

First and Second Corinthians Dealing with False Teachers

Lesson #12 for September 19, 2026

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 10:1-17; 11:1-15,22-28; 12:20-21; 13:5; Jeremiah 9:24.

1. ***Would someone really want to mislead us? Why would someone be a “false teacher”? How can we identify a false teacher? Or, a trustworthy teacher?***

[From the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=T-BSG:]
Imagine you're hiking in unfamiliar mountains with a small group. The terrain is rugged, the fog thick, and you're unsure of the path. Suddenly, a confident man appears. He's dressed like a park ranger, has a walkie-talkie, and even carries a map. He says, "You're headed the wrong way. Follow me—I know a shortcut."

Relieved, the group follows him. He walks with authority, tells stories of past rescues, and seems to know every twist and turn. But after an hour, the path becomes narrower, more dangerous, and nothing looks right. Someone checks his GPS and realizes your *guide* is not leading you toward safety. He's leading you deeper into the wilderness.

For sure, he looked the part. He sounded convincing. But he wasn't a guide—he was a fraud. And the consequences of continuing to follow him could've been deadly.

Paul is dealing with this same problem in 2 Corinthians 10–12. False teachers had crept into the church, presenting themselves as apostles, speaking with charisma and authority. But they were preaching a different Jesus and leading people away from the truth.

Paul's response isn't just about defending himself. It's about protecting the church from being led into spiritual danger by impostors who looked and sounded the part but were nothing like the real thing.—T-BSG*158.†‡§

Background for Public Oration in Corinth in the First Century A.D.

2. **We need to review the historical background to get an accurate picture of the setting for Paul's letters to the church at Corinth.**

[T-BSG:] In the first century, the church in Corinth was a young, diverse community in a wealthy, immoral, and philosophically minded [*sic*] Greek city. As a major port, Corinth attracted a flood of religious ideas, teachers, and philosophies. In this environment, it was common for **popular Greek teachers**—especially rhetoricians, philosophers, and Sophists—to **make a living by charging wealthy audiences for lectures, private lessons, or mentorship**. A teacher's value was often measured by his fee.... Even Dio Chrysostom criticized such figures, saying, "They are like actors on a stage, **performing not for truth, but for silver and applause**" (*Orations* 32.11).

Rhetorical power was often associated with virility and manhood. "Any man who aspired to a position of leadership in the first-century Roman world would have been subject to an almost continuous evaluation of his virility by his auditors and rivals."—Jennifer Larson, "Paul's Masculinity," *Journal of*

Biblical Literature, vol. 123, no. 1 (2004), p. 87.

Against this backdrop, Paul faced opposition from false teachers in Corinth. **These Jewish-Christian missionaries, whom Paul mockingly called “super-apostles” (2 Cor. 11:5, 2 Cor. 12:11, ESV), attacked Paul for his lack of speaking skills, his sufferings, and his refusal to charge money—behaviors that, by Greek standards, seemed unimpressive.—***T-BSG**159.†§ [However, think about Paul’s speech at Mars Hill in Athens!][‡]

2 Corinthians 11:5-6: ⁵I do not think that I am the least bit inferior to those very special so-called “apostles” of yours! ⁶Perhaps I am an amateur in speaking, but certainly not in knowledge; we have made this clear to you at all times and in all conditions.—American Bible Society. (©1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*®* [GNT] (*Today’s English Version*) [TEV], Second Edition (2 Corinthians 11:5-6). Philadelphia: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible-TEV** or *GNB-TEV**].[‡]

2 Corinthians 12:11b: You are the ones who ought to show your approval of me. For even if I am nothing, I am in no way inferior to those very special “apostles” of yours.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.* [Paul had been a member of the Sanhedrin.][‡]

Boasting in Christ

3. Paul wanted both the Corinthians and us to understand that this is no ordinary human conflict we are having spiritually. Men’s lives are at stake. The only way to deal with lies is to tell the truth. And sometimes the truth needs to be spoken very boldly.

