

# 2 Corinthians 4:1-2 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

2 CORINTHIANS - PAUL'S MINISTRY IN THE LIGHT OF THE INDESCRIBABLE GIFT  
Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
[Another Overview Chart](#) on right side

## Overview of Second Corinthians

2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21
Character of Paul	Collection for the Saints	Credentials of Paul
Testimonial & Didactic	Practical	Apologetic
Past: Misunderstanding & Explanation	Present: Practical Project	Future: Anxieties
Apostle's Conciliation, Ministry & Exhortations	Apostle's Solicitation for Judean Saints	Apostle's Vindication of Himself
Forgiveness, Reconciliation	Confidence	Vindication
Gratitude		
Ephesus to Macedonia: Change of Itinerary Explained	Macedonia: Preparation for Visit to Corinth	To Corinth: Certainty and Imminence of the Visit
2Co 1:1-7:16	2Co 8:1-9:15	2Co 10:1-12:21

[2Corinthians written ~ 56-57AD - see Chronological Table of Paul's Life and Ministry](#)

Adapted & modified from [Jensen's Survey of the New Testament \(Highly Recommended Resource\)](#) & [Wilkinson's Talk Thru the Bible](#)

**2 Corinthians 4:1 Therefore since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart** ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek** : Dia touto, echontes (PAPMPN) ten diakonian tauten, kathos eleethemen, (1PAPI) ouk egkakoumen, (1PPAI)

**Amplified**: THEREFORE, SINCE we do hold and engage in this ministry by the mercy of God [granting us favor, benefits, opportunities, and especially salvation], we do not get discouraged (spiritless and despondent with fear) or become faint with weariness and exhaustion. ([Lockman](#))

**Barclay**: Since therefore this part of God's service has been given to us, even as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. ([Westminster Press](#))

**The Living Bible** It is God himself, in his mercy, who has given us this wonderful work of telling his Good News to others, and so we never give up.

**God's Word**: We don't become discouraged, since God has given us this ministry through his mercy. ([GWT](#))

**Easy English**: God in his \*mercy has given us this work to do. As a result, we do not lose hope.

**ESV**: Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. ([ESV](#))

**KJV**: Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

**NET**: Therefore, since we have this ministry, just as God has shown us mercy, we do not become discouraged. ([NET Bible](#))

**NIV**: Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NLT:** Therefore, since God in his mercy has given us this new way, we never give up.. [NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**NEB** SEEING THEN that we have been entrusted with this commission, which we owe entirely to God's mercy, we never lose heart.

**Phillips:** This is the ministry of the new agreement which God in his mercy has given us and nothing can daunt us. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Weymouth:** Therefore, being engaged in this service and being mindful of the mercy which has been shown us, we are not cowards.

**Wuest:** Because of this, having this ministry [of the new testament] even as we were made the objects of mercy [in its bestowal], we do not lose courage, ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** Because of this, having this ministrations, according as we did receive kindness, we do not faint,

**THEREFORE, SINCE WE HAVE THIS MINISTRY, AS WE RECEIVED MERCY, WE DO NOT LOSE HEART: Dia touto, echontes (PAPMPN) ten diakonian tauten, kathos eleethemen, (1PAPI) ouk egkakoumen, (1PPAI):**

- **Since:** 2Co 3:6,12 2Co 5:18 Eph 3:7,8
- **As:** 1Co 7:25 1Ti 1:13 1Pe 2:10
- **We do not lose heart:** 2Co 4:16 Isa 40:30 Ga 6:9 Eph 3:13 Php 4:13 2Th 3:13 Heb 12:3 Rev 2:3
- 2 Corinthians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### **Related Passage:**

1 Peter 2:10 for you once were NOT A PEOPLE, but now you are THE PEOPLE OF GOD; you had**NOT RECEIVED MERCY**, but now you have **RECEIVED MERCY**.

1 Timothy 1:13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I **was shown mercy** because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;

Isaiah 40:30-31 Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, 31 Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.

Ephesians 3:13 Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf, for they are your glory.

Philippians 4:13 (READ CONTEXT = Php 4:11-12) I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Hebrews 12:3 For consider Him Who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

## **SURPASSING GLORY OF NEW COVENANT MINISTRY**

[Paul Apple](#) introduces this chapter - Easy for ministers of the gospel to get **discouraged and lose heart**. Look at all that Paul was facing: - attacks against his **character** - attacks against the **legitimacy of his apostleship** - attacks against the **effectiveness of his ministry**. In some sense all believers are ministers (small "m") of the gospel – not just isolating some special paid clergy class; so these instructions apply to all of us

[Alfred Plummer](#) comments on the poor chapter division - Here again, as between chapters 1 and 2, the division of chapters is unintelligently made. The first six verses of this chapter belong to the preceding one, and the close connexion between the two paragraphs is obvious: the opening verses of this chapter show how close it is, for the Apostle is still urging the claims of his office, especially against those who charge him with insincerity and self-commendation. The six verses run in couplets; the glory of the new ministry (2Co 4:1, 2); the condition of those who are too blind to see the glory of the Gospel (2Co 4:3, 4); the source of the glory (2Co 4:5, 6). A fresh departure is made at 2Co 4:7. With 2Co 4:1-6 compare 1Th 2:1-12, which is a similar vindication of Apostolic authority on behalf of St Paul and his colleagues, and contains several similar expressions. ([Plummer, Alfred. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. New York: Scribner. 1915](#))

[Brian Bell](#) outlines Chapter 4 -

- A Great **Light** in Gloomy Darkness!
- A Great **Treasure** in Jars of Clay!
- A Great **Glory** in Light Affliction!

**Therefore** reflects the combination of two Greek words (*dia touto*) which together signify a term of conclusion and are rendered *for this reason, because of this or therefore*. Refers back to the previous chapter in which Paul presented a superb synopsis of the surpassing glory of the ministry under the New Covenant as compared to the ministry of Moses under the Old Covenant. **John MacArthur** sees the "**therefore**" as pointing back to 2Co 3:18 commenting that "Strength to endure trials comes from the unveiled look into the face of Christ made possible under the New Covenant. That look was also the source of strength for Paul's new covenant ministry."

**Paul Apple** Look back at chapter 3 to see the nature of this New Covenant Ministry – one of life, one of the Spirit, one of hope, one of confidence, one of boldness, one of glory

**Dia touto** - This idiom is used some 46 times in the NT - Mt 6:25 12:27 31 13:13 52 14:2 18:23 21:43 23:14 23:34 24:44 Mk 6:14 11:24 12:24 Lk 11:19 12:22 Jn 1:31 5:16 18 6:65 7:22 8:47 9:23 10:17 12:39 13:11 15:19 16:15 19:11 Ac 2:26 Ro 5:12 2Co 4:1 7:13 13:10 Ep 1:15 5:17 6:13 Col 1:9 1Th 3:7 Philemon 1:15 He 1:9 2:1 1Jn 3:1 4:5 Rev 7:15 12:12

**Since we have this ministry (diakonia), as we received mercy, we do not lose heart** - I like the **NRSV** rendering "since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart." **NEB** renders it "we have been entrusted with this commission, which we owe entirely to God's mercy, we never lose heart." **NIV** has "since through God's mercy we have this ministry we do not lose heart." This rendering begs the simple question why do "we have this ministry?" The simple answer is it is a gift of God's mercy. **Have** (or possess) is present tense indicating **this ministry** was Paul's continuing possession. **Ministry** (service) (**diakonia**) as discussed below is a Greek word that described menial labor, like waiting tables (see Acts 6:1-2+). It was service that was not highly esteemed by the cultured Greeks. Paul's **ministry** (like ours) was based not on his adequacy but on the adequacy on the omnipotent, indwelling Spirit of God (2Co 3:5-6+). His (our) **ministry (diakonia)** was in turn for the equipping of the saints for their work of **ministry (diakonia)** and the building up the body of Christ (Eph 4:12+). Received is aorist (past completed action - first on the "Road to Damascus") and is passive voice (divine passage) indicating it is a gift from God. They had **received mercy** for salvation and service (which should be the natural outflow of salvation - see Eph 2:8-9+ = salvation and Eph 2:10+ = service).

**THOUGHT** - Paul presents us a great example in crediting the **mercy** of God for the effectiveness of his ministry. We may be saved by grace but we still have the rotten flesh which loves adulation and praise and recognition. It loves to take credit for a "job well done!" Paul's testimony should cause us all to pause (frequently) to take inventory on whether His New Covenant ministry has been replaced by "our" ministry. Anything we do by grace is a reflection of God's infinitely inexhaustible mercy, for none of us knows the depths of the evil of our flesh which colors even our motivations for ministry. Thank God for His mercy. Without it none of us would have any eternal efficacy in ministry.

