CRAWFORD BIBLE COMMENTARY

BIBLE STUDY

2 Corinthians Chapter 13 — Final Warnings and Benediction

A Verse-by-Verse Bible Study from the Crawford Standard Bible

Introduction

2 Corinthians Chapter 13 is the final chapter of the letter.

Paul is about to visit Corinth for the third time.

He has opened his heart.

He has defended his ministry.

He has boasted in his weakness.

Now he gives his final warnings.

Those who continued in sin would be dealt with.

Some in Corinth wanted proof that Christ was really speaking through Paul.

Paul answers that Christ is not weak among them.

He was crucified in weakness, but He lives by the power of God.

Then Paul turns the question around.

Instead of testing Paul, they should test themselves.

"Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith."

Paul prays that they will do what is right.

He hopes he will not need to be harsh when he comes.

His authority was given to build them up, not tear them down.

Then the letter ends with warmth.

Rejoice.

Be restored.

Encourage one another.

Be of one mind.

Live in peace.

And finally, Paul gives one of the most beautiful blessings in the Bible.

"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

The chapter moves through three movements:

- Paul's Third Visit Announced (verses 1–4).
- A Call to Self-Examination (verses 5–10).
- Final Greetings and Blessing (verses 11–14).

The central truth of 2 Corinthians 13 is:

Believers must examine themselves to be sure Christ lives in them, receive loving correction meant to build them up, live together in joy, unity, and peace, and rest in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

I. THE THIRD VISIT

2 Corinthians 13:1 — Two or Three Witnesses

“This will be my third visit to you. “Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.””

“This will be my third visit to you.”

Paul's first visit was when he planted the church.

His second was the painful visit mentioned earlier in the letter.

Now he was coming a third time.

“Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

Paul quotes the law of Moses.

In Israel, no one could be judged guilty on the word of only one person.

There had to be clear evidence.

Paul would be fair.

He would not act on rumors.

Any discipline would be based on clear facts.

Some Bible students also see his three visits as a kind of three-fold witness to the church.

Cross References

Deuteronomy 19:15

> One witness is not enough to convict someone of a crime or wrongdoing. A case must be proven by what two or three witnesses say.

Matthew 18:16

> If he will not listen, take one or two others with you, so that everything said can be backed up by two or three witnesses.

John 8:17

> Your own law says that when two people agree about something, what they say is true.

Spiritual Principle

Godly correction must be fair, careful, and based on clear truth.

Key Truth

God's people should never act on rumors or gossip.

II. I WILL NOT SPARE THEM

2 Corinthians 13:2 — A Clear Warning

“I warned you before when I was with you the second time. Now, while absent, I again warn those who have sinned previously and all the rest, that if I come again, I will not spare them.”

“I warned you before when I was with you the second time.”

Paul had already warned them in person.

“Now, while absent, I again warn.”

Now he warns them again in writing.

“Those who have sinned previously and all the rest.”

The warning was for those still living in sin, and for anyone tempted to join them.

“If I come again, I will not spare them.”

Paul had been patient.

He had been gentle.

But patience has a limit.

If they did not repent, he would act.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 4:21

> What would you like? Should I come to you with a rod for discipline, or with love and a gentle spirit?

2 Corinthians 10:2

> I am asking you not to make me be bold when I come, because I am ready to stand up to those who say we live by worldly standards.

Titus 1:13

> What they say about them is true. So correct them firmly, so that their faith will become healthy.

Spiritual Principle

God's patience is great, but it is not endless.

Spiritual Warning

Do not mistake God's patience for approval of sin.

III. CHRIST IS POWERFUL AMONG YOU

2 Corinthians 13:3 — Proof That Christ Speaks

“Since you are seeking proof that Christ is speaking through me—He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you.”

“Since you are seeking proof that Christ is speaking through me.”

Some in Corinth doubted Paul.

They wanted proof that he truly spoke for Christ.

“He is not weak in dealing with you.”

Paul may have seemed weak.

But Christ is not weak.

“But is powerful among you.”

The Corinthians had already seen Christ's power.

Their own faith and spiritual gifts were proof that Christ had worked through Paul.

And if needed, Christ's power would be seen in discipline too.