4. Read **2 Corinthians 10:12-18**.

[From the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=BSG:] Paul’s use of self-boasting language has intrigued interpreters throughout the centuries. However, self-boasting was a common practice in the ancient world and was controlled by social conventions to avoid offending the audience. Paul knew such conventions, and he followed them. In addition, Paul makes it clear that his way of boasting distinguishes itself from that of the false teachers. He boasts in the Lord (2 Cor. 10:17).—*BSG** for Monday.^{‡§}

Jeremiah 9:24: [The LORD says:] “If any want to boast, they should boast that they know and understand me, because my love is constant, and I do what is just and right.

These are the things that please me.”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*[‡]

[BSG:] By quoting this passage from Jeremiah, Paul shows that it is Christ who is in focus—Christ’s love, justice, and righteousness.

In other words, Paul’s boasting focuses on God’s accomplishments in Christ. Thus, his boasting is biblical and, hence, inoffensive. On the other hand, his opponents got into an atmosphere of competitiveness by comparing themselves to one another. This is foolishness (2 Cor. 10:12).—*BSG** for Monday, September 14.^{‡§}

5. **It would be very helpful if we had the teachings and words of Paul’s opponents; however, we do not. In some ways, it may be best that we do not!**

[BSG:] In 2 Corinthians 10:14–16, Paul hints that preaching the gospel is the primary focus of his ministry, both in Corinth and in regions beyond Corinth. Paul’s love for Jesus led him to talk constantly about the good news of salvation, found in the death and resurrection of Christ.—BSG* for Monday, September 14.†‡

6. How could Paul convince the Corinthians that his powerful “meekness” and Christlike gentleness were really not weakness?

False Teachers in the Church vs. Teachers Called by God

[BSG:] As if Paul didn’t have enough problems already, another one arose that he had to deal with as well: false teachers in the church. These people were opposed to him and to his work and ministry. Worse, **these false teachers had seduced members of Corinth as well**. Paul refers to his fight against this problem as a spiritual war. [Those were Judaizers!]

Would that be an exaggeration? Not at all. Paul knew that, ultimately, those people were opposing not him but Christ Himself.... He knew that the message he was commissioned to preach was a matter of life or death, with eternal consequences. And he knew that he had been sent to do it by God Himself: “Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God” (1 Cor. 1:1).

When it comes to false teachings, the church is supposed to act with love but firmness, based on the authority of Scripture. The gospel message must be conserved, unspoiled and pure, in order to give souls the hope of eternity.—BSG* for Sabbath Afternoon, September 12.†‡§

[T-BSG:] **The false teachers promoted a more legalistic, works-based gospel, flaunted spiritual experiences**, and carried letters of recommendation to boost their standings. [Who would give such letters?] Their influence threatened the purity of the gospel, urging the church to judge leaders by outward success rather than by Christlike humility. Paul deliberately countered this influence by **working as a tentmaker** (Acts 18:3) and **preaching without remuneration** (2 Cor. 11:7–9), though some saw these practices as a mark of weakness. Paul reminded the Corinthians that, unlike him, these false teachers were those who make “slaves of you” and take “advantage of you” (2 Cor. 11:20, ESV).—T-BSG*159.†‡§

7. Read **2 Corinthians 11:7-9,20**.
8. ***If these were Jewish-Christian “missionaries,” what were their credentials? Paul had been a member of the Sanhedrin! How could they have higher Jewish credentials than that?***
9. It is impossible to tell from listening only to Paul’s side of the discussion if these false teachers arose among the Corinthian believers or if they came from elsewhere, trying to counteract Paul’s work. We know that in other places, so-called Judaizers had followed Paul and tried to undo his work.
10. Paul had come to the conclusion that false teachers needed to be confronted.
11. Jesus Himself had, at times, spoken very humbly of people taking His yoke and resting. (Matthew 11:29) However, Jesus also spoke very strongly when it was necessary.

