



— SECOND — CORINTHIANS



The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People

Part 6 — “Living by the Grace of God” (2 Cor. 1:12-14) — 15 October 2023

Introduction: We Become Like What/Who We Worship

Having spoken personally of his own afflictions and the comfort of God in their midst, the apostle then moved to address criticism of his actions and writings. Against the claims of his critics, he argued from the testimony of his conscience that he and his companions had conducted themselves according to the grace of God. The Corinthians then should understand the things which he had written in that light so that they might boast in one another on the day of the Lord Jesus.

Main Point: Those who are recipients of the _____ of God can and should be characterized by grace in terms of how they _____ to one another.

Paul’s Defense of His Ministry - 1:12-14

2 Cor. 1:12-14—¹²For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you. ¹³For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand—¹⁴just as you did partially understand us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

- Paul made a defense of his personal _____ so as to reestablish his relationship with the Corinthians (1:12)

Observations:

1. Paul makes reference to _____ but does so in a positive way.
 - “boasting” —καύχησις (*kauchēsis*)— The act of taking pride in something; that which constitutes a source of pride or boasting.
 - ⇒ “Pride” and “boasting” are often understood negatively and Paul had even warned the Corinthians that no one could boast in God’s presence (1 Cor. 1:29) and that they should not boast in their earthly leaders (1 Cor. 3:21).
 - “Boasting, arrogance, and contempt for others of lesser status were common in the Corinthian environment and were gaining a secure place in the church as well. Some in the congregation used their boasting to gain greater prominence among their peers (1 Cor. 1:12; 3:21; 4:7).” —David Garland
 - ⇒ Boasting or taking pride in something can be a positive thing, however. Old age is a crown of ‘boasting’ (Prov. 16:31 LXX) and David led the congregation of Israel in “boasting” in the Lord (1 Chron. 29:11-13 LXX).

2. Paul’s boast was that his conscience was clear in terms of how he had conducted himself before the Corinthians.
 - “simplicity” “godly sincerity”
 - ⇒ Paul was stating that both his words and actions before them were straight forwardly understood. He had no hidden motives and no secret message.

3. Paul’s conduct was ordered according to the grace of God and not _____ wisdom.
 - ⇒ Paul was guided by the _____ of God, not the wisdom of the world.
 - Acts 20:32—*And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*
 - ⇒ Paul was empowered by the _____ of God and not the flesh.
 - Gal. 5:16-17a—¹⁶*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh...*
 - ⇒ This was in contrast to ministry according to fleshly wisdom that sought its own benefit (2 Cor. 2:17), and made use of clever words (1 Cor. 2:1) and cunning (2 Cor. 4:2).

Paul’s boasting was based on his confidence in God! (Jer. 9:23-24 → 1 Cor. 1:24)

(1) God was his _____ and ultimate _____.

(2) God had graciously accomplished all of this _____ and _____ him.

(3) There was no personal _____ for him in this boasting.

Key Point: Living by God's grace affected Paul's _____ as well as his _____.

1 Tim. 1:5—*The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*

- Paul further explained that the Corinthians should understand the things he had _____ to them in light of how he had conducted his ministry (1:13-14)

Observations:

1. Paul seems to be addressing his Corinthian opponents' deliberate _____ of his writings.

2. Paul includes a play on words in these verses.

"what you read (anaginōskō) and understand (epiginōskō)"

⇒ These terms are in the present tense, referring likely to the public reading of Paul's writings. What they hear read publicly is the clear meaning that Paul intended.

"Paul affirms the straightforward character of his letters. His teaching is not veiled, equivocal, or mercurial. They do not need to ask, 'What did he really mean by what he said?' He has no hidden agenda. He is transparent in all that he does and in all that he writes. If they comprehend his letters, then they will also understand his purposes and will not impugn his motives."
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3. Paul expects that the Corinthians will ultimately have full understanding even as they had _____ understanding when he was among them.

⇒ The use of "*understand*" (*epiginōskō*) here likely refers to acceptance and implementation. During his time among the Corinthians, they had embraced his teaching concerning the gospel and the Christian life at least in part.

"you will fully understand"

4. On the day of the Lord Jesus, their relationship would be fully restored and they would _____ in one another.

"Paul speaks elsewhere of the pride and joy in his converts that he will have at the coming of the Lord (Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 2:19), but only here of the pride he expects his converts to have in him on that day. For his part, Paul will feel pride in his converts because they are the seal of his apostleship, the proof that he has faithfully carried out his commission...His converts will feel pride in their apostle when they realize all they owe him."
—Colin Kruse

Key Point: Since Paul's writings were also offered to them in the grace of God, the Corinthians should _____ them and _____ them accordingly.

Concluding Thoughts

- Living by God's grace will affect our _____ and our _____.

- Living by God's grace leads us to extend that grace to fellow _____.

- Living by God's grace will lead us to _____ together in the work that God is doing and will do in us.



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- Living by God's grace leads us to extend that grace to fellow believers.
- Living by God's grace will lead us to rejoice together in the work that God is doing and will do in us.