

## I. Review

### A. 2Cor. 12:14-18

- i. Paul makes it clear that he is now ready to visit them for the third time.
  1. Back in chapter 10, he told them he was coming again to Corinth, this time in full force.
    - He was going to deal boldly with the critics, and boldly with them, if necessary (cf. 2Cor. 10:2).
    - 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).
- ii. 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).
- iii. As their gospel father, Paul wanted their welfare and affection more than their money.
  1. Paul considers it only right that, as their gospel parent, he should save up for them, not the other way around.
- iv. 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. 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.

## II. Continuation

### A. 2Cor. 12:19a (ESV), “*Have you been thinking all along that we have been defending ourselves to you?...*”

- i. Paul asked this question because it would appear to them that he was defending himself, beginning with chapter 10 to now.
  1. A person who defends himself is one who is actually commending himself.
  2. Those who defend themselves seek the favor of those who stand in judgment of them.
  3. Such persons seek to protect their reputation and seek to excuse their behavior.
- ii. Paul, however, is making it clear by this question that he is not defending himself before the Corinthians.
  1. Neither the Corinthians nor his critics have jurisdiction over him.
  2. He has not committed a wrong against them and does not feel the need to exonerate himself before them.
  3. They are not his judges. God is his judge (cf. 1Cor. 4:2-4).
  4. Paul is fully aware that he will stand before the judgment seat of Christ for his actions (cf. 2Cor. 5:10).

- B. 2Cor. 12:19b (ESV), “... *It is in the sight of God that we have been speaking in Christ, and all for your upbuilding, beloved.*”
- i. Paul did not hide things. He had been transparent to them and, most importantly, to God.
    1. He does not see himself standing in God’s courtroom, not mans!
  - ii. Everything spoken by Paul spoken for their spiritual welfare!
    1. His convictions of boasting in the Lord (cf. 2Cor. 10:17-18), God’s all-sufficient grace and God’s power being made perfect in weakness (cf. 2Cor. 12:9) should lead to their edification.
      - Earlier in 2Cor. 10:8, Paul said that the authority given to him by the Lord was for their edification, not for their destruction.
- C. 2Cor. 12:20 (ESV), “*For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish—that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.*”
- i. Paul feared two things:
    1. That he may find them not as he wishes.
      - That he may find himself very disappointed at them due to their disobedience towards his apostolic authority.
    2. That they might see the disciplinarian in Paul.
      - He already had a painful visit (cf. 2Cor. 2:1-2)
      - He certainly didn’t want another painful visit!
      - Earlier in 2Cor. 10:2, Paul begged them not to make him show boldness towards them as he plans on doing towards his critics.
      - But he fears that regardless of the pleading and the encouragement to obey God’s instructions, he will find them behaving like unspiritual people (cf. 1Cor. 3:1-3).
  - ii. The list of sins gives one some insight as to what was still happening at Corinth:
    1. Quarreling – debates, arguments and in-fighting that will require mediation by a spiritual leader, in this case, Paul.
    2. Jealousy – envious spirit that leads to rivalry and competition.
    3. Anger – Outbursts of temper that stems from a spirit of combat and jealousy.
    4. Hostility – unfriendly, antagonistic attitudes.
    5. Slander -- bad talk; in this case, maligning others within the family of God.
    6. Gossip – entertaining negative talk; inviting negative talk (“tell me more” attitude)
    7. Conceit – arrogant, puffed-up attitude.
    8. Disorder – division and chaos.
  - iii. It is good to note that just like bad parenting results in undisciplined children, bad leadership results in an unruly church.
    1. It is said, “As the church leaders go, so goes the church”
      - Paul’s critics did not lead the Corinthian church down a path of Christ-like behavior and but rather down a path of sinful practices and attitudes.
- D. 2Cor. 12:21 (ESV), “*I fear that when I come again my God may humble me before you, and I may have to mourn over many of those who sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality that they have practiced.*”
- i. To make matters worse, not only does Paul fear seeing disunity among his children, but immorality as well!
  - ii. If the congregation’s life is filled with disunity and immorality, it will be humiliating to Paul, especially as a father to them.
    1. What father would be proud of his disgraced child?