[BSG:] False teachers must be faced with boldness and confidence (2 Cor. 10:2) but mingled with the gentleness of Christ (2 Cor. 10:1). Jesus once said, “I am gentle and humble in heart” (Matt. 11:29, NIV). However, Jesus also boldly confronted the money changers in the temple by overturning their tables and calling them robbers (Matt. 21:12, 13).—BSG* for Sunday.†§

Matthew 21:12-13: ¹²Jesus went into the Temple and drove out all those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the stools of those who sold pigeons, ¹³and said to them, “It is written in the Scriptures that God said, ‘My Temple will be called a house of prayer.’ But you are making it a hideout for thieves!”—Good News Bible-TEV.*

[BSG:] He [Jesus] also called the Pharisees hypocrites and whitewashed tombs right to their faces (Matt. 23:23–27). Like Jesus, Paul also knows that we are in a spiritual war that demands the use of God’s whole armor (Eph. 6:12–17).—BSG* for Sunday, September 13.†§ [Compare John 8:44!][‡]

12. ***How do you think Paul described his call from Jesus Christ on the Damascus road? Would people believe him if he talked about that experience? What proof would he give that it was real?***

[BSG:] Unlike the false teachers in Corinth who commended themselves, Paul had been commended and approved by God (2 Cor. 10:12, 18). He was “called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God” (1 Cor. 1:1, NKJV). He was faithful to this calling until the end of his life (2 Tim. 4:7).—BSG* for Monday, September 14.†§

13. ***An atmosphere of competition is not helpful in the church. How can we avoid that problem?***

Recognizing False Teachers

14. We, of course, do not have the names or the details about these false teachers; however, we do have some clues about **how we can identify false teachers**.

[BSG:] The New Testament contains several warnings against false teachers in Christian communities. Jesus Himself warned the disciples about this same thing (Matt. 7:15–20). The apostles also called attention to it (Gal. 1:6–9 [Compare Galatians 2:11-14.], 1 Tim. 6:3–5, 2 Pet. 2:1–3).—BSG* for Tuesday, September 15.†§

Matthew 7:15-20: [Jesus warned:] ¹⁵“Be on your guard against false prophets; they come to you looking like sheep on the outside, but on the inside they are really like wild wolves. ¹⁶You will know them by what they do. Thorn bushes do not bear grapes, and briars do not bear figs. ¹⁷A healthy tree bears good fruit, but a poor tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a poor tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹And any tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown in the fire. ²⁰**So then, you will know the false prophets by what they do.**”—Good News Bible-TEV.*†‡

Galatians 1:6-9: ⁶I am surprised at you! In no time at all you are deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ, and are accepting another gospel. ⁷Actually, there is no “other gospel,” but I say this because there are some people who are upsetting you and trying to change the gospel of Christ.

⁸But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel that is different from the one we preached to you, may he be condemned to hell! ⁹We have said it before, and now I say it again: if anyone preaches to you a gospel that is different from the one you accepted, may he be condemned to hell!—Good News Bible-TEV.*†