Cross References

Matthew 10:20

> You will not be the ones speaking. The Spirit of your Father will be speaking through you.

1 Corinthians 5:4

> When you meet together in the name of our Lord Jesus, and I am with you in spirit, the power of the Lord Jesus is there with you.

Jeremiah 1:9

> Then the Lord reached out and touched my mouth. He said to me, “Look, I have put My words in your mouth.”

Spiritual Principle

Christ speaks with power through His faithful servants.

Key Truth

The messenger may be weak, but the Lord who sends him is mighty.

IV. CRUCIFIED IN WEAKNESS, LIVING BY POWER

2 Corinthians 13:4 — Weak in Him, Alive with Him

“For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. Likewise, we are weak in Him, but by God's power we will live with Him in our dealings with you.”

This verse explains the whole pattern of Paul's ministry.

“Though He was crucified in weakness.”

On the cross, Jesus looked completely weak.

He was mocked, beaten, and killed.

“Yet He lives by the power of God.”

But God raised Him from the dead.

He now lives in power.

“Likewise, we are weak in Him.”

Paul shared in Christ's weakness.

He suffered and was looked down on.

“But by God's power we will live with Him in our dealings with you.”

Paul would also share in Christ's power.

When he came, God's power would be seen.

The cross and the resurrection are the pattern for the Christian life.

Weakness first, then power.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 1:23

> Our message is about Christ nailed to a cross. Many Jews trip over this message, and many Gentiles laugh at it as nonsense.

Philippians 3:10

> My deepest desire is to know Christ, to feel the same power that brought Him back to life, and to share His sufferings until I become like Him even in His death.

Romans 1:4

> By the power of the Holy Spirit, He was shown to be the Son of God with power when He was raised from the dead. He is Jesus Christ our Lord.

Spiritual Principle

The way of the cross leads to the power of the resurrection.

Key Truth

Christ's weakness on the cross was not defeat; it was the path to victory.

V. EXAMINE YOURSELVES

2 Corinthians 13:5 — Test Yourselves

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you—unless you fail the test?”

This is one of the most searching verses in the Bible.

The Corinthians had been testing Paul.

Now Paul tells them to test themselves.

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith.”

The real question was not about Paul.

It was about them.

Did they truly belong to Christ?

“Test yourselves.”

Look honestly at your own life.

“Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?”

For true believers, Christ lives within.

Paul expected most of them to find this true.

“Unless you fail the test.”

But some might find that their faith was not real.

Bible students understand this verse in slightly different ways.

Many see it as a call to make sure one's faith is genuine.

Others stress that Paul is mainly reminding them that Christ is already in them, so they should live like it.

Both agree that self-examination should lead us to Christ, not to despair.

The goal is not to doubt endlessly, but to see honestly and to trust Him fully.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 11:28

> Everyone should look carefully at his own heart before he eats the bread and drinks from the cup.

Galatians 6:4

> Each person should take a careful look at his own work. Then he can be proud of what he himself has done, without comparing himself with someone else.

Colossians 1:27

> God wanted His people to know this great and glorious secret, which is for the Gentiles too: Christ lives in you, and He is your hope of sharing God's glory.

Spiritual Principle

Every believer should honestly examine whether Christ truly lives in them.

Application

When you look at your life, do you see the evidence of Christ in you?

VI. WE HAVE NOT FAILED

2 Corinthians 13:6 — Paul's Confidence

“And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test.”

The Corinthians had questioned Paul.

But if they examined themselves and found Christ in them, that would prove something.

It would prove that Paul's ministry was real.

Paul had brought them the gospel.

Their faith was the fruit of his work.

So if they passed the test, Paul passed too.

Cross References

1 Corinthians 9:27

> I train my body and keep it under control, so that after preaching to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

2 Timothy 2:15

> Do your very best to stand before God as a worker He is pleased with, one who has no reason to be embarrassed, because you handle the true message the right way.

Romans 16:10

> Greet Apelles, who has proven himself faithful in Christ.

Spiritual Principle

The faith of those we serve is the best evidence of our ministry.

Key Truth

Changed lives are the true credentials of God's servants.