**Ralph Harris** - God put Paul in the ministry. He did not choose it for himself. He always considered he received that honor as an act of mercy and grace

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, 13 even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief;(1 Timothy 1:12, 13).

**Broomall** - Note three things: (1) our riches—**we have this ministry**; (2) our reminder—**even as we obtained mercy** (ASV; cf. 1 Tim 1:13, 16); (3) our resource—**we faint not** (cf. the same verb in 2 Cor 4:16; Lk 18:1; Gal 6:9; Eph 3:13; 2 Thess 3:13). [Wycliffe Bible Commentary online 2 Corinthians 4](#))

**William Barclay** has an interesting note - Paul says that he never loses heart in the great task that has been given to him, and by implication he tell us why. Two things keep him going. (a) There is the consciousness of a great task. A man who is conscious of a great task can do amazing things. One of the great works of musical genius is Handel's Messiah. It is on record that the whole work was composed and written down in twenty-two days, and that during all that time Handel would scarcely consent to eat or to sleep. A great task brings its own strength with it. (**ED: TRUE BUT ULTIMATELY IT IS GOD'S SPIRIT WHO ENERGIZES SUCH AMAZING WORK**) (b) There is the memory of mercy received. It was Paul's aim to spend all his life seeking to do something for the love which had redeemed him (**ED: NOT IN THE SENSE THAT HE FELT HE NEEDED TO PAY GOD BACK BUT FROM A HEART MOTIVATED BY LOVE AND THANKSGIVING, ALL ENERGIZED BY GOD'S SPIRIT**). ([The Daily Study Bible Series. The Westminster Press](#))

**We have this ministry** - But what is "this ministry"? What ministry? **Paul** had just reminded the saints that the **ministry** (diakonia) of the New Covenant which he had received (1Ti 1:12, Ac 9:15) was "**the ministry** (diakonia) **of the Spirit**" (2Co 3:8) and in chapter 5 adds that it was "**the ministry of reconciliation**" (2Co 5:18). He also succinctly documented the superiority of the New Covenant ministry compared to the Old Covenant ministry of Moses. (See chart summarizing the superior nature of the New Covenant)

As alluded to above Paul's statement that "**we have this ministry**" implies that it was something he had received. It was a gift from God, a gift that was grounded in God's great mercy. None of us receive ministry based on anything meritorious we have done, and Paul never lost sight of this great truth (and neither should we -- which is always a potential danger when we experience a modicum of success!) In his last written communication (2 Timothy) we read "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus **by the will of God**, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus." (2Ti 1:1+)

**R Kent Hughes** rightly notes that Paul's New Covenant ministry so surpassed the Old Covenant because "it effected a removal of the veil of unbelief, the liberation of the Holy Spirit, and transformation into the image of the Lord. Having a ministry of such splendor left Paul with no place for faintheartedness but only for boldness (cf. 2Co 3:12)." ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word](#))

**A T Robertson** feels that the use of the plural ("**we**" is used throughout this chapter) is the so-called *literary plural* and adds "*Can he not speak for all of us?*" Some feel that "**we**" instead of "**I**" is an expression of Paul's humility, which is a reasonable interpretation in view of the personal way in which he is forced to defend his ministry.

**Utley** on **we have this ministry** - Paul is referring to "the ministry of the Spirit" (cf. 3:8), also called "the ministry of righteousness" (cf. 3:9). Paul uses this word for service, diakonia, so often in II Corinthians. Christians are saved to serve (cf. Eph. 2:10). Christianity is not a "what's in it for me" focus as much as "what can I do for others because of what Christ has done for me" focus. Paul served and called to service (cf. Gal. 2:20). See Special Topic: [Servant Leadership \(2 Corinthians 4 Commentary\)](#)

Paul's willingness to carry out his ministry illustrates how he imitated His Lord for Jesus' high and holy purpose was not "to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mk 10:45+) Paul calls all us to imitate the example he imitated declaring "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor 11:1+)

**Ministry** (1248)(**diakonia** see verb **diakoneo**) means the rendering or assistance or help by performing certain duties, often of a humble or menial nature serve, including such mundane activities as waiting on tables or caring for household needs—activities without apparent dignity. It is good to remember the cultural **context** for in Grecian through **diakonia** was not a dignified term. The service associated with **diakonia** involved dependence, submission, and constraints of time and freedom, which cause the Greeks to regard **diakonia** as degrading and dishonorable. Service for the public good was honored, but "voluntary giving of oneself in service of one's fellow man is alien to Greek thought. The highest goal before a man was the development of his own personality. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#)) To the Greek mind, mundane service was not considered to be a proper purpose for a man's life. The formula of the sophist expressed the prevalent Greek philosophy -- "*How can a man be happy when he has to serve someone?*". Paul would likely respond "*How can a man be blessed unless he is a servant of all?*" (cp Acts 20:35+) Surprisingly, Judaism had no philosophy of ministry involving **diakonia**. Instead, Judaism adopted a philosophy of service not unlike that of the Greeks. If service was rendered at all, it was done as an act of social obligation or as an act to those more worthy. A superior would not stoop to become a servant! Though Judaism in the time of Jesus knew and practiced its social responsibilities, e.g., to the poor, this was done mainly by alms, not by service (cf. Lk 10:30-35). Lowly service such as waiting on tables, was beneath the dignity of a free man (cf. Lk 7:44ff). Sometimes, the "greater" would wait on a table, but this was unusual. Thus Jesus' example introduced a radical new attitude toward **diakonia**.

**Diakonia** - Used 7x in 2 Corinthians. Diakonia is primarily a Pauline word (>2/3's of the 32 uses in NT) - Lk. 10:40; Acts 1:17; Acts 1:25; Acts 6:1; Acts 6:4; Acts 11:29; Acts 12:25; Acts 20:24; Acts 21:19; Rom. 11:13; Rom. 12:7; Rom. 15:31; 1 Co. 12:5; 1 Co. 16:15; 2 Co. 3:7; 2 Co. 3:8; 2 Co. 3:9; 2 Co. 4:1; 2 Co. 5:18; 2 Co. 6:3; 2 Co. 8:4; 2 Co. 9:1; 2 Co. 9:12; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 11:8; Eph. 4:12; Col. 4:17; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:5; 2 Tim. 4:11; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 2:19

In the NT, a **diakonos** is one who by choice comes under the authority of his Master and who serves as did His Master served (Mk 10:45+, cp 1Co 4:16+ 1Co 11:1+). Paul emphasized this philosophy of ministry in his parting words to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:17) declaring...

I esteem my life of absolutely no account as precious to myself in order that I [LIKE A GREEK RUNNER SEEKING THE PRIZE] may finish my race, even **the ministering work** (**diakonia**) which I received from the

presence of the Lord Jesus (Acts 9:15 16 Acts 22:21 Acts 26:17-18) to bear testimony to the good news of the grace of God (THE GOSPEL). (Acts 20:24+ [Eerdmans Publishing](#))

**Comment:** Beloved we are all called to be in a ministry of some sort (we are certainly called to bear testimony of the good news of the grace of God with our life and our lips - cp 1Pe 2:9+), for all believers are called to walk in Jesus' steps (1Pe 2:21+), in a life of service to others (Php 2:5, 6, 7+). Given that this ministry is a "race" and we each get only one opportunity (~one life) to run this race course, the question is...Beloved, how are you running? Have you laid aside the encumbrances (non-essentials, not bad things, just not the best things) of this life and the sin which so easily entangles you? Are you running with endurance? (Heb 12:1+, It's too soon to quit - see Gal 6:7+, Ga 6:8+, Ga 6:9, 10+) Are you fixing your eyes on Jesus (Heb 12:2+), learning to strive according to His power which mightily works within you? (Col 1:29+) Are you running in such a way that you might not be disqualified (not loss of salvation, but loss of reward - cp 1Co 3:15+, 2Jn 1:8 2Co 5:10+)? (1Co 9:24+, 1Co 9:25+, 1Co 9:26+, 1Co 9:27+, 2Ti 2:5+) Take a moment and listen to and be motivated by this Scripturally based song [Run Like Heaven](#).

In Acts 21 Paul presents a proper perspective for **ministry** ([diakonia](#)) writing...