15. Read also **1 Timothy 6:3-5** and **2 Peter 2:1-3**.
16. Read 2 Corinthians 11:1-15. Notice how Paul described the experience of those false apostles with the Corinthians and compared that to Eve's being deceived by the snake in Genesis. **Then, he began to explain why he believed that his ministry was valid.** He preached to them without ever asking them to support him with their money. Those other so-called "apostles" obviously were asking for money. And Paul essentially asked, "Was it wrong of me not to ask for money?"
17. The Corinthian believers should not have been too surprised that those false apostles could make themselves look like real apostles in a deceptive way. Do not forget that even Satan can disguise himself as an "angel of light!" See 2 Corinthians 11:14 & 1 Kings 13, talking about God's former prophet, "But the old prophet was lying"! (1 Kings 13:18, *GNT**)
2 Corinthians 11:13-15: ¹³Those men are not true apostles—they are false apostles, who lie about their work and disguise themselves to look like real apostles of Christ. ¹⁴Well, no wonder! **Even Satan can disguise himself to look like an angel of light!** ¹⁵**So it is no great thing if his servants disguise themselves to look like servants of righteousness.** In the end they will get exactly what their actions deserve.—*Good News Bible-TEV.*†*
 [BSG:] Paul exposes the false apostles by saying that they are "deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:13, *NKJV*). They disguise themselves as apostles of Christ, just as "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" and "his [Satan's] servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:14, 15, *ESV*). **What a tragic situation: professing servants of Christ working as agents of Satan.** Paul concludes his thought by saying that their "end will be according to their works" (2 Cor. 11:15, *NKJV*).—*BSG** for Tuesday.^{†‡Ω§}
18. Paul's ministry was Christ-centered. Was that apparent to his Corinthian believers? Could they see a clear difference between his approach and that of those so-called apostles? Paul went so far as to say that **those false apostles were teaching a different "Jesus" and a different gospel!** And he reminded them that Jesus warned in Matthew 7:21 that not everyone who says called Jesus "Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven."
19. ***Could we see such false teachers in our day? Do you think Paul was being too strong with his accusations against those false teachers?***

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] The Lord is guarding his people against a repetition of the errors and mistakes of the past. There have always abounded false teachers who, advocating erroneous doctrines and unholy practises [*sic*-British spelling], and working upon false principles in a most specious, covered, deceptive manner, have endeavored to deceive, if possible, the very elect. They bind themselves up in their own fallacies. If they do not succeed, because their way becomes hedged by warnings from

God, they will change somewhat the features of their work, and the representations they have made, and bring out their plans again under a false showing. They refuse to confess, repent, and believe. Confessions may be made, but no real reformation takes place, and erroneous theories bring ruin upon unsuspecting souls because these souls believe and rely upon the men advocating these theories.—Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*,* January 7, 1904, par. 5.† [This followed the Kellogg affair!][‡]
[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p821.23801&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p821.23801&index=0)[‡]

[EGW:] The Lord designs that our opinions shall be put to the test, that we may see the necessity of closely examining the living oracles to see whether or not we are in the faith. Many who claim to believe the truth have settled down at their ease, saying, “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.”—Ellen G. White, *The Review and Herald*,* December 20, 1892, par. 1; *Counsels to Writers and Editors** 36.1.†
[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p821.12387&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p821.12387&index=0) = R&H[‡]
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20. ***Was Paul too gentle with the Corinthians? Did they really believe that he was weak? Was it necessary for Paul to change his approach in order to deal with the false teachers who were stirring up trouble in Corinth? What do you think we as 21st century Christians can learn from Paul’s discussion about false apostles?***

Spiritual Warfare Involving False Teachers

21. Read **2 Corinthians 10:1-11**.

[T-BSG:] **Spiritual Warfare:** In 2 Corinthians 10:4, Paul emphasizes that the battle he faces is not fought with worldly weapons but with spiritual ones that “have divine power to destroy strongholds” (*ESV*). This passage highlights the concept of spiritual warfare, in which **the enemy is not human or earthly but spiritual in nature—manifested in the forces of darkness and deception that seek to undermine the truth of the gospel**. Paul is not referring to physical battles or earthly struggles, but to the unseen battle that believers are engaged in as they strive to live according to God’s truth in a world full of opposing ideologies and false teachings. In 2 Corinthians 11:13, Paul calls attention to the **false apostles and their teachings, describing them as “deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ” (*ESV*) who distort the gospel and lead others astray....**

