

GOD'S MASTERWORK, VOLUME SIX
LETTERS TO GOD'S PEOPLE—A SURVEY OF ROMANS—PHILEMON
2 CORINTHIANS: A MAN AND HIS MINISTRY
A SURVEY OF 2 CORINTHIANS



The Heart of the Matter

Someone has called the writer of 2 Corinthians “The Transparent Apostle,” for here, as in no other letter Paul wrote, the man bore his soul. Clearly the most autobiographical of all Paul’s correspondence, this letter allows us to see the man and his ministry in true, unveiled terms. The letter was written from a defensive posture because Paul’s apostleship was being questioned. But behind the strong words and forceful style is a heart tender toward God and committed to ministry—a beautiful, rare blend of strength and compassion.

In this letter, the afflicted apostle modeled how Christians should respond to suffering. He highlighted God’s role as the perfect comforter. Paul also showed believers the connection between inadequacy in ministry and experiencing God’s strength.



Discovering the Way

1. Some Helpful Background Information (2 Corinthians 7:5–7)

Let’s examine the purpose for this letter, its style, and the circumstances in which Paul wrote it.

2. An Analysis of the Letter (2 Corinthians 1:1–11; 2:1–16; 3:1–6; 4:1–10; 8:1–2; 9:7–8; 10:10–11)

Review the outline of 2 Corinthians on the next page, and examine the underlying themes of suffering, forgiveness, grace, and giving.

3. Second Corinthians for Today

Remember: it’s brokenness that gives wholeness to a ministry; it’s meekness that communicates strength in life; it’s loneliness that makes us value companionship; and it’s weakness that puts God’s power on display.

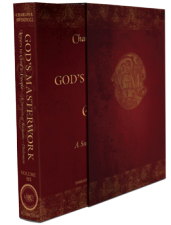


Starting Your Journey

Read 2 Corinthians and reflect on a time of suffering when God comforted you. Thank Him for His grace and share it with someone else this week.



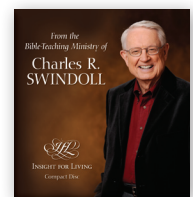
Tools for Digging Deeper



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SECOND CORINTHIANS

Introduction — Greeting (1:1–2)	Crucial Concerns <u>Suffering and God's comfort</u> <u>New covenant ministry</u> <u>Persevering in godliness</u>	Grace Giving <u>Example of Macedonians</u> <u>Command to Corinthians</u>	Conclusion — Farewell (13:11–14)
	<i>CHAPTERS</i> 1:3–7:16	<i>CHAPTERS</i> 8–9	<i>CHAPTERS</i> 10:1–13:10
Scope	Past	Present	Future
Issue	Misunderstandings, concerns, explanations	Financial project	Vindication of Paul's ministry
Tone	Forgiving, grateful, bold	Confident	Defensive and strong
Theme	Paul's defense of his apostleship and message		
Key Verses	4:5	9:7	10:8
Christ in 2 Corinthians	Jesus is the One who comforts us in our suffering, reconciles us to God, and gives strength in our weaknesses (1:5; 5:17–21; 12:9).		

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