And after he had greeted them (CONTEXT = Acts 21:17, 18+), he *began* to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his **ministry** ([diakonia](#)). (Acts 21:19+)

**THOUGHT:** (1) Paul's ministry was but a conduit of what God did through him (cf "VESSEL OF HONOR" - 2Ti 2:21+), and so it is still true in all of us who are called to be "ministers" of the Lord, even if not formally. (2) The first thing Paul did after greeting them was to give testimony to the great things the Lord had done ("THE THINGS WHICH GOD HAD DONE"), a good pattern for all God's ministers to seek to emulate. What *we do* is natural but what *God does* through us is supernatural. Can you glorify your Father by telling others "one by one the things" He has done through your ministry, His Spirit working in and through you to point others to Jesus?

**We received mercy** ([1653](#)) ([eleeo](#) from [eleos](#)) means to feel sympathy with the misery of another, especially such sympathy which manifests itself in deeds (action), less frequently in words. It describes the general sense of one who expresses compassion to someone in need. Mercy is a concern for an afflicted person that prompts one to give help. God's grace gives us what we don't deserve and His mercy does not give us what we do deserve.

**Utley** - Paul wrote in Greek, but thought in Hebrew. The Greek term *eleeō* (mercy, pity, compassion) is used in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew term *hesed* (**ED: CORRECTION** - IT IS ACTUALLY THE ROOT NOUN [eleos](#) WHICH IS USED TO TRANSLATE [hesed](#) = LOVINGKINDNESS. THE VERB [eleeo](#) IS USED MOST COMMONLY TO TRANSLATE [chanan](#) = GRACIOUS), which relates to covenant fidelity (REFERRING TO [hesed](#)) YHWH is faithful to His covenant promises, even when humanity is not! Paul's dramatic conversion clearly reveals the compassion of God. He acts in mercy to Jews (cf. Ro 9:15, 16, 18, 23–24; 11:30) and to Gentiles (cf. Rom. 11:32) for His own covenant purpose, the restoration of His image in mankind through the work of Christ and the ministry of the Spirit. God's loyalty to His covenant and His unchanging character of mercy is mankind's only hope. ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

Writing to Timothy **Paul** gave a parallel description of **mercy** he had received first explaining that...

even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet **was shown mercy** ([eleeo](#)) because I acted ignorantly in unbelief. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. But that is why God **had mercy** on me, so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example (model) of his great patience with even the worst sinners (Paul considered himself a "living epistle" testifying that God could save any sinner [cf 2Co 3:1-4+] - what a mercy filled God!). Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in Him and receive eternal life. (1Ti 1:13-16 - v16 is NLT)

**Johann Bengel**...The **mercy** ([eleeo](#)) of God, through which this ministry is received, makes us (**ED: OR SHOULD MAKE US**) zealous and sincere ministers. Even Moses obtained mercy, and thereby found so near access, Ex 33:19+. ([The Critical English Testament](#))

Paul's acknowledgment of his receipt of (and need for) **mercy** ([eleeo](#)) is a reflection of his continuing attitude of humility and dependence on God, recognizing that his holy calling as an apostle was not due to his works but was a result of his having received mercy. He would have loved [Augustus Toplady's](#) great hymn...



### [A debtor to mercy alone,](#)

Of covenant mercy I sing;  
Nor fear, with Thy righteousness on,  
My person and offering to bring;

The terrors of law and of God  
With me can have nothing to do;  
My Saviour's obedience and blood  
Hide all my transgressions from view.

[\(Another Version\)](#)

**Vincent** writes that **eleeo** means "to succor or to show compassion...The (root) word (**eleos**) emphasizes the misery with which grace deals; hence, peculiarly the sense of human wretchedness coupled with the impulse to relieve it, which issues in gracious ministry. Bengel remarks, "*Grace takes away the fault, mercy the misery.*"

While the Dispenser of the mercy is not stated, this is certainly an allusion to the bestowal of bountiful mercy from our great "God (Who is) merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth." (Ps 86:15+) (See discussion of God's attribute of Mercy)

**Brian Bell** - Paul reminds himself of the **Mercy** he's received. "Mercy cost nothing to receive, but it cost everything to give." (Charles Swindoll) It cost Jesus His life!

**Phillip Towner** adds that "**Mercy** (is) the Foundation of God's Covenant (**Ed**: Including the New Covenant). Mercy and **hesed** (**word study**) [חֶסֶד , רַחֲמִים], God's covenant love, are integrally related. So close is the relationship that hesed [חֶסֶד , רַחֲמִים] sometimes is to be viewed in terms of mercy. In this relationship, **mercy** then comes to be seen as the quality in God that directs Him to forge a relationship with people who absolutely do not deserve to be in relationship with Him. **Mercy** is manifested in God's activity on behalf of His people to free them from slavery...The pattern of God's dealings with people in the Old Testament, at the core of which is **mercy**, also provides the shape for understanding his dealings in the New Testament. God desires a relationship with humankind, but must show **mercy** to them in order for this relationship to be built. Of course, the New Testament expounds the theme of God's **mercy** in the light of Christ (cp 2Co 4:6+), the supreme expression of love, mercy, and grace. (**ED**: And this is the "Light" that radically impacted Saul on the road to Damascus Ac 9:3-5+ the merciful Light he never grew tired of praising and proclaiming.) ([Mercy - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology - Recommended Reading](#))

**Spurgeon** describes **God's mercy** as His "tender attribute (which) sweetens the grand thought of His power: the divine strength will not crush us, but will be used for our good (**ED**: and His glory. Amen!). (See The Attributes of God - Spurgeon)

**Matthew Henry** has a good reminder that "The best of men would faint, if they did not receive mercy from God. And that mercy which has helped us out, and helped us on, hitherto, we may rely upon to help us even to the end. (**Amen!**) ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

**Paul** understood **God's great mercy** (1Pe 1:3+) for he of all people had been in desperate need of **mercy** before salvation (Acts 8:1, 3, 9:3, 4, 5, 6, 22:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 26:9, 10, 11, 12, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19) and thereafter Paul never forgot God's saving **mercy**, living in daily dependence on and thankfulness for this same divine **mercy** that saved him on the Damascus Road. **THOUGHT - Do you live daily with a similar sense of great gratitude for having been shown such great mercy from so great a God?** The longer Paul was a recipient of God's mercy, the greater was his sense of humility (and inadequacy) as he "progressed" from an apostle "**not fit to be called an apostle**" (1Co 15:9+ ~55AD), to "**the very least of all saints**" (Ep 3:8+ ~61AD) to the **foremost of sinners** (1Ti 1:15 - 63-66AD)

**R Kent Hughes** comments that "the combination of this **mercy** and the astonishingly surpassing **glory** of his (New Covenant) ministry heartened him and kept him from losing heart...**Spurgeon** was right in delineating **discouragement as one of the ministry's great risks. Loss of heart can bring disaster.** But these two things will ground our hearts: (1) God's merciful call, and (2) the surpassing glory of the gospel ministry. He stands in Christ's stead; his message is the Word of God; around him are immortal souls; the Saviour, unseen, is beside him; the Holy Spirit broods over the congregation; angels gaze upon the scene; and heaven and hell await the issue" (Matthew Simpson). What glory! How heartening! ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word](#))

**Willmouth: Tenacity of Ministry** -- The way we view our ministries will often help determine how we will fulfill it. If it becomes a burden instead of a privilege, then it becomes easy to quit when things don't go our way. Paul was overwhelmed by God's grace and mercy, which gave him the tenacity to keep on serving Christ regardless of his circumstances, regardless of what others said about him, regardless if anyone responded the way he wanted them too.

