

Outline of the Book of 2 Corinthians

The book of 2 Corinthians is a deeply personal and pastoral letter in which Paul defends his apostleship, explains his ministry, addresses the challenges and sufferings of Christian life, and provides guidance on several practical and theological issues. Below is an exhaustive outline of 2 Corinthians, highlighting the dangers facing believers.

I. Greeting and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)

- A. Salutation (1:1-2)
 - 1. Paul's identity and mission (1:1)
 - 2. Greeting to the Corinthian church (1:2)
- B. Thanksgiving for Comfort in Affliction (1:3-11)
 - 1. God of all comfort (1:3-4)
 - 2. Sharing in Christ's sufferings (1:5-7)
 - 3. Deliverance from deadly peril (1:8-11)

II. Paul's Defense of His Conduct and His Ministry (1:12-7:16)

- A. Paul's Integrity and Change of Plans (1:12-2:4)
 - 1. Paul's boast of a clear conscience (1:12-14)
 - 2. Explanation of change in travel plans (1:15-2:4)
- B. Forgiveness for the Offender (2:5-11)
 - 1. Call to forgive and comfort the penitent (2:5-8)
 - 2. Preventing Satan's advantage (2:9-11)
- C. Paul's Anxiety and Triumph in Ministry (2:12-17)
 - 1. Paul's concern for Titus (2:12-13)
 - 2. Triumph in Christ (2:14-17)
- D. The New Covenant Ministry (3:1-18)
 - 1. Commendation from Christ (3:1-3)
 - 2. Sufficiency from God (3:4-6)
 - 3. Glory of the New Covenant (3:7-18)
- E. Paul's Perseverance in Ministry (4:1-18)
 - 1. Integrity in proclaiming the gospel (4:1-2)
 - 2. The light of the gospel of Christ (4:3-6)
 - 3. Treasure in jars of clay (4:7-12)
 - 4. Faith and hope in eternal glory (4:13-18)
- F. Assurance of the Resurrection (5:1-10)
 - 1. The heavenly dwelling (5:1-5)
 - 2. Confidence and aim to please the Lord (5:6-10)
- G. The Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11-6:2)
 - 1. Compelled by Christ's love (5:11-15)
 - 2. The message of reconciliation (5:16-21)
 - 3. Appeal not to receive God's grace in vain (6:1-2)

- H. Paul's Hardships and Plea for Reconciliation (6:3-7:16)
 - 1. Endurance in hardships (6:3-10)
 - 2. Call to open hearts (6:11-13)
 - 3. Warning against unequal yoking (6:14-7:1)
 - 4. Joy in the Corinthians' repentance (7:2-16)

III. The Collection for the Saints (8:1-9:15)

- A. The Example of the Macedonians (8:1-7)
 - 1. Grace of giving in Macedonia (8:1-5)
 - 2. Encouragement to excel in giving (8:6-7)
- B. Christ's Example and Call for Generosity (8:8-15)
 - 1. Christ's poverty for our richness (8:8-9)
 - 2. Completion of the Corinthians' offering (8:10-15)
- C. Titus and His Companions (8:16-24)
 - 1. Titus's earnest care (8:16-17)
 - 2. Commendation of the messengers (8:18-24)
- D. Principles of Generous Giving (9:1-15)
 - 1. Preparation for the gift (9:1-5)
 - 2. The cheerful giver (9:6-9)
 - 3. God's provision and the results of giving (9:10-15)

IV. Paul's Defense of His Apostolic Authority (10:1-13:10)

- A. Paul's Defense Against Criticism (10:1-18)
 - 1. Appeal for meekness and gentleness (10:1-2)
 - 2. Spiritual warfare and divine power (10:3-6)
 - 3. Critique of superficial judgments (10:7-11)
 - 4. Paul's rightful boasting in the Lord (10:12-18)
- B. Paul and the False Apostles (11:1-15)
 - 1. Concern for the Corinthians' fidelity (11:1-4)
 - 2. Contrast between Paul and false apostles (11:5-15)
- C. Paul's Sufferings and Revelations (11:16-12:10)
 - 1. Paul's foolish boasting (11:16-21)
 - 2. Catalog of sufferings (11:22-33)
 - 3. Visions and the thorn in the flesh (12:1-10)
- D. Paul's Concern for the Corinthians (12:11-13:10)
 - 1. Paul's signs of apostleship (12:11-13)
 - 2. Fear of moral failures in Corinth (12:14-21)
 - 3. Final warnings and appeals (13:1-10)