The phrase “**divine power**” (*ESV*), in 2 Corinthians 10:4, highlights the fact that the power behind these spiritual weapons comes from God alone, and they are effective because they align with His divine authority and purpose. Paul’s reference to the destruction of enemy strongholds refers to the dismantling of the deeply entrenched arguments, ideologies, and thought patterns that oppose God’s truth. In the context of his ministry, such dismantling involves confronting false apostles and their teachings that promote “another Jesus” and “a different gospel” (*2 Cor. 11:4, ESV*). These false apostles use manipulation and deceit to subvert the true message of Christ, and Paul recognizes that such falsehoods create spiritual

strongholds in the minds of believers. The strongholds are metaphorical, representing thinking patterns and worldviews that lead to spiritual oppression and keep individuals in bondage to sin and error.—*T-BSG** 161.†§

[BSG:] In this spiritual warfare, Paul acts in the authority of Christ. This authority, however, aims at edification, not destruction (*2 Cor. 10:8*). It is easy for spiritual leaders to affirm that they are acting in the authority of God. Nevertheless, they must remember that their authority is given by Christ, and, like Him, they must be meek and humble in heart. Paul's claim of his Christ-given authority is due to his concern that the Corinthians were listening to the wrong people, thereby risking their loyalty to Christ.

How can we be simultaneously gentle and bold when dealing with false teachers? Why must we be both?—BSG* for Sunday.†§

22. How would you describe the spiritual weapons that Paul used in this portion of 2 Corinthians? Paul recognized that these false teachers were making great boasts, and he reminded the Corinthians that Jeremiah 9:23-24 said we must boast only in the LORD!

Suffering for the Sake of the Gospel

23. *What point was Paul making at the end of 2 Corinthians 11?*

[BSG:] After exposing the false teachers as agents of Satan (*2 Cor. 11:1–15*), Paul now “plays” their game by boasting a little as a fool might (*2 Cor. 11:16–21*) so that the Corinthians could see how senseless it was to give ears to the false teachers’ speech. If the Corinthians held them in high regard, Paul deserved higher consideration. His sufferings for the gospel show that he was a faithful servant of Christ (*2 Cor. 11:22, 23*).—*BSG** for Wednesday.†§ [Paul had been through “war,” and it showed!][†]

2 Corinthians 11:16-28: ¹⁶I repeat: no one should think that I am a fool. But if you do, at least accept me as a fool, just so I will have a little to boast of. ¹⁷Of course what I am saying now is not what the Lord would have me say; in this matter of boasting I am really talking like a fool. ¹⁸But since there are so many who boast for merely human reasons, I will do the same. ¹⁹You yourselves are so wise, and so you gladly tolerate fools! ²⁰You tolerate anyone who orders you around or takes advantage of you or traps you or looks down on you or slaps you in the face. ²¹I am ashamed to admit that we were too timid to do those things!

But if anyone dares to boast about something—I am talking like a fool—I will be just as daring. ²²Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham’s descendants? So am I. ²³Are they Christ’s servants? I sound like a madman—but I am a better servant than they are! I have worked much harder, I have been in prison more times, I have been whipped much more, and I have been near death more often. ²⁴Five times I was given the thirty-nine lashes by the Jews; ²⁵three times I was whipped by the Romans; and once I was stoned. I have been in three shipwrecks, and once I spent twenty-four hours in the water. ²⁶In my many travels I have been in danger from floods and from robbers, in danger from my own people and from Gentiles; there have been dangers in the cities, dangers in the

wilds, dangers on the high seas, and dangers from false friends. ²⁷There has been work and toil; often I have gone without sleep; I have been hungry and thirsty; I have often been without enough food, shelter, or clothing. ²⁸And not to mention other things, every day I am under the pressure of my concern for all the churches.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

24. Considering what we have learned so far about all that Paul had been through, there are some points that need to be made: (1) Paul must have been covered with scars from all his beatings and trials. Surely, none of those false teachers could have matched that! (2) Paul had clearly been near death from those experiences. He made it clear that he endured that for the sake of all the churches.