VII. DO WHAT IS RIGHT

2 Corinthians 13:7 — Paul's Prayer

“Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people may see that we have stood the test, but so that you may do what is right, even if we seem to have failed.”

“We pray to God that you will not do anything wrong.”

Paul's prayer was for their holiness.

“Not so that people may see that we have stood the test.”

Paul was not trying to look good.

“But so that you may do what is right.”

He simply wanted them to live rightly.

“Even if we seem to have failed.”

Here is a beautiful humility.

If they repented, Paul would have no need to show his authority.

Some might then say he was weak.

Paul did not care.

He would rather look weak and see them do right.

Cross References

Philippians 4:8

> One last thing, my brothers and sisters: fill your thoughts with things that are true, worthy of respect, fair, clean, beautiful, and well spoken of. If something is good and deserves praise, think about that.

Romans 12:17

> Never pay back evil with more evil. Be careful to do what everyone can see is good.

1 Thessalonians 5:22

> Stay away from everything that is evil.

Spiritual Principle

A true servant cares more about others doing right than about his own reputation.

Application

Do you care more about looking right or about others being right with God?

VIII. FOR THE TRUTH

2 Corinthians 13:8 — Not Against the Truth

“For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.”

Paul's authority had limits.

He could not use it against the truth.

He could only use it to serve the truth.

If the Corinthians repented, there would be nothing to punish.

Paul would never act against people who were doing right.

God's truth guided everything he did.

Cross References

John 18:37

> Jesus said, “I was born and came into the world for this reason: to tell people the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to Me.”

3 John 1:4

> Nothing makes me happier than hearing that my children are living by the truth.

Proverbs 23:23

> Get the truth and never sell it. Get wisdom, discipline, and understanding too.

Spiritual Principle

God's servants must always stand for the truth, never against it.

Key Truth

Truth is not a tool we use; it is a master we serve.

IX. WEAK THAT YOU MAY BE STRONG

2 Corinthians 13:9 — Praying for Maturity

“We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is for your maturity and perfection.”

“We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong.”

Paul was happy to be weak if it meant they were strong.

He did not need to be the hero.

“And our prayer is for your maturity and perfection.”

The word here carries the idea of being restored, mended, or made complete.

It was used for mending fishing nets or setting a broken bone.

Paul prayed that the broken places in the church would be healed.

He prayed that they would grow into full maturity in Christ.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 12:10

> So for Christ's sake I am glad in my weaknesses, insults, hard times, persecutions, and troubles. When I am weak, that is when I am strong.

Colossians 1:28

> We tell everyone about Christ. We warn and teach with all wisdom, so that we can bring each person to God fully grown in Christ.

Ephesians 4:13

> This will continue until we all come together in faith and in knowing the Son of God, becoming mature and growing to the full measure of Christ.

Spiritual Principle

A true leader prays for the growth and restoration of others, even at his own expense.

Application

Are you praying for the spiritual growth of others?

X. NOT HARSH

2 Corinthians 13:10 — Authority for Building Up

“This is why I write these things while I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.”

“This is why I write these things while I am absent.”

Paul wrote this letter ahead of time for a reason.

“That when I come I may not have to be harsh.”

He wanted them to repent before he arrived.

Then he would not need to be severe.

“The authority the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.”

Paul repeats what he said in Chapter 10.

Authority in the church has one purpose.

To build people up.

Even discipline, when needed, is meant to restore.

Cross References

2 Corinthians 10:8

> Even if I brag a little too much about the authority the Lord gave us, I am not ashamed. He gave it to build you up, not to tear you down.

1 Corinthians 4:21

> Which would you prefer? Do you want me to come with a rod of correction, or with love and gentleness?

Jeremiah 1:10

> Today I have given you authority over nations and kingdoms to pull up and to tear down, and to build up and to plant.

Spiritual Principle

God gives authority in the church to build up, and even correction is meant to restore.

Key Truth

Warning ahead of time is an act of love.

XI. FINALLY, BROTHERS AND SISTERS

2 Corinthians 13:11 — Five Final Commands

“Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.”

After all the hard words, Paul ends with warmth.

He calls them **“brothers and sisters.”**

They are family.

He gives five short commands.

“Rejoice!”

Be glad in the Lord.

