
2 CORINTHIANS VERSE-BY-VERSE | DR. RANDY WHITE

SESSION 24 | 2 CORINTHIANS 12:14-13:1

2 CORINTHIANS 12:14-13:1 | PAUL'S PLAN FOR A FUTURE VISIT

- Verse 12:14 -
 - The phrase **the third time** is confusing because, as far as we know, Paul had only been to Corinth one time (see 2 Cor. 1:15-16).
 - Much of this letter was written to explain why Paul never made his second planned visit. Likely this is a reference to the third *intended* trip, as explained in 2 Corinthians 1:15-16, where he says he planned he would **come unto you** (2 Cor. 1:15) and then **come again** (2 Cor. 1:16).
 - All attempts to resolve this issue require some speculation.
 - See introductory notes to 2 Corinthians in *The Companion Bible*, paragraph 4.
 - Paul promises that he will **not be burdensome** (likely in all regards) because he does not want **yours, but you**, and he considers himself the parent, not the child.
- Verse 12:15 -
 - This is the perfect attitude for ministry, to **spend and be spent** even if the *more you love, the less you are loved*.
- Verse 12:16 -
 - The verse is a bit challenging to translate due to the difficult nature of knowing whether Paul is quoting someone, speaking sarcastically, or speaking about himself.
 - The clear part of the verse: **but be it so, I did not burden you**. That is, "even if Paul's love for the Corinthians was not reciprocated (as in v. 15), Paul never moved from his habit to **gladly spend and be spent**, and thus was never a **burden** for them.
 - The less clear part of the verse begins with **nevertheless**. Here are two options:
 - "I am a crafty person and got some benefit out of you anyway, by my guile."
 - "I have been accused by some of you of using my guile and crafty ways to get some benefit out of you."
 - Clearly the second option is the only one that makes sense (and this could also be achieved by placing a question mark at the end of the sentence).
- Verse 12:17 -
 - In 2 Cor. 8:18-22 Paul explained the safety measures taken so that there was honesty **not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of man** (2 Cor. 8:21).
- Verse 12:18 -
 - Paul had selected **Titus** for the task, and also another **whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches** (2 Cor. 8:18).
 - Paul is emphasizing the point that nobody (neither himself nor Titus, his appointee) did **make a gain** of the Corinthians, as someone must have charged.
 - Christian work should be done *above board* so that there is never an appearance of someone being made rich from the donations given by those who give generously to make the ministry happen.
- Verse 12:19 -
 - Paul asks the Corinthians if they think that Paul (and his companions) **excuse ourselves**, using the Greek word ἀπολογέομαι [apologeomai].
 - All Greek words with the prefix *apo* give the idea of either *separation* or *response*.
 - In this case, the word means "to use words to defend ourselves" and in the context, not *make up* a defense, thus the King James says **excuse ourselves**.
 - The English word *apology* and *apologetics* come from this Greek word (a response with words).

- Paul continues by saying that his verbal response has been **before God in Christ and for your edifying**, thus none of it is "just talk."
- Verse 12:20 -
 - Paul was doing **all things...for your edifying** (v. 19) because he was afraid that when he arrived (on what would have been his third visit, had his original plans not changed) he and the congregation would not be pleased with one another and in unity.
 - The things he was concerned he would find had to do with a lack of unity, including:
 - **Debates** (never coming to a conclusion so that unity could be attained)
 - **envyings** (using the Greek ζήλος [zelos], which is unhealthy *jealousy*)
 - **wraths** (fierce indignation)
 - **strifes** (electioneering among themselves)
 - **backbitings** (the most intensified word for "to talk")
 - **whisperings** (likely a play on words from the most intensified speech to a *whisper*)
 - **swellings** (pride, with the Greek word carrying the idea of being *puffed up*, as if to look more powerful)
 - **tumults** (confusions).
 - In the end, these vices have to do with not coming to a conclusion on theological issues, and the lack of clarity brings about all the above.
- Verse 12:21 -
 - Paul was concerned that **God will humble me among you**, likely in relation to his **boasting** on behalf of the Corinthians (2 Cor. 8:24).
 - There are only two references to repentance in Paul's letters, and this is the second (see notes on 2 Cor. 7:8-10). This repentance is clearly directed toward those within the Corinthian church.
- Verse 13:1 -
 - See note on 2 Corinthians 12:14 for **the third time**.
 - However, it is possible that here Paul is saying, "I told you in verse 20 that I am coming. I told you again in verse 21 that I am coming again. Now the third time I am telling you that **I am coming to you**."
 - Such an interpretation makes the second part of the verse make greater contextual sense. In the second part of the verse Paul quotes Deuteronomy 19:15 (also used in Matt. 18:16).