians to be baptized in "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The divine Trinity lies at the basis of all New Testament teaching. The Redeemer claimed to be equal with God, one with the Father, and ever spoke of the Spirit as being both personal and divine. The apostles everywhere proclaimed His doctrine and recognized the threefold distinction in the Persons of the Godhead. The equal deity (and honor) of the Son and the Spirit with the Father is the mystery and glory of the gospel they preached. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

The "only true God" is revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and is known in and through Jesus Christ, the one Mediator.

That the revelation of the triune God constitutes the doctrinal foundation of Christianity is easily capable of demonstration. First, as pointed out above, the true God subsists in three co-essential and co-eternal Persons, and therefore he who worships any but the triune God is merely rendering homage to a figment of his own imagination. He who denies the personality and absolute deity of either the Father, the Son, or the Spirit cannot be a true Christian. Second, no salvation is possible for any sinner save that of which the triune God is the Author. To regard the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior to the exclusion of the saving operations of both the Father and the Spirit is a serious mistake. The Father eternally purposed the salvation of His elect in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-6). The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit entered into an everlasting covenant with each other for the Son to become incarnate in order to redeem sinners.

The salvation of the Church is ascribed to the Father: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling,... according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2 Timothy 1:9).

The Father, then, was our Savior long before Christ died to become such, and thanksgiving is due Him for the same. Equally necessary are the operations of the Spirit to actually apply to the hearts of God's elect the good of what Christ did for them. It is the Spirit who convicts men of sin and who imparts saving faith to them. Therefore is our salvation also ascribed to Him: "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

A careful reading of Titus 3:4-6 shows the three Persons together in this connection, for "God our Savior" is plainly the Father; "he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:6).

Third, the doctrine of the Trinity is a foundational doctrine because it is by the distinctive operations of the Holy Three that our varied needs are supplied. Do we not need "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ"? Is not our most urgent experimental requirement to come to Him constantly and draw from the fullness of grace which is treasured up for us in Him? (John 1:16). If we would obtain "grace to help in time of need" then we must go to that throne on which the Mediator sits. And do we not also need "the love of God", that is, fresh manifestations of it, new apprehensions thereof?

Are we not bidden to keep ourselves "in the love of God"? (Jude 21); And do we not equally need "the communion of the Holy Spirit"? What would become of us if He did not renew day by day in the inner man? (See Corinthians 4:16; Ephesians 3:16.) What would be our prayer-life if He no longer helped "our infirmities" and made "intercession for the saints according to the will of God"? (Romans 8:26-27).

THE HOLY TRINITY Like the virgin birth of Christ and the resurrection of our bodies, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is one of the mysteries of the faith. The first truth presented to faith is the Being of the true and living God, and this we know not from any discovery of reason but because He has revealed it in His Word. The next grand truth is that the one living and true God has made

Himself known to us under the threefold relation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and this we know on the same authority as the first. They are equally above reason, and real Christians do not attempt to fathom them; yet their incomprehensibility so far from being an objection is a necessary condition of confidence in revelation and faith in Him who is revealed. If the Bible presented no heights beyond the powers of reason to scale, if it contained no depths unfathomable to the keenest mental acumen, this writer for one would have discarded it as being nothing more than a human production and imposture. For our part we would no more worship a "god" that we could measure by our intellect than we would honor an image that our hands fashioned.

Whenever we attempt to discuss the revelation God has made of His three Persons we should do so with bowed heads and reverent hearts, for the ground we tread is ineffably holy. The subject is one of transcendent sacredness for it concerns the infinitely majestic and glorious One. For the whole of our knowledge on this subject we are entirely shut up to what it has pleased God to reveal of Himself in His Oracles. Science, philosophy, experience, observation, or speculation cannot in this exalted sphere increase our knowledge one iota.