“Strive for full restoration.”

Work to repair what was broken.

“Encourage one another.”

Build each other up.

“Be of one mind.”

Seek unity in Christ.

“Live in peace.”

Stop the quarreling.

“And the God of love and peace will be with you.”

Here is the promise.

When God's people live this way, they experience His presence in a special way.

Cross References

Philippians 4:4

> Keep on being glad in the Lord, no matter what. Let me say it one more time: be glad!

Romans 12:16

> Live in agreement with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to spend time with ordinary people. Do not think you are wiser than everyone else.

Romans 15:33

> May the God who gives peace be with all of you. Amen.

Spiritual Principle

A church that rejoices, restores, encourages, agrees, and lives in peace will know the God of love and peace.

Application

Which of these five commands do you most need to obey this week?

XII. A HOLY KISS

2 Corinthians 13:12 — Greeting One Another

“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

In Paul's day, a kiss on the cheek was a common greeting among family and close friends.

Paul calls it a **holy** kiss.

It was a pure sign of love among believers.

It showed that they were one family in Christ.

In many cultures today, believers show the same love with a handshake, a hug, or a warm greeting.

The form may change.

But the love and welcome behind it should not.

For a church that had been divided, this simple greeting would be a sign of healing.

Cross References

Romans 16:16

> Greet each other with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings.

1 Corinthians 16:20

> All the believers here greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

1 Peter 5:14

> Greet each other with a kiss of love. Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

Spiritual Principle

Believers should welcome one another with genuine, holy affection.

Application

How do you welcome others in your church family?

XIII. ALL GOD'S PEOPLE GREET YOU

2 Corinthians 13:13 — Greetings from the Saints

“All God's people here send their greetings.”

Paul was probably writing from Macedonia.

The believers there sent their love to Corinth.

This simple verse reminds us of something important.

The church is bigger than one congregation.

Believers in different places belong to the same family.

The Corinthians were not alone.

Cross References

Philippians 4:22

> All of God's people here send greetings, especially those who work in Caesar's household.

Hebrews 13:24

> Greet all your leaders and all of God's people. Those from Italy send their greetings.

Titus 3:15

> Everyone with me sends greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with all of you.

Spiritual Principle

Believers everywhere are one family in Christ.

Key Truth

No church stands alone; it is part of God's worldwide family.

XIV. THE GRACE, THE LOVE, AND THE FELLOWSHIP

2 Corinthians 13:14 — The Triune Blessing

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”

Paul ends the letter with one of the richest blessings in the Bible.

It names the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

It is one of the clearest pictures of the Trinity in the New Testament.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Jesus gives us undeserved favor.

Through Him, we are forgiven and saved.

“And the love of God.”

The Father's love is the source of our salvation.

He loved us and sent His Son.

“And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.”

The Spirit joins us to God and to one another.

He gives us shared life together.

“Be with you all.”

Notice the word **“all.”**

Even the ones Paul had warned.

Even the ones who had criticized him.

Paul wanted every one of them to receive God's blessing.

“Amen.”

So be it.

Cross References

Matthew 28:19

> Go to people of every nation and help them become My disciples. Baptize them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

1 Peter 1:2

> God the Father chose you long ago as He planned. The Spirit made you holy so you would obey Jesus Christ and be made clean by His blood. May grace and peace be yours more and more.

Ephesians 4:4

> God's people make up a single body, with a single Spirit, and God called all of you to share a single hope.

Spiritual Principle

The full blessing of the Christian life comes from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Key Truth

Grace from the Son, love from the Father, and fellowship in the Spirit are the inheritance of every believer.

XV. FIVE GREAT LESSONS FROM 2 CORINTHIANS 13

1. Accountability Matters

“Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith.”

Principle:

Believers are urged to test themselves to make sure they are truly in the faith.

2. Christ's Power Works in Weakness

“Though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God.”

Principle:

Just as Jesus triumphed through the cross, Paul's own weakness revealed God's strength.

3. Leaders Correct in Love

“The authority the Lord gave me for building up and not for tearing down.”

Principle:

Authority in the church is given for building up, not tearing down.

4. Unity and Peace Are Essential

“Be of one mind, live in peace.”