V. Conclusion (13:11-14)

- A. Final Exhortations (13:11-12)
 - 1. Strive for restoration and peace (13:11)
 - 2. Greetings and holy kiss (13:12)

- B. Benediction (13:13-14)
 - 1. Trinitarian blessing (13:13-14)

Dangers Facing the Believer Highlighted in 2 Corinthians

1. Misunderstanding and Distrust of Leadership (1:12-2:4):

- **Danger:** Misinterpreting the intentions and actions of church leaders, leading to distrust and division.
- **Application:** Strive for transparency, open communication, and trust in godly leadership.

2. Unforgiveness (2:5-11):

- **Danger:** Holding grudges and refusing to forgive repentant individuals, which can give Satan an advantage.
- **Application:** Embrace forgiveness and restoration to prevent division and maintain unity.

3. Lack of Spiritual Discernment (2:12-17):

- **Danger:** Failing to recognize the genuine work of God and being led astray by false teachings.
- **Application:** Develop spiritual discernment through prayer, study of the Word, and reliance on the Holy Spirit.

4. Boasting in Human Credentials (3:1-6):

- **Danger:** Placing confidence in human qualifications and commendations rather than in God's calling and empowerment.
- **Application:** Recognize that sufficiency comes from God, not from human abilities or endorsements.

5. Spiritual Blindness (3:12-18):

- **Danger:** Being veiled in understanding and not experiencing the transformative power of the Spirit.
- **Application:** Seek the unveiling through Christ, allowing the Spirit to transform and illuminate understanding.

6. Losing Heart in Ministry (4:1-18):

- **Danger:** Becoming discouraged and losing heart due to hardships and challenges in ministry.
- **Application:** Focus on the eternal weight of glory and the renewal of the inner self, despite outward difficulties.

7. Worldly Values and Behavior (5:11-6:2):

- **Danger:** Adopting worldly values and behaviors that conflict with the message of reconciliation in Christ.
- **Application:** Live as ambassadors of Christ, embodying the message of reconciliation and living in the light of God's grace.

8. Unequal Yoking (6:14-7:1):

- **Danger:** Forming close partnerships with unbelievers, leading to compromised values and spiritual defilement.
- **Application:** Maintain spiritual purity and separation from influences that conflict with Christian faith and values.

9. Reluctance to Give Generously (8:1-9:15):

- **Danger:** Holding back from generous giving, thereby missing the blessings and grace associated with generosity.
- **Application:** Emulate Christ's example of giving, recognizing the spiritual benefits and encouragement it brings.

10. Undermining Apostolic Authority (10:1-18):

- **Danger:** Challenging and undermining the authority of genuine apostolic leadership.
- **Application:** Respect and uphold godly leadership, recognizing their role in guiding and building up the church.

11. Being Deceived by False Apostles (11:1-15):

- **Danger:** Being led astray by false apostles who disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.
- **Application:** Exercise vigilance and discernment, staying true to the gospel and the teachings of genuine apostles.

12. Pride and Self-Sufficiency (12:1-10):

- **Danger:** Becoming proud and self-sufficient, especially in light of personal revelations and spiritual experiences.
- **Application:** Embrace humility and dependence on God, recognizing that His grace is sufficient in weakness.

13. Moral and Ethical Failures (12:20-21):

- **Danger:** Falling into moral and ethical failures, including quarreling, jealousy, anger, and impurity.
- **Application:** Strive for personal holiness and ethical conduct, fostering a community of accountability and purity.

Well-known Passages from 2 Corinthians

[2 Corinthians 4:13-18 ESV] Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.

For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

[2 Corinthians 5:17-21 ESV] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

[2 Corinthians 9:6-9 ESV] The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. As it is written, "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

[2 Corinthians 10:3-6 ESV] For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ, being ready to punish every disobedience, when your obedience is complete.

[2 Corinthians 12:7-10 ESV] So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Conclusion for 2 Corinthians

By understanding these dangers and applying Paul's teachings and exhortations, believers can navigate the challenges of Christian life, maintain unity and integrity within the church, and live out the transformative power of the gospel in their daily lives.