TRINITY IN UNITY The divine Trinity is a Trinity in Unity: that is to say, there are not three Gods but three Persons as coexisting by essential union in the divine essence as being the one true God. Those three Persons are coequal and co-glorious so that one is not before or after the other, neither greater nor less than the other. It is in and by Their covenant offices They are manifested to us, and it is our privilege and duty to believe and know how these three Persons stand committed to us and are interested in us by the everlasting covenant; but we cannot understand the mystery of Their subsistence. Any teaching which does not equally honor all the Persons of the Godhead, distinctively and unitedly, is of no value to the soul. As one has said, "There is not a vestige of Christianity where the truth of the Trinity is not known and acknowledged. Not a vestige of godliness in the heart where the Father, Son, and Spirit do not officially dwell. There is not a clear view of any doctrine of God's grace to be obtained unless (so to speak) the telescope of the truth of the Trinity be applied to the eye of faith and that doctrine be viewed through it."

In view of what has just been pointed out, it constitutes one of the gravest signs of the times that in professedly "Christian" countries the Triune God is no longer officially acknowledged. While some of our national leaders still give thanks to "God" and own our dependence upon "the Almighty," that is no more than any Orthodox Jew or Muhammadan would do. There is a studied avoidance of any reference to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the Holy Spirit. Though that is sad, it is not to be wondered at; it is simply the shadowing forth in the civil realm of what has long obtained in the religious. For several generations past the absolute deity of Christ and of the Spirit has been openly denied in most of the theological seminaries, and thereby the triunity of God was repudiated. Even in most of the "orthodox churches" the eternal Three have not been accorded Their rightful place either in the doctrinal teaching of the pulpit or the devotional life of the pew.

In this benediction the apostle invokes the Trinity as the Source of grace, love, and communion. Its unique features must not be overlooked: the order is unusual, and the Names used informally. The Son is placed before the Father. The divine Persons are not here spoken of as the Son, the Father, and the Spirit, but as the Lord Jesus Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit. The reason for this is because what we have in our text is not primarily a confession of faith (as is Matthew 28:19), nor a doxology (as is Jude 24-25), but a benediction. A doxology is an ascription of praise, a benediction is a word of blessing; the one ascends from the heart of the saint to God, the other descends from God to the saint. Samuel Chadwick wrote, "Consequently the benediction does not approach the subject from the standpoint of theology but of experience. It is not concerned with definition, nor does it contemplate the glory of God in the absoluteness of His deity; but it sets Him forth as He is realized in the soul."

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY OF GREAT IMPORTANCE The Christian benediction therefore intimates that the doctrine of the Trinity is one of great importance to the existence and progress of vital godliness: that it is not a subject of mere speculation but one on which depends all the communications of grace and peace to the saints. It is a striking and solemn fact that those who reject the truth of the Trinity are seldom known to even profess having spiritual communion with God but instead treat the same as a species of enthusiasm and fanaticism, as a perusal of the writings of Unitarians will show. The benediction, then, sums up the blessings of Christian privilege in the three great words of the gospel: grace, love, communion. Those three divine gifts are attributed to different Persons in the Godhead. Each takes precedence in His own peculiar work, though we cannot trace the limits of such, and must be careful lest we conceive of God as three Gods rather than one. Each belongs to all. Grace is of God and of the Spirit as well as of the Son. Love is of the Son and Spirit as well as the Father. And our communion is with the Father and the Son as well as with the Spirit.

GRACE A GREAT WORD OF THE GOSPEL "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." Why distinctively ascribe grace to Him if it is of God and the Spirit as well? Because in the economy of redemption all grace comes to us through Him. The word grace is the special token of Paul in every epistle: eight close with "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you," sometimes varying the formula to "with your spirit." Grace is one of the outstanding words of the gospel. Again quoting Chadwick: "It is more than mercy and greater than love. Justice demands integrity, and mercy is the ministry of pity; love seeks correspondence, appreciation, and response; but grace demands no merit. Grace flows unrestrained and unreserved upon those who have no goodness to plead and no claim to advance. Grace seeks the unfit and the unworthy. It is love, mercy, and compassion combined, stretching out toward the

guilty, ungracious, and rebellious. It is the only hope for sinful men. If salvation comes not by grace, it can never be ours. Without grace there can be no reconciliation, no pardon, no peace." "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ." That is His designation as the Godman Mediator. It includes and indicates His divine nature: He is "the Lord," yes, "the Lord of lords." His human nature: He is "Jesus"; His office: He is "Christ," the anointed One, the long-promised Messiah, the Mediator. It is the favor of His divine person clothed with our nature and made the Head of His people which the apostle invokes for all his believing brethren. "His grace be with you all." That comes first in the benediction because it is our initial need. "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" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

There it is His infinite condescension in submitting to such a mean condition for our sakes.