Principle:

Paul urges the church to live in harmony, showing love and encouragement to one another.

5. The Triune Blessing

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.”

Principle:

The grace of Jesus, the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit are our full source of life and peace.

XVI. HOW TO EXAMINE YOURSELF

Verse 5 calls every believer to honest self-examination.

Do I Trust Christ Alone for Salvation?

Not my works, my background, or my church membership.

Do I See Christ at Work in Me?

Is there a growing desire to please Him?

Do I Love God's Word?

Do I want to hear and obey it?

Do I Hate Sin?

Do I grieve when I sin and turn back to God?

Do I Love Other Believers?

Do I care for God's people?

Is There Fruit in My Life?

Is the Spirit producing love, joy, peace, and other good fruit?

A Word of Comfort

Self-examination is not meant to crush us.

No believer is perfect.

The goal is to look honestly and then look to Christ.

If you find weakness, run to Him.

If you find no faith at all, it is not too late to trust Him today.

Crawford Bible Study Principle

Look honestly at yourself, then look fully to Christ.

XVII. FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY CHURCH

Verse 11 gives five commands for church life.

1. Rejoice

A joyful church.

2. Strive for Full Restoration

A healing church.

3. Encourage One Another

A supportive church.

4. Be of One Mind

A united church.

5. Live in Peace

A peaceful church.

The Promise

“The God of love and peace will be with you.”

Key Truth

Where God's people live in joy, unity, and peace, they know His presence in a special way.

XVIII. THE TRIUNE BLESSING

Verse 14 shows the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

- Undeserved favor.
- Forgiveness of sins.
- Salvation through the cross.

The Love of God the Father

- The source of salvation.
- The love that sent the Son.
- A love that never fails.

The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

- Living union with God.

- Shared life with other believers.
- Daily help and presence.

For Everyone

“Be with you all.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The whole Trinity is at work in the life of every believer.

XIX. LOOKING BACK OVER 2 CORINTHIANS

The final chapter is a good place to remember the whole letter.

Chapters 1–7: Comfort and Reconciliation

- The God of all comfort.
- Treasure in jars of clay.
- A new creation in Christ.
- The ministry of reconciliation.
- Godly sorrow that leads to repentance.

Chapters 8–9: The Grace of Giving

- Christ became poor to make us rich.
- God loves a cheerful giver.
- Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.

Chapters 10–13: Paul's Defense and Final Appeal

- The weapons of our warfare.
- Boasting in weakness.
- My grace is sufficient for you.
- Examine yourselves.

- Grace, love, and fellowship.

Key Truth

The great theme of 2 Corinthians is that God's power is shown through human weakness.

XX. WHAT 2 CORINTHIANS 13 TEACHES ABOUT GOD

He Is Just

“Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”

He Raised Jesus by His Power

“He lives by the power of God.”

He Lives in His People

“Jesus Christ is in you.”

He Is the God of Love and Peace

“The God of love and peace will be with you.”

He Is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.”

He Blesses All His People

“Be with you all.”

Crawford Bible Study Principle

The God who corrects His people in love is the same God who blesses them with grace, love, and fellowship.

XXI. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PERSONAL STUDY

Question 1

Why does Paul mention two or three witnesses?

To show that any discipline would be fair and based on clear evidence, not rumors.

Question 2

What warning does Paul give in verse 2?

Those who continued in sin without repenting would not be spared when he came.

Question 3

What proof did the Corinthians want?

Proof that Christ was really speaking through Paul.

Question 4

How does the cross explain Paul's ministry?

Jesus was crucified in weakness but lives by God's power, and Paul shared that same pattern.

Question 5

What does Paul tell the Corinthians to examine?

Whether they are truly in the faith and whether Christ lives in them.

Question 6

Should self-examination lead to fear and doubt?

No.

It should lead us to honest repentance and fresh trust in Christ.

Question 7

What did Paul pray for the Corinthians?

That they would do what is right, even if it made him look weak.

Question 8

What does “maturity and perfection” mean in verse 9?

Being restored, healed, and made complete in Christ.

Question 9

Why did Paul write before coming?

So that they would repent and he would not have to be harsh.

Question 10

What five commands does Paul give in verse 11?