**Barclay** - He says that he never loses heart in the great task that has been given to him, and by implication he tells us why. There

are two things which keep him going. (a) There is the consciousness of a great task. A man who is conscious of a great task can do amazing things. One of the great works of musical genius is Handel's Messiah. It is on record that the whole work was composed and written down in twenty-two days, and that during the whole time Handel would scarcely consent to eat or to sleep. The strange thing about a great task is that it brings its own strength with it. (b) There is the memory of mercy received. It was Paul's aim to spend all his life and all his effort seeking to do something for the love which had redeemed him. ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

**We do not lose heart** - The Greek word for "not" (*ou/ouk*) indicates absolute negation. Paul says we absolutely in no way are losing heart, we are not becoming discouraged or despondent with fear and we are not becoming faint with weariness and exhaustion. **Lose heart** is in the present tense indicating that this is his continual attitude in spite of the challenges to his character and conduct by the false teachers. One is reminded of **Winston Churchill** famous words when Britain was facing overwhelming odds and possible defeat - **NEVER GIVE IN! NEVER GIVE IN!**

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, have you ever been falsely accused or had your motives for ministry impugned or unfairly questioned? Most of us who have been at this for a while have been unjustly treated or unfairly criticized. We need to remember that the same thing happened to Paul and of course to our Lord Jesus and thus we must continually strive by the Spirit to imitate them (1Co 11:1+) walking in the steps our Savior trod (1Pe 2:21+), so that we do not **lose heart**. (See 1Pe 5:8+ 1Pe 5:9+, 1Pe 5:10+)

Earlier Paul had affirmed that he had great **boldness** to speak forth the truth of the Gospel (2Co 3:12+) and when he considered the greatness of his calling (having such a **hope**), it buoyed up his spirit and gave him courage to face all his adversaries and afflictions with a sense of confidence.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, as those who have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light, we can quickly lose heart when we fail to remember the greatness of the hope (absolute assurance of future good) our calling (Ep 1:18+ Ep 4:4+) with which God has called us in and for Christ Jesus (Ro 1:6+, Jude 1:1+) and we forget that we have the high *privilege* and holy *purpose* to proclaim His excellencies to those still lost in darkness. (1Pe 2:9+, cf Acts 26:18+, Col 1:13+, 2Co 5:14+)

Listen to **Spurgeon's** exhortation - The preacher should either speak in God's Name or hold his tongue. My brother, if the Lord has not sent you with a message, go to bed, or to school, or mind your farm; for what does it matter what you have to say of your own? If heaven has given you a message, speak it out as he ought to speak who is called to be the mouth of God. (cf Jer 20:9 Acts 4:19, 20+)

**Lose heart** (1573) (**ekakeo** from **ek** = out of or intensifies meaning of... + **kakos** = bad) strictly speaking means to act or behave badly in some circumstance. On one hand, it can mean to give in to evil. On the other hand, it can convey the idea of to be weary in or become tired of doing something, to lose courage, to slacken their one's labor or exertion because of the weariness caused by prolonged effort. It can picture one who becomes faint-hearted or despondent in the face of trial or difficulty. The verb **ekakeo** means "to become good for nothing, to grow faint, and hence to be discouraged." ([EBC](#)) "A strong Greek term which refers to abandoning oneself to cowardly surrender. That was not how Paul responded to the continual attacks he faced. ([MacArthur Study Bible](#)) **Ekkakeo** "became a Christian technical term expressing the unflagging pursuit of the goal of service to neighbor, or of apostolic ministry, as well as the tautness (having no give or slack -- tightly drawn, chiefly a nautical term signifying in proper order or condition) of the determined heart that does not let up or lose courage. (Linguistic and Exegetical Key) [Barnes](#) writes that **ekakeo** "means properly to turn out a coward; to lose one's courage; then to be faint-hearted, to faint, to despond, in view of trial, difficulty, etc. Here it means, that by the mercy of God he was not disheartened by the difficulties which he met; his faith and zeal did not flag; he was enabled to be faithful, and laborious, and his courage always kept up, and his mind was filled with cheerfulness. See [2Co 2:14]. He was deterred by no difficulties; embarrassed by no opposition; driven from his purpose by no persecution; and his strength did not fail under any trials. The consciousness of being entrusted with such a **ministry** animated him; and the **mercy** and grace of God sustained him."

**Ekkakeo** - 6x in 6v - Lk 18:1+; 2Co 4:1, 16; Ga 6:9+; Ep 3:13+; 2Th 3:13+. NAS = grow weary(1), lose heart(5).

It is worth noting that Paul "bookends" chapter 4 with "**lose heart**" (**ekakeo**) emphasizing that despite the difficulties and detractions, he refused to **lose heart**, and steadfastly remained "energized" for the ministry for which he had been chosen (Ac 9:15, 16+, cp 2Ti 1:1+)

Therefore **we do not lose heart** (**ekakeo**), but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen (**eg**, the detractions and the detractors!), but at the

things which are not seen ("**20/20**" **eternal vision - Father, grant this to all of Thy children in Christ. Amen**); for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. (2Co 4:16+, 2Co 4:17+, 2Co 4:18+)

The **UBS Handbook** notes that "Not to be discouraged may be expressed in a number of ways, often idiomatically, for example, "not to lose heart," "not to give up," "not to run away," (**ED**: Have you ever felt like running away from the ministry for which He has chosen you? **Don't do it!** Instead run to Him (to the Strong Tower - Pr 18:10+) and hide in Him and in His Sufficiency. Pr 30:5+ Ps 32:7+, Ps 119:114+, Ps 143:9+ Ps 9:9+ Ps 27:5+ Ps 31:20+ Ps 91:1+ Col 3:3+) or "not to think that all is lost" ([New Testament Handbook](#))

**Utley** - Paul did feel like giving up several times. Jesus appeared to him in visions several times to encourage him (cf. Acts 18:9–10; 23:11; 27:24; 2 Tim. 4:17). In this particular context, in the face of physical trials and problems with the church at Corinth, Paul had confidence that the merciful, covenantal God was there and in control (cf. 3:12). The task was too important to lose heart (cf. Matt. 28:19–20; Acts 1:8). ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

**Constable** comments that. "Since we have a ministry in which the Spirit opens people's eyes and transforms their characters we can feel encouraged. Our job is not simply to lay God's high standards on people, as Moses did, but to provide God's grace to them as the Holy Spirit's agents. ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** writes that "A discouraged Methodist preacher wrote to the great Scottish preacher, Alexander Whyte, to ask his counsel. Should he leave the ministry? "Never think of giving up preaching!" Whyte wrote to him. "The angels around the throne envy you your great work!" That was the kind of reply Paul would have written, the kind of reply all of us need to ponder whenever we feel our work is in vain.

---

**Unmistakable Success** - What would you think of a baseball player who played seven seasons without hitting the ball in fair territory? One of the best players of all time, Mickey Mantle, did the equivalent of that. His walks and strikeouts add up to more than 3,400 trips to the plate—seven seasons' worth.

Or what would you think of an inventor who failed hundreds of times in his experiments? Thomas Edison, perhaps the greatest inventor in American history, spent many long months failing before he found a filament that would stay lit in his incandescent light.

The lesson behind these experiences is clear: We have to look beyond failures and keep persevering.

I can't think of a better example of someone who persevered despite apparent failure than the apostle Paul. His list of failures would lead most of us to quit. For one, the people in a church he founded in Corinth stumbled badly. For another, he went to prison numerous times. Throw in the shipwrecks, beatings, and betrayals (2Co 11:23, 24, 25, 26 27), and you could have a picture of defeat. Yet Paul's ministry is remembered for its unmistakable success.

Let's learn to look past our failures. **Because of God's mercy, we need not lose heart** (2Co 4:1). - May 20, 1996 — by Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Success is failure turned inside out—  
The silver tint of clouds of doubt,  
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—  
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit. —Piggott

Success often rises out of the ashes of failure.

---

**Are You Weary?** - I read a story about a pastor of a small, rural church in Scotland. He had been forced out by his elders, who claimed they saw no fruit from his ministry. The village in which the pastor served was a difficult place. People's hearts were cold and hostile to the truth. During the time the pastor served, there had been no conversions and no baptisms. But he did recall one positive response to his preaching.

When the offering plate was passed during a service, a young boy placed the plate on the floor, stood up, and stepped into it. When asked to explain, he replied that he had been deeply touched by the minister's life, and while he had no money to give he wanted to give himself wholly to God.

The boy who stepped into the plate was Bobby Moffat, who in 1817 became a pioneer missionary to South Africa. He was greatly used of God to touch many lives. And it all started with that small church and the faithful work of that unappreciated pastor.

Perhaps you see no fruit from your work for the Lord. Remain faithful! Do not lose heart, but ask God to strengthen you with His



power (2Corinthians 4:1,7). In His time and in His way, He will produce a harvest if you do not give up (Galatians 6:9). September 15, 2003 — by David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Keep me faithful, keep me grateful,  
This my earnest plea each day!  
Keep me serving, keep me telling  
Of His love while yet I may!  
—Thiesen

### **A fruitful harvest requires faithful service.**

---

**Paul Apple** - PREPARATION SKIT: Here is a simple skit to introduce today's topic .. with apologies to C.S. Lewis – The Screwtape Letters --

**The Setting:** Satan's war room – He is discussing his battle plans with his top advisors –

**The Topic:** How to stop the rapid growth of the first century church

**The Strategy:** Get the Apostolic Leaders ... especially the Apostle Paul who has proven really effective ... to quit the ministry

**Satan:** I think we have the right strategy ... Jesus might have made a huge blunder ... all that time He spent in ministry and He only developed 11 key leaders to kick off his church ... It's easy to see where we need to attack ... it was good we got our mitts on Judas and had an inside mole ... at least we could track what was being planned

**Demon 1:** Yeah, boss ... but what about that Saul guy .... He came out of the blue ... really surprised us ... and look at how effective he's been ... I thought he was going to be a big time player for us ... He had that persecution thing down real good ... the disciples were so shook up they had a hard time believing he had flipped!