When He became incarnate the only begotten of the Father was beheld by His own as "full of grace and truth," and as the apostle added, "And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:14,16).

Here the meaning of grace passes from an attribute of the divine character to an active energy in the souls of the redeemed. At the throne of grace we "find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). The heart is "established with grace" (Hebrews 13:9) and by that grace we are enabled to "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Hebrews 12:28). It is in "the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (<550201> Timothy 2:1) that we find our strength, and He assures us of its competency to support us under all afflictions and persecutions by the promise "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Therefore we are exhorted to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). Those passages all speak of the divine power in the soul as the operation of grace in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ as its Fountain.

THE LOVE OF GOD "And the love of God." There are two reasons why this comes second: because this is the order both in the economy of redemption and in Christian experience.

First , it was the mediatorial grace or work of Christ which procured the love of God for His people, which turned away His wrath from them and reconciled Him to them. Hence it is referred to not as "the love of the Father," which never changed or diminished to His people, but as the love or goodwill of God considered as their Governor and Judge.

Second , it is by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in saving us that we are brought to the knowledge and enjoyment of the love of God. The love of the Father is indeed the source and originating cause of redemption, but that is not the particular love of God which is here in view. The death of Christ as a satisfaction for our sins was necessary in order to bring us to God and into participation of His love. The manifestation of the love of God toward us in the pardon of our sins and the justification of our persons was conditioned on the atoning blood.

THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT "And the communion of the Holy Spirit." As the grand design of Christ's work Godward was to appease His judicial wrath and procure for us His love and favor, so the grand effect saintward was the procuring of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word may be rendered either "communion" or "communication." By the communication of the Holy Spirit we are regenerated, faith is given, holiness is wrought in us. Life, light, love, and liberty are the special benefits He bestows on us. Without the Spirit being communicated to us we could never enter, personally and experimentally, into the benefits of Christ's mediation. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us... that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (Galatians 3:13-14).

Thus, the communicating of the Spirit to His people was one of the chief objects of Christ's death.

But the Greek also signifies the communion of the Holy Spirit, a word which means "partnership, companionship." He shares with us the things of God. Grace tends to love, and love to communion. Hence we see again that the order here is that of Christian experience. Only as grace is consciously received and the love of God is realized in the soul can there be any intelligent and real communion. Through Christ to God, the Father, and through Both to the abiding presence of the Comforter. This expression "the communion of the Holy Spirit" shows He is a person, for it is meaningless to talk of communion with an impersonal principle or influence. United as He is in this verse with "the Lord Jesus Christ and God" it evidences Him to be a divine Person. Further, it denotes He is an Object of intercourse and converse, and hence we must be on our guard against grieving Him (Ephesians 4:30). The separate mention of each of the eternal Three teaches us that They are to be accorded equal honor, glory, and praise from us.

What is signified by "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all "? It cannot mean less than a consciousness of God's presence. The apostle was not praying for the gifts of grace, love, and communion apart from the Persons in whom alone they are to be found. He requested that the presence of the triune God might be realized in the souls of His people. The New Testament teaches that the divine Three are equally present in the heart of the believer. Speaking of the Spirit Christ said, "He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you," and of Himself and the Father, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:17,23).

The Christian is indwelt by the triune God: the Lord Jesus dwells in him as the source of all grace, God the Father abides in him as the spring of all love, and the Holy Spirit communes with him and energizes him for all spiritual service.

What is the purpose of that indwelling? God the Father abides in the believer to conform him to His image, that he may become one with Him: one with Him in mind and heart, in character and purpose. The Christian reflects his God. The grace by which the Lord Jesus tasted death for His people is designed to produce a like spirit of sacrifice in them: "Because he laid down his life for us... we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16).

They that know the love of God must live the life of love. If we say the love of God is "with us" and we walk contrary to love, we are liars. The God of love dwells in His people that they may live the life of Godlike love. So it is with the communion of the Holy Spirit: He does not share with us His riches that we may spend them upon ourselves. Chadwick averred: "The threefold benediction is to abide with us that its threefold grace may be manifested by us, and the presence of the three-one God demonstrated through us."