Rejoice, strive for restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, and live in peace.

Question 11

What is the “holy kiss”?

A pure greeting of love among believers, shown today in many cultures by a handshake or hug.

Question 12

What should 2 Corinthians 13 change about the way Christians live today?

2 Corinthians 13 should cause believers to live:

- Taking sin seriously.
- Examining their own hearts honestly.
- Trusting that Christ lives in them.
- Praying for others to do what is right.
- Standing for the truth.
- Rejoicing and encouraging one another.

- Seeking unity and peace.
- Resting in the grace, love, and fellowship of God.

XXII. PERSONAL APPLICATION

2 Corinthians 13 asks several important questions.

Am I Taking God's Warnings Seriously?

Or am I presuming on His patience?

Have I Examined Myself?

Am I truly in the faith?

Is Christ Living in Me?

What evidence do I see?

Do I Care More About Others or My Reputation?

Would I rather look good or see others do right?

Am I Standing for the Truth?

Even when it is costly?

Am I Helping Restore What Is Broken?

Is there a relationship I need to mend?

Am I Living in Peace?

Or am I part of the conflict?

Am I Resting in God's Blessing?

Do I live each day in His grace, love, and fellowship?

XXIII. A CRAWFORD BIBLE STUDY PRINCIPLE

“Grace, Love, and Fellowship”

2 Corinthians was a hard letter to write.

Paul had been criticized.

He had been misunderstood.

He had faced false teachers.

He had shed many tears.

He had to give strong warnings.

But how does he end?

Not with a threat.

Not with a complaint.

He ends with a blessing.

Grace from Jesus.

Love from the Father.

Fellowship from the Spirit.

And he gives it to all of them.

Even to those who had hurt him.

This creates a powerful principle.

A heart filled with God's grace will end with blessing, even after conflict.

When we have been hurt, we can still wish God's best for those who hurt us.

Principle:

Let your final word to others be a blessing, because God's final word to you is grace.

XXIV. FINAL APPLICATION

2 Corinthians Chapter 13 brings the letter to a close.

It warns that sin must be dealt with.

It shows that Christ's power works through weakness.

It calls each believer to honest self-examination.

It shows a leader who cares more about others than his own reputation.

It calls the church to joy, restoration, encouragement, unity, and peace.

And it ends with the blessing of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13 therefore reminds us:

Never ignore God's warnings.

Never assume your faith without examining it.

Never use authority to tear others down.

Never let conflict have the last word.

Never forget the grace, love, and fellowship that are yours in God.

The church does not need people who only test others.

It needs:

Believers who examine themselves.

Leaders who build up.

Churches that live in peace.

And hearts that rest in the blessing of the triune God.

The same God still calls:

Tell people that Christ was crucified in weakness and lives by God's power.

Tell people that Christ can live in them.

Tell people that the God of love and peace wants to be with them.

Tell people about the grace, love, and fellowship of God.

And as you live:

Examine yourself.

Rejoice.

Live in peace.

Rest in God's grace, love, and fellowship.

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for this letter and for all it has taught us.

Thank You that You are just and fair in all Your ways.

Thank You that Christ was crucified in weakness and lives by Your power.

Thank You that Christ lives in all who trust Him.

Thank You for leaders who correct us in love to build us up.

Thank You that You are the God of love and peace.

Forgive us when we have ignored Your warnings.

Forgive us when we have tested others but not ourselves.

Forgive us when we have cared more about our reputation than about doing right.

Forgive us when we have caused conflict instead of peace.

Help us examine our hearts honestly.

Help us see Christ living in us.

Make us people who rejoice, restore, and encourage.

Make us one in mind and peaceful in spirit.

And let the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Key Verse

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.” — 2 Corinthians 13:14

Central Truth

Believers must examine themselves to be sure Christ lives in them, receive loving correction meant to build them up, live together in joy, unity, and peace, and rest in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13 in One Sentence

Paul warns that he will deal with unrepented sin on his third visit, reminds the Corinthians that Christ was crucified in weakness but lives by God's power, calls them to examine themselves to see whether they are in the faith, urges them to rejoice, be restored, and live in peace, and blesses them with the grace of Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.