**Satan:** That WAS a shocker ... but if he quit on us maybe we can make him quit on Jesus, too ... maybe he just doesn't have the perseverance to hang in there when things get tough ... We have to figure out how to discourage him and make him back off his ministry .. We could just let him burn out on his own ... a lot of people start off a ball of fire and just fizzle out after awhile .. but he's too strategic a leader for us to leave alone ... we need to go after him aggressively

**Demon 2:** I don't know if that's going to work ... we've already shot a lot of our best ammunition at him ... Remember what we've tried already?? - The prison deal is usually a good tactic for educated folks like Paul ... they don't usually like being locked up with the riff raff of society ... but he keeps turning it into another episode of "Unshackled" ... preaching the gospel and sending out missionaries like prison is their home church .. plus all that singing and worship time ... we were losing some of our best people ... That Prison Fellowship Ministries has been a real pain in our side

**Demon 3:** That's why we decided to get physical with him - The Jews didn't need much encouragement to haul him into the synagogue and administer their Friday night special = 39 lashes .. but it didn't seem to phase him ... I thought we finally had him with that stoning incident ... but somehow he lived through

**Satan:** What are his weak points ... What scares him the most ... We need to do some more research and discover his Achilles heel

**Demon 4:** We had a source that told us he was deathly afraid of the water ... so we had him shipwrecked three times ... but it turns out he was an undercover lifeguard ... no problems there ... we ditched that source ...

**Demon 5:** We found somebody else who had heard that he was terrified of snakes ... but that didn't seem to bother him either. . . he just shook it off . . . the natives ended up thinking he was a god ... I don't know what to try??

**Satan:** We've been going about this all wrong ... He just gets stronger when he faces obvious evil ... We need a more subtle approach ... one that will sneak up on him and hurt him from the inside ... Let's plant some false disciples and attack him from inside the church... We will use some real leader types ... guys with a lot of charisma and speaking ability ... guys that are very persuasive ... maybe some lawyers that we have sitting around just trying to get those Christians to sue one another and divorce one another

**Demon 1:** But how can they say anything against Paul that the church would believe?? He's beyond reproach ... his character is well known ...

**Satan:** Let's infiltrate that Corinthian group ... they have a lot of immature believers ... it seems they argue among themselves about everything ... For a lot of them, Paul's not even their favorite speaker ... Here's our plan

- 1) First, We will attack Paul's character by saying that he is trying to profit by building up a kingdom for himself – at least the city government workers should understand what we're saying
- 2) Secondly, we will attack his message – you know he keeps talking about that grace stuff like you don't have to follow Moses and the law and you can live however you please .... We can really go after him there – We'll call our legalistic message the gospel as well and use a lot of the same terminology ... that should confuse them
- 3) Thirdly, we will accuse him of not being very productive or effective – I know some specific examples where he preached for an hour and no converts at all ... that doesn't look good for him
- 4) Finally, let's question his fitness to be an apostle – we'll have our guys claim to be apostles as well and muddy the waters – how can you tell the true from the false .. it will be just as easy as our campaign last year to pass off counterfeit denarii .. we made a mint off that scheme

That should finally discourage him ... imagine all that sacrifice he's made and now he has his own people turning against him and questioning his authority ... Why wouldn't he just throw in the towel and give up the fight???

**2 Corinthians 4:2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ([NASB: Lockman](#))**

**Greek** : alla apeipametha (1PAMI) ta krupta tes aischunes, me peripatountes (PAPMPN) en panourgia mede dolountes (PAPMPN) ton logon tou theou, alla te phanerosei tes aletheias sunistanontes (PAPMPN) heautous pros pasan suneidesin anthropon enopion tou theou.

**Amplified**: We have renounced disgraceful ways (secret thoughts, feelings, desires and underhandedness, the methods and arts that men hide through shame); we refuse to deal craftily (to practice trickery and cunning) or to adulterate or handle dishonestly the Word of God, but we state the truth openly (clearly and candidly). And so we commend ourselves in the sight and presence of God to every man's conscience. ([Lockman](#))

**Barclay**: But we have refused to have anything to do with hidden and shameful methods. We do not act with unscrupulous cleverness. We do not adulterate the word which God gave us to preach. But by making the truth clear, we commend ourselves to the human conscience in all its forms in the sight of God. ([Westminster Press](#))

**God's Word**: Instead, we have refused to use secret and shameful ways. We don't use tricks, and we don't distort God's word. As God watches, we clearly reveal the truth to everyone. This is our <letter of> recommendation. ([GWT](#))

**Easy English**: We do not do things in secret and evil ways. We do not try to make people believe lies. We do not give a false meaning to the word of God. The opposite is true. We tell the truth clearly. We know that God sees everything. He sees everything that we do. Therefore, we live in a way that is attractive to everyone's conscience.

**ESV**: But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ([ESV](#))

**KJV**: But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

**NET**: But we have rejected shameful hidden deeds, not behaving with deceptiveness or distorting the word of God, but by open proclamation of the truth we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience before God. ([NET Bible](#))

**NIV**: Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ([NIV - IBS](#))

**NLT:** We reject all shameful deeds and underhanded methods. We don't try to trick anyone or distort the word of God. We tell the truth before God, and all who are honest know this. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** We use no hocus-pocus, no clever tricks, no dishonest manipulation of the Word of God. We speak the plain truth and so commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Weymouth:** Nay, we have renounced the secrecy which marks a feeling of shame. We practice no cunning tricks, nor do we adulterate God's Message. But by a full clear statement of the truth we strive to commend ourselves in the presence of God to every human conscience.

**Wuest:** but we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not ordering the manner of our lives in the sphere of craftiness, nor even adulterating the word of God [by an admixture of error], but by means of an open declaration of the truth commending ourselves to every variety of the conscience of men in the sight of God. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Young's Literal:** but did renounce for ourselves the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness, nor deceitfully using the word of God, but by the manifestation of the truth recommending ourselves unto every conscience of men, before God;

- **renounced:** 1Co 4:5
- **shame,** Ro 1:16 6:21 Eph 5:12
- **not:** 2Co 1:12 2:17 11:3,6,13-15 Eph 4:14 1Th 2:3-5
- **by:** 2Co 5:11 6:4-7 7:14
- 2 Corinthians 4 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:** Paul had fended off previous attacks at his character and integrity...

2 Corinthians 1:17+ Therefore, I was not vacillating when I intended to do this, was I? Or what I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, so that with me there will be yes, yes and no, no at the same time?

2 Corinthians 2:17+ For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

2 Corinthians 3:1+ Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you?



## **NO HOCUS POCUS PERMITTED OR PRACTICED!**

**Phillips** has a pithy summary of the three ministerial perversions Paul staunchly disavows "We use no hocus-pocus, no clever tricks, no dishonest manipulation of the Word of God."

**But (alla)** uses this conjunction to sound a strong **contrast** between God's ministry in and through him and the false ministers that had infiltrated the church at Corinth.

**Paul Apple** prefaces Paul's remarks with the statement that "standing up with transparent integrity is the ultimate safeguard. Couple this with Paul's Aggressive Opposition to Deceit and Marketing Manipulation

**We have renounced the things hidden ([kruptos](#)) because of shame - Amplified** = "We have renounced disgraceful ways (secret thoughts, feelings, desires and underhandedness, the methods and arts that men hide through shame); we refuse to deal craftily (to practice trickery and cunning) or to adulterate or handle dishonestly the Word of God." Paul is saying he is not hiding anything in his ministry, that nothing is veiled. **Have renounced** is aorist tense, a so-called "timeless aorist" (A T Robertson) which pictures this as a once and forever repudiation by Paul. **Hidden because of shame** is more literally "***the hidden things of shame***". Paul is referring to those things that are done only under cover with the fear of shame if exposed.

**Barclay** points out that Paul's "enemies had leveled three charges against him. They had said that he used underhand methods, that he exercised an unscrupulous cleverness to get his own way, and that he adulterated the message of the gospel. ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

**Adulterating** is present tense picturing their falsification as an ongoing process, an apt description of false teachers, for even when they present the truth as Peter writes the "**secretly introduce destructive heresies**" (2Pe 2:1+), where the verb *pareisago* accurately describes their method of bringing in deadly error alongside the truth. This always reminds of the U S Treasury department's method of training their agents to recognize counterfeit \$20 bills by having them intensely study real \$20 bills.

**Bob Utley** - "we have renounced" This is AORIST MIDDLE INDICATIVE. There is a series of things which Paul personally refused to use in his own ministry: (1) underhanded means; (2) disgraceful methods; (3) cunning; (4) tampering with or watering down God's message. Each of these methods reflect the false teachers' charges or their actions....In this context the phrase seems to describe the methodology of the itinerant false teachers. ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

**Charles Hodge** adds that what Paul denies of himself he affirms of the false teachers, their "lack of openness, adopting secret methods to achieve their ends, which they would be ashamed to admit openly." ([2 Corinthians Commentary](#))

**David Lowery** writes that "Already he had adroitly parried the attacks of his accusers several times in the letter (e.g., 2Co 1:17; 2:17; 3:1), but he felt forced to do so again (e.g., 2Co 6:3; 7:3; 2Co 10:1-13:14). ([Bible Knowledge Commentary](#))

**Murray J Harris** adds that "Evidently he had been accused of deceitful behavior (cf. 2Co 7:2; 12:16). This he emphatically rejects. The openness marking the new covenant had always been reflected in his conduct. His tactics had never been secretive or deceptive, nor had he ever dishonestly manipulated the message of God entrusted to him. ([Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Broomall** - The decisive act, renounced, is explained by two negative concomitants: (1) **not walking in craftiness**; (2) **nor handling the word of God deceitfully**. The resultant life is described according to its (1) means—**by the manifestation of the truth**; (2) method—**commending ourselves to every man's conscience**; (3) measure—**in the sight of God**. Christians should renounce (as here), repudiate (cf. 2Co 6:14-17), and reprove ( Cf. Eph 5:11) the hidden things of shame (ASV; Cf. Ro 6:21; 1Co 4:5). ([Wycliffe Bible Commentary - 2 Corinthians 4](#))

**UBS Handbook** explains that "The words "of **shame**" characterize those things that are hidden; they are "secret and shameful deeds." More specifically, does Paul mean that the people who do such deeds are, in fact, ashamed of their deeds? (Revised English Bible "the deeds that people hide for very shame.") Or does he mean that they should be ashamed and are not? Either is possible, but the majority opinion seems to be that the practices were "so shameful that they have to be kept hidden" ([Barclay](#)). ([United Bible Societies' New Testament Handbook Series](#))

**J H Bernard** - the hidden things of shame; cf. Ro 13:12, Eph. 4:22. The stress is on *ta krupta* (the hidden); it is the openness and candor of his ministry on which he insists (cf. John 3:20). ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

**Henry Alford** adds that the meaning here is that "The having any views, ends or practices which, such as have them, hide through shame...Shame is subjective, meaning fear arising from expectation of exposure. It is plain from the **context** that it refers, not to crimes and unholy practices, but to crooked arts, of which men are ashamed, and which perhaps were made use of by the false teachers ([The New Testament for English Readers](#)).

**Renounced** (550) (*apeipomen* from *apó* = from + *eipon* <> *épo* = speak) literally means to speak off or to speak out (against) and so to refuse, deny, denounce, renounce, spurn, disown with aversion. Found only here in the NT. Expresses strong disapproval of something with the idea of "distancing" one's self from the thing denounced or renounced. **Renounce** (English definitions) to give up, refuse, or resign usually by formal declaration. To refuse to follow, obey, or recognize any further. To disown; to disclaim; to reject; as a title or claim; to refuse to own or acknowledge as belonging to as to renounce a title to land or a claim to reward; to renounce all pretensions to applause. To renounce allegiance. To cast off or reject as a possession; to forsake. Four uses in the Septuagint - 1 Ki. 11:2; Job 6:14; Job 10:3; Zech. 11:12

**Hidden** (2927) (*kruptos* from *krupto* = keep secret; English ~ cryptic, etc) means concealed, secret, hidden either to protect it or for self-serving purposes. **Krupto** describes something that is unknown because it is being kept secret or hidden. **Liddell-Scott** give an example of a secular use of *kruptos* -- "a trench covered and concealed by planks and earth". Giving and praying are to be done in secret (Mt 6:4, Mt 6:6) for God sees all things and there is nothing hidden from Him so that all things will one day be brought to the light by Him (Mt 10:26 Mk 4:22 Lk 8:17 Lk 12:2 1Co 4:5). **Kruptos** conveys the idea of *privately* in Jn 7:4, 10, 18:20. **Kruptos** describes the "*secrets*" of men's hearts (Ro 2:16, 1Co 14:25). "The hidden person of the heart" in 1Pe 3:4 which Wuest explains is "*the personality of the Christian woman as made beautiful by the ministry of the Holy*

*Spirit in glorifying the Lord Jesus and manifesting Him in and through her life.*"([Wuest Word Studies - Erdman Publishing Company Volume 1, Volume 2, Volume 3](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Krupto** - 17x in 15v in **NAS** - Mt 6:4, 6; 10:26 Mk 4:22 Lk 8:17; 12:2 Jn 7:4, 10; 18:20 Ro 2:16, 29 1Co 4:5 14:25 2Co 4:2 1Pe 3:4. **NAS** = hidden(5), inwardly(1), secret(7), secrets(2), things hidden(2).

**Shame** (152) (**aischune** from **aischos** = shame, disfigurement, disgrace) means shame resulting from exposure of sin for example. Paul is describing that which brings humiliating disgrace or disrepute. The idea is one acts in defiance of social and moral standards, with resulting disgrace, embarrassment, and shame. **Zodhiates** has 3 sense - (1) Subjectively meaning a sense of shame resulting from exposure of one's weaknesses or sins. It is that feeling which leads one to shun what is unworthy out of the prospect and anticipation of dishonor, fear of disgrace (Luke 14:9) (2) Objectively meaning disgrace, reproach (Heb. 12:2; Sept.: Job 8:22; Ps. 69:20; Is. 50:6). (3) Cause of shame, i.e., a shameful thing or action, disgraceful conduct. Hidden things of shame, clandestine conduct of which the disciples of Christ should be ashamed (2 Cor. 4:2). See also Phil. 3:19; Heb. 12:2; Jude 1:13. "Shameful nakedness" (Rev. 3:18 [a.t.]). See also Sept.: 1 Sam. 20:30. In **Classic Greek** - "Shame, dishonor, and disgrace" are all valid translations of *aischunē* in classical Greek (cf. the verb *aischunō* [152]). Shame can be a result of some act done to or by someone. It may also be used of a "feeling of shame" **Webster's 1828** on **shame** - A painful sensation excited by a consciousness of guilt, or of having done something which injures reputation; or by the exposure of that which nature or modesty prompts us to conceal. Shame is particularly excited by the disclosure of actions which, in the view of men, are mean and degrading. Hence it is often or always manifested by a downcast look or by blushes, called confusion of face.

**Aischune** - 6x in 6v in **NAS** - Luke 14:9; 2 Cor 4:2; Phil 3:19; Heb 12:2; Jude 1:13; Rev 3:18. **NAS** = disgrace(1), shame(5).

**MacDonald** - Here doubtless the apostle is thinking once again of the false teachers who had come into the Corinthian church. Their methods were the same as are always used by forces of evil, namely, shameful enticements to sin, crafty juggling of the truth, use of tricky arguments, and adulteration of the word of God. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Not walking (peripateo) in craftiness (panourgia) or adulterating (doloo) the word of God - Amplified** = "We have renounced disgraceful ways (secret thoughts, feelings, desires and underhandedness, the methods and arts that men hide through shame); we refuse to deal craftily (to practice trickery and cunning) or to adulterate or handle dishonestly the Word of God." Paul is saying he is not hiding anything in his ministry, that nothing is veiled. Paul is saying that he scrupulously avoids clever manipulation of words so that error is made to look like truth (cp Ep 4:14-+). He is well aware of the fact that there are those who do practice **panourgia**, using subtle sophistries and specious statements because they are willing to do anything to achieve their unscrupulousness goals (to them this "end justifies the means" regardless of cunning the means are.)

**Paul Apple** describes three possible groups who are **walking in craftiness** - (1) Gospel Charlatans – deceivers = pretending to be other than what they are (2) Gospel Politicians = men-pleasers; hidden agendas No convictions (3) Gospel Manipulators = playing on emotions....Twisting the meaning; taking it out of context - Adding to the Scriptures - Subtracting from the Scriptures

**Ray Stedman** - I am always amazed at how up-to-date the Scriptures seem. You would think that Paul had just been listening to some Christian radio broadcasts, or television programs, when he wrote this. Evidently there were people in his day, preaching in churches and evangelizing, who were practicing disgraceful, underhanded ways. They were relying on cunning approaches and even tampering with the Word of God. Paul says, "I have given all that up," (if he ever did it). "Seeing other people do this, I want nothing to do with it." . . . Notice particularly what this consists of, because this speaks to our own time. First, he says, "I have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways," that is, the practice of deliberate deceit. . . Paul says he refuses to practice cunning. Now what does that mean? Well, it means to rely on some psychological trick played on people to get them to respond, some intense pressure tactic in a meeting, perhaps beautiful seductive music to get them to give way, telling stories that bring tears to people's eyes, playing upon their emotions, this kind of thing. Paul says, "We don't need any of this any longer. We don't rely upon that." In our day it is largely a matter of going in for Christian showmanship, seeing who can put on the biggest spectacle to attract people to come in by hiring a special band or getting trapeze artists to come and put on a show, etc., Paul says we do not rely on those kinds of things anymore. ([2 Corinthians 4:1-6 Nothing But the Truth](#))

**Not walking in** - Not living, not behaving, not conducting oneself. **Walking** is in the present tense implying the false teachers were continually walking in craftiness, etc. The preposition "in" (*en*) means *in the sphere of* (it's like a fish in a fish bowl - he lives *in the sphere of* the water that fish bowl - see locative of sphere). **Wuest** translates it as Paul saying we are "not ordering the manner of our lives in the sphere of craftiness", as were the false teachers. **UBS Handbook** "To walk" is an Old Testament expression that means "to conduct oneself" or "to behave in a certain manner." (Ibid)



**Kent Hughes** adds that **craftiness** ([panourgia](#)) is "a cunning readiness to adopt any device or trickery for the achievement of ends which are anything but altruistic (unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others)...I once received an expensive brochure that featured eight separate pictures of a self-styled "evangelist" designed to instill confidence in his power. It featured photos of him praying by a waterfall and praying with his hands on a pile of letters asking for prayer. Another photo showed him holding a baby. In another he was shaking the hand of a poor man. But what really got my attention was the offer of a specially blessed handkerchief that had been dipped in the Jordan River and that, if prayerfully applied, would bring healing. The cost? About twenty-five dollars in today's economy. Such conduct was anathema to Paul. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word.](#))

**Charles Swindoll** - "Like supermarket cereal, when Christianity is brightly packaged & sugarcoated & enticingly offers free prizes on the inside, we fail to see the fine print on the side of the box. And so we never know about all the empty calories we've eaten...or realize how malnourished we've become."

**HCSB Study Bible:** False teachers are recognized both by wrong motives (**deceit**) and the wrong message (**distorting**). True teachers are recognized by true motives and by "the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all" (Jude 1:3). There is no secret tier of truth reserved only for those who have been initiated into its secrets. ([HCSB Study Bible](#))

Satan's [modus operandi](#) has not changed that much since the Garden of Eden (cf Ge 3:1-4, 13+) so we do well to remain on "high alert" (1Pe 5:8+ cf 2Co 2:11 "*we are not ignorant of his schemes*") for his nefarious schemes. As Moses declared "the serpent was (still is) more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made" (Ge 3:1).

**Utley** - Paul uses this same word (1) in a quote from Job 5:13 referring to human wisdom (cf. 1 Cor. 3:19); (2) of Satan tempting Eve (cf. 2 Cor. 11:3); (3) of the trickery of Satan and the false teachers (cf. Eph. 4:14); and (4) here of the methods of false teachers ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

**Barnes** writes that "Truth never needs such arts ([panourgia](#)); and no cause will long succeed by mere trick and cunning." ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

**A W Pink** comments that "The ministers of the New Covenant are described as those who had "renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness." Christendom today is infested with men who are full of deceit and hypocrisy, trimming their sails according to whatever direction the breeze of public opinion is blowing. "Nor handling the Word of God deceitfully" (2Co 4:2). The true servant of Christ holds back nothing that is profitable, no matter how unpalatable it may be unto his hearers. He is one who does not magnify himself, nor his denomination—but Christ—His wondrous Person, His atoning blood, His exacting claims. ([Ministerial Thieves](#))

**Paul** passed on the unadulterated **Word of God** to the saints, writing in his first epistle...

For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you (1Co 11:23a)

**Comment:** What Paul heard, Paul preached, in purity and in power! How can we who preach and teach do any less in a day when God and His Word and prayer to Him are being systematically extracted from the heart of "*In God we trust*" America which is reaping the consequences of this evil seed in the form of a rapidly crumbling social fabric much like the days of the Judges (Jdg 21:25+). We must become like the psalmist and cry out "**My soul cleaves to the dust. Revive me according to Thy Word.**" (Ps 119:25+)

**William Barclay** explains that...We best get the meaning of this from the corresponding verb (doloun).**Doloun** has two characteristic usages. It is used of debasing precious metals and of adulterating wines. **Dolos** is deceit; it describes the quality of the man who has a tortuous and a twisted mind, who cannot act in a straightforward way, who stoops to devious and underhand methods to get his own way, who never does anything except with some kind of ulterior motive. It describes the crafty cunning of the plotting intriguer who is found in every community and every society." In another writing Barclay explains that **dolos** can be translated "guile" and that "It comes from a word which means **bait**; it is used for trickery and deceit. It is used for instance of **amousetrap**. When the Greeks were besieging Troy and could not gain entry, they sent the Trojans the present of a great wooden horse, as if it was a token of good will. The Trojans opened their gates and took it in. But the horse was filled with Greeks who in the night broke out and dealt death and devastation to Troy. That exactly is **dolos**. It is crafty, cunning, deceitful, clever treachery. **Dolos** is the trickery of the man who is out to deceive others to attain his own ends, the vice of the man whose motives are never pure. ([Daily Study Bible](#))

Paul says I do not corrupt, debase, or make impure the **precious** (Ps 19:10+, Ps 119:72+, Ps 119:127+, Job 23:12+), **persisting** (Eternal - Mt 24:35 5:18+), **powerful** (Lk 1:37ASV+) **Word of God** by adding any genre of foreign or inferior elements!

**THOUGHT** - Is your "porch" bigger than your "house?" Dear preacher of the Word may I ask you a question? How much time do you devote to introducing your message each Sunday, before you begin to preach the Word ("the porch")? I routinely encounter sermons where from one quarter to one third of the "sermon" time is

allocated to introductory illustrations calculated to make the Word more "authentic". Beloved, that is too long. The Word is authentic. I am not against salient, short introductions and illustrations, but when they begin to "cut in" on the time of the pure milk of God's Word then frankly the saints are being short changed and will likely walk away unsatisfied for only the Word brings genuine soul satisfaction. Personal stories and cute illustrations may generate an emotional response, but ultimately they only tickle the ears (2Ti 4:3,4+) and produce "spiritual children" who are vulnerable to being tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (Ep 4:14+). God's Words through His prophet Jeremiah are relevant to much of the fare being offered from modern pulpits...

Thus says the LORD, "**Stand** by the ways and **see** and **ask** (= **3 commands**) for the **ancient paths** (cp Dt 32:7) where the **good way** is, and walk in it and you shall find **rest for your souls**. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.' (Jer 6:16)

For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me (Je 18:15), the Fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves **cisterns, broken cisterns**, that can hold no water. (Jer 2:13)

**Guzik** comments that...Many preachers fail on this exact point. They have the true gospel, but they **add** to it things of **human ingenuity and wisdom**. Often, they add these corrupting or diluting things to the gospel because they think it will make the gospel more effective or give it a greater hearing. They are doing what Paul insisted he would never do -- handling the word of God deceitfully. ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

**C H Spurgeon** addressed the age old tendency of preachers to change the words of the clear Gospel message in order to make it more "seeker friendly" or hip or acceptable ("culturally relevant") writing that "Certain divines tell us that they must adapt truth to the advance of the age, which means that they must murder it and fling its dead body to the dogs...which simply means that a popular lie shall take the place of an offensive truth."

**John Calvin** is quite blunt writing "For just as chaste and honorable women are content with the gracefulness of natural beauty and do not resort to artificial adornments, whereas harlots never think themselves well adorned until they have corrupted nature, so too Paul's boast is that he has set forth the pure Gospel whereas others have offered a counterfeit Gospel decked out with unworthy additions." ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

Earlier **Paul** had written...

we are not like many, **peddling** (profiteering, adulterating for personal gain) the **word of God**, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God. (2Co 2:17)

**Paul** gives us a wonderful "definition" of the unadulterated **Word** and its **work** (efficacy) in men...

And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the **word of God's message**, you **accepted** it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the **word of God**, which also (present tense = continually) **performs its work** (energeō - energetic, efficient, effectual, efficacious!) in you who believe. (1Th 2:13+)

**Kent Hughes** has some sobering thoughts on how even evangelical preachers "**tamper with the Word of God**" noting that instead of actually cutting out the Bible as crass liberal preachers are prone to do...

it is far more common for the evangelical preacher to "edit" (**Ed**: *Edit* = to alter, adapt, or refine especially to bring about conformity to a standard or to suit a particular purpose!) God's Word:

(1) by removing the text from its **context**, (**Ed**: Context must be "*king*" in order to arrive at accurate **Interpretation** - see example of **danger of misinterpretation**) and using it to say whatever the preacher likes (**Ed**: See example of the mishandling Pr 29:18-discussion),

(2) by moralizing the text, so that it is reduced to an ethical maxim that fits any religion,

(3) by using the text to promote hobbyhorses (**Ed**: a topic to which one constantly reverts, a favorite object of pursuit), and

(4) by dogmatic insistence that the text says things it does not truly say. This homiletical hocus-pocus has subtle roots such as the **desire to be clever and popular** or **synthetically relevant** or **intellectually respectable** or **to make the gospel more acceptable**.

**But most often God's Word  
gets watered down by the preacher's laziness.**

He simply will not do the hard work to engage and preach a text in its **context**. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word](#)) (Bolding and italics added)

**Comment:** How many hours [or perhaps minutes!] does it take for you to prepare your message for Sunday? You are under grace, not legalism and so there is no gold standard given in Scripture, but I have heard that Dr John MacArthur routinely sets aside 20+ hours to prepare his messages. And we can certainly see the fruit of his bountiful sowing! (Remember 2Co 5:9+, 2Co 5:10+)

**John MacArthur** ([2Corinthians](#)) emphasizes how important it is that pastors and bible teachers constantly strive to derive...the right message from the right passage. Don't "proof text" your bias or opinions by making the Bible say what you already know you want it to say...like the guy who said, "*I've already got a sermon; I just have to find a verse for it*" That's having a preconceived idea and then getting some verses to support it...so there are three errors to avoid...

**Don't make a point at the price of a proper interpretation**  
**Avoid a superficial interpretation**  
**Don't spiritualize.**

**Warren Wiersbe** cautions all of us who handle the **Word Truth** to strive to rightly divide it (2Ti 2:15+) ...

We must never divorce one part of Scripture from another, but we must always "compare spiritual things with spiritual" (1Co 2:13). We can prove almost anything by the Bible if we isolate texts from the **contexts** and turn them into **pretexts**...

You can prove anything by the Bible, provided you twist the Scriptures **out of context** and reject the witness of your own conscience. The Bible is a book of literature and it must be interpreted according to the fundamental rules of interpretation. If people treated other books the way they treat the Bible, they would never learn anything....

Most heresies are the perversion of some fundamental doctrine of the Bible. False teachers take verses out of **context**, twist the Scriptures, and manufacture doctrines that are contrary to the Word of God. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**The Word of God** - This phrase occurs 47x in 46v in the NAS - 1 Sam 9:27; 2 Sam 16:23; 1 Kgs 12:22; 1 Chr 17:3; Pr 30:5; Mt 15:6; Mark 7:13; Luke 3:2; 5:1; 8:11, 21; 11:28; John 10:35; Acts 4:31; 6:2, 7; 8:14; 11:1; 13:5, 7, 46; 17:13; 18:11; Rom 9:6; 1 Cor 14:36; 2 Cor 2:17; 4:2; Eph 6:17; Phil 1:14; Col 1:25; 1 Thess 2:13; 1 Tim 4:5; 2 Tim 2:9; Titus 2:5; Heb 4:12; 6:5; 11:3; 13:7; 1 Pet 1:23; 2 Pet 3:5; 1 John 2:14; Rev 1:2, 9; 6:9; 19:13; 20:4

#### **Related Resources:**

- Click Scriptural Descriptions of the Word of God
- Inductive Study on the Power of the Word of God

**Walking** ([4043](#))(**peripateo** from **peri** = about, around + **pateo** = walk, tread) means literally to walk around, to go here and there in walking, to tread all around. The 39 uses in the Gospels always refer to literal, physical walking. Seven of the 8 uses in Acts are also in the literal sense (except Acts 21:21). (See Spurgeon's comments on what it means *to walk*) Paul uses **peripateo** only in the metaphorical sense (32 times in his Epistles) meaning to conduct one's life, to order one's behavior, to behave, to make one's way, to make due use of opportunities, to live or pass one's life (with a connotation of spending some time in a place).

**Craftiness** ([3834](#))(**panourgia** from **pas** = all + **ergon** = work) is literally "all working" or capable of all work. In the NT **panourgia** takes on a negative meaning and conveys the ideas of trickery involving evil cunning, cleverness, craftiness, shrewdness, craft or treachery. The idea of "all work" depicts these unscrupulous individuals as willing to stoop to any trick and go the limit! A crafty person is marked by subtlety and guile and is adept in the use of cunning. Beware! (see Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders - Acts 20:28).

**NIDNTT** has the following note regarding the classic use of **panourgia**..."Its first appearance is in Aeschylus; and from then on in secular Greek its connotation is most commonly pejorative, an unprincipled "capable of doing anything" (e.g. Aristotle, Lysias). Even as a divine attribute (in Euripides, Artemis applies it to Aphrodite) the connotation is negative. In the few instances where the word bears a positive sense, there is a hint of presumption or perhaps deceptive evaluation (Plato, Plutarch). It is possible that the positive ability implicit in the etymology of the word group never got off the ground

because in Gk. thought the very idea of such ability is indicative of an arrogance which soon tinges the panourgia with undesirable characteristics. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology](#))

Here are uses of **panourgia**...(Lk. 20:23; 1 Co. 3:19; 2 Co. 4:2; 2 Co. 11:3; Eph. 4:14)

Lk 20:23+ But He (Jesus) detected their **trickery** and said to them, (The scribes and the chief priests are guilty of "trickery" in their question to Jesus)

1Co 3:19+ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God. For it is written, "He is the one who catches the wise in their **craftiness**";

2Co 11:3+ But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived (beguiled her thoroughly, seduced her wholly, led her astray - see **exapatao**) Eve by his **craftiness (panourgia)**, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Paul explains that one of the sought after effects of **panourgia** is to deceive the listener even as Satan deceived Eve (Ge 3:13+)...

Eph 4:14+ As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine (Thus the vital importance of the ministry described in Ep 4:11+ - if we are preaching and teaching with stories and humor rather than the Word of Truth, we are failing to arm the disciples to be able to discern Satan's subtle errors and lies. Remember that Satan wages war in the mind and the battle is for truth! Preach the Word! 2Ti 4:2+), by the **trickery** of men, by **craftiness** (panourgia) in deceitful scheming;

**Adulterating (1389)** (**doloo** from **dolos** which is derived from **delo** meaning to bait or to catch with bait) is used only here in the NT and means to use deceit, to bait, to ensnare, to corrupt with error, to distort, to falsify. The idea is changing something to cause it be false (even while it appears to be "true"!). The goal is to beguile, to ensnare or to take by craft. It's like adding a touch of arsenic to pure, life giving water - now it is deadly poison! **Doloo** was used in secular Greek to describe the dishonest practice of adulterating wine with water. Here Paul is saying in essence "*I don't water down the Word of Truth with half truths, funny stories, inappropriate language* (which is sadly becoming all too accepted in modern, "hip", "authentic" evangelicalism!)"

It is worth noting that the root word **dolos** literally refers to a fishhook, trap, or trick -- all of which are various "instruments" of deception. **Dolos** is a deliberate attempt to