[BSG:] While Paul's Jewish credentials are [at least] identical [or exceeded] to those of the false teachers (2 Cor. 11:22) [He had been in the Sanhedrin!], his service to Christ surpasses theirs (2 Cor. 11:23). "Are they ministers of Christ?" he asks. The answer is "I am more." His labors were more abundant; his imprisonments, more frequent; his beatings, more severe.

But this is not all. His list of sufferings also includes five instances of thirty-nine strokes (2 Cor. 11:24), beatings with rods, stoning, shipwrecks, danger in deep waters (2 Cor. 11:25), danger at journeys, danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from countrymen, danger from Gentiles, danger in crowded cities, danger in desolate country, danger at sea, danger from false believers (2 Cor. 11:26), strenuous labors, exhausting toils, sleepless nights, hunger, thirst, food shortage, cold, and nakedness (2 Cor. 11:27). As if that weren't enough, he still had to deal with mental anguish because of his deep anxiety for the churches (2 Cor. 11:28).

Only a true servant of Christ would be willing to suffer like this for the gospel. If Paul were really to boast about his sufferings, he had much to say. However, the next section of the letter shows that **the reason for his boast was based not on what he did for Christ but on what Christ had done for him**. Paul knew that God's power is more visibly displayed in human weakness (2 Cor. 12:9, 10). By giving him a thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7), [Paul apparently had poor eyesight!] God protected Paul from boasting about his accomplishments. This kept him humble, aware of his weakness, dependent on divine power, and in the condition of receiving more of God's grace and mercy.

Have you also been suffering for the sake of the gospel? What have you learned from this experience? How can the way Paul dealt with his sufferings help you deal with yours?—BSG* for Wednesday.^{†§}

25. ***Is it possible that Paul's experiences in all his sufferings could be an example for some of us today? Do any of us suffer like that? Some are in danger of death!***

Paul's Plans

26. Read **2 Corinthians 12:14-13:10**. Paul was making it very clear what his plans were. He was on his way to Corinth, and he planned to do everything he could from a Christian perspective to straighten out the problems there.
27. ***Do we have some idea of the sins that were pervading the church in Corinth?***

2 Corinthians 12:20-21: ²⁰I am afraid that when I get there I will find you different from what I would like you to be and you will find me different from what you would like me to be. I am afraid that I will find quarreling and jealousy, hot tempers and selfishness, insults and gossip, pride and disorder. ²¹I am afraid that the next time I come my God will humiliate me in your presence, and I shall weep over many who sinned in the past and have not repented of the immoral things they have done—their lust and their sexual sins.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

28. Doesn't it look like some of the sins that Paul had dealt with in the past in Corinth were continuing? Paul gave several clear lists of sins that are quite remarkable and similar. See Romans 1:29-31 and Galatians 5:19-21.

29. Paul was hinting that those members who had been involved in impurity, sexual immorality, and sensuality may not have repented and abandoned those sins. Surely, those sins would have caused conflict within the church. So, what should a church do if and when it discovers there are sins like that going on within the church members? Paul concluded his discussion by asking the Corinthians to judge themselves.

2 Corinthians 13:5: Put yourselves to the test and judge yourselves, to find out whether you are living in faith. Surely you know that Christ Jesus is in you?—unless you have completely failed.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

The Four Letters of Paul to the Corinthians: Summarized from A. Graham Maxwell and William Barclay

30. Paul spent one and one-half years working with the Corinthians. Those years and Paul's writings are summarized from material spoken by Dr. A. Graham Maxwell over the years.

31. Apparently, we do not have Paul's first letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 5:9) in which he wrote against becoming involved in fornication. However, a portion of that letter may have been copied or preserved in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.

32. Thus, the book that we call *1 Corinthians*, would be Paul's second letter to them. He wrote to deal with certain very serious conditions (1 Corinthians 1:11; 5:1) at Corinth that had been reported to him by members of Chloe's family. He addresses those in 1 Corinthians 1-6. Then he dealt separately with several other important questions that had been put to him. (See 1 Corinthians 7:1; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1.)

33. **It is probable that after 1 Corinthians (his second letter) was written, Paul made that short but painful or sad visit to Corinth and discovered that most of his advice was being ignored!** After returning to Ephesus, he decided that the time had come for him to write a **very strong letter to them, demanding that things change.** (See 2 Corinthians 1:23-2:2; 12:14; 13:1-3,9-10. Compare 2 Corinthians 10:1-6,9-10,11-12.) He sent the letter with Titus to be delivered by hand to the Corinthian church.

34. After sending the letter, Paul wondered if he had done the right thing by using such strong language with these relatively new church members. He almost wished he had not written that letter. So, he decided to leave Ephesus and see them. He walked to the port at Troas, hoping that Titus had arrived with news of their response. (2 Corinthians 2:12-13) However, Titus was not there. Paul began to worry more than ever. So, he walked to

Macedonia, hoping to find Titus on the way. (2 Corinthians 7:5-6) When he first arrived in Macedonia, Titus was not there. But, soon, Titus arrived. Paul was enormously relieved to get the good news that the letter had worked. The church in Corinth had reformed their ways and dealt with some of the problems that they had. They were anxious, once again, to have Paul visit them and work among them. (2 Corinthians 7:7-16)

35. With this good news ringing in his ears, Paul decided that he could spend a little more needed time, working with the churches in Macedonia before he went to Corinth. So, he wrote another letter and sent it back, once again, with Titus. (2 Corinthians 8:16-17, 23-24) It is possible that that last letter is what we have in 2 Corinthians 1-9 (except for 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 which is mentioned above as Paul's first letter to Corinth.)
36. A short time later, he proceeded to Corinth and spent the winter there. After having succeeded in dealing with the church at Corinth, he was ready to deal with problems that were arising in other churches. He looked forward to visiting new cities to establish and strengthen other churches. **During these few months wintering at Corinth, he apparently wrote Galatians and Romans.**
37. **In summary:** Paul probably wrote four letters to the church at Corinth. He also made that short but painful and sad visit to Corinth when they ignored his advice in 1 Corinthians!
38. **First Letter:** Probably written from Ephesus to deal with rumors of serious immorality in the church at Corinth. A portion of it may be preserved in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.
39. **Second Letter:** Written from Ephesus after more rumors had come and members of Chloe's family had arrived to bring a letter from Corinth with questions that the members in Corinth had raised. This letter is what we call *1 Corinthians*.
40. **Painful/Sad Visit:** Paul decided that a visit to Corinth might be in order; so, he traveled there, most likely by boat. He was not prepared for the reception that he received, and he "fled" back to Ephesus.
41. **Third Letter:** Written from Ephesus: After much crying and tears, he decided to write a "**Sinai letter**" to Corinth. He knew what God had done so many times in the Old Testament, and he decided that he should follow God's example. It is possible that a portion or all of that letter is preserved in 2 Corinthians 10-13. He sent Titus personally to deliver that letter with the hope that Titus could also minister to the Corinthians.
42. **Fourth Letter:** Written from Macedonia after receiving the wonderful news from Titus that Paul's "Sinai letter" had worked. A portion, or all of that letter, may be preserved in 2 Corinthians 1-9 (except for 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).—Summary from Maxwell/Hart. See also William Barclay's article: The Corinthian Correspondence, in *The Letters to the Corinthians*, in *The Daily Study Bible* [Series], page 9 (1956).
43. Look at 2 Corinthians 10. Does it sound like Paul was beginning a new letter? What kind of appeal was he making? Remember what we have said about the sequence of these letters. Paul had written that very strong letter that he sent with Titus after the Corinthians apparently somewhat ignored his advice from the second letter that we call *1 Corinthians*.

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