

## I. Review

### A. 2Cor. 12:11-13

- i. Paul admits to being a fool by adopting the boastful tactics of his critics.
- ii. What led Paul to boast was the lack of defense on behalf of the Corinthians.
- iii. Paul asserts that certain signs, wonders and miracles were done among them that verified his authenticity as an apostle of Christ!
  1. The miracles alone should have motivated the Corinthians to defend Paul against his critics.
  2. It is good to note that Paul focused on the signs (evidences) of an apostle rather than his position as an apostle.
    - Those who serve should concentrate on demonstrating the proofs of their leadership by their works, rather than expecting others to follow them because of who they say they are.
    - A leader must earn the respect of those they lead with his works (evidences) rather than demanding it because of their position.
- iv. Paul lets the Corinthians know that his refusal to accept financial support from them was not a sign that he favored them less.

## II. Continuation

### A. 2Cor. 12:14a (ESV), “*Here for the third time I am ready to come to you...*”

- i. After Paul’s disastrous visit and their repentance as a result of his severe letter to them, Paul makes it clear that he is now ready to visit them for the third time.
  1. The letter of 2Corinthians was intended as a preparation for Paul’s third visit.
    - Back in chapter 10, he told them he was coming again to Corinth, this time in full force.
      - i. He was going to deal boldly with the critics, and boldly with them, if necessary (cf. 2Cor. 10:2).
      - ii. He warned them not to be fooled by his bodily presence or demeanor so they think he will not punish every disobedience when he comes (2Cor. 10:10-11).

### B. 2Cor. 12:14b (ESV), “*... And I will not be a burden, for I seek not what is yours but you...*”

- i. And upon his stay, Paul planned to continue his same financial policy with them:
  1. He would remain financially independent of them (cf. 2Cor. 11:9).
  2. Paul had earlier said that his refusal to take money from them was not a sign of his lack of love for them (cf. 2Cor. 11:10).
  3. He also did not want to take money from them to expose the falsehood of his critics who claimed to do their mission work on the same terms as Paul (cf. 2Cor. 11:12).
- ii. Paul wanted their welfare more than their money:
  1. His concerns were for them to be completely devoted to Christ (cf. 2Cor. 11:2-3).
- iii. He also wanted their affection:
  1. As a gospel parent, he called them to open wide their hearts towards him as he has towards them (cf. 2Cor. 6:11-13).
  2. Paul described his relationship to them...
    - As a father who cares for them and has begotten them (1Cor. 4:14-15).
    - As a father who has arranged their marriage -- to Christ (2Cor. 11:2)
    - As one who has exalted them at his own expense (2Cor. 11:7)
    - As one who has loved them faithfully as God can attest (2Cor. 11:11).
  3. Paul now goes on to use a parental principle to explain why he does not want to be a financial burden to them when he comes ...

- C. 2Cor. 12:14c (ESV), “...*For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.* <sup>15</sup> *I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?*”
- i. As a general rule, parents (Paul) sacrifice for their children (the Corinthians), not the other way around.
    1. It is true that, under certain circumstances, children are to help their parents (cf. 1Tim. 5:4, 8).
    2. However, Paul is stressing the basic parental rule here: children are the heirs of their father, not the other way around.
      - Parents, especially fathers, give their children, from infancy on, all that is needed for them to grow and survive.
      - And as their gospel father, Paul planned to use all his resources to contribute to the Corinthians' welfare.
- D. 2Cor. 12:15 (ESV), “*I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more, am I to be loved less?*”
- i. Paul continues the theme of being a loving parent...
    1. Here is the best litmus test for the sign of a true servant of the crucified Christ!
      - He is one who is willing to spend everything he has and be spent on behalf of a congregation.
      - He serves at great cost to himself for the great benefit of others.
      - And in the case of Paul, he proved his love for Christ and the churches, including the Corinthians, by the magnitude of his hardships listed in 2Cor. 11:23-29.
    2. The Corinthians should recognize the depth of his love for them.
    3. The least they can do is love and honor him in return.
      - The problem is the more he loves them and sacrifices for them, even trying to avoid another painful visit, the less they seem to love him in return.
      - Love for Paul is not shown when the congregation listens to and tolerates slander and puts him in an awkward position of having to commend himself to them all over again as if he were a stranger.
- E. 2Cor. 12:16 (ESV), “*But granting that I myself did not burden you, I was crafty, you say, and got the better of you by deceit.*”
- i. The KJV presents verse 16 as if Paul was saying that he himself was crafty and was deceitful.
    1. But the context leads us to believe that Paul was being sarcastic.
      - He was not saying this of himself, but it was what his critics were saying of him.
    2. There are some who, unfortunately, take this statement as if Paul was saying it is alright to sometimes to use deceit to serve a good purpose.
  - ii. Some in Corinth – most likely through the influence of Paul’s critics -- had evidently accused Paul of craftily obtaining money from the Corinthians indirectly through his agents such as Titus.
    1. It was Titus who was sent to Corinth to initiate the collections for the poor saints in Jerusalem (2Cor. 8:6).
    2. They may have regarded the collection for the poor Jerusalem saints as one way that Paul was deceptively getting money from them for himself.

**F. 2Cor. 12:17-18 (ESV), “*Did I take advantage of you through any of those whom I sent to you?<sup>18</sup> I urged Titus to go, and sent the brother with him. Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?*”**

**i. Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions:**

- 1. If the Corinthians were to be honest, they would realize that the answer to all these questions is a resounding “No!”**
- 2. Paul squashes the slander made against him by bringing Titus into the equation.**
  - Paul knew that the Corinthians held Titus in high regard (2Cor. 7:7).**
  - Paul appealed to Titus' conduct as proof that Paul had not taken advantage of the Corinthians.**
    - i. What is true for Titus reflects back for the one who sent him, namely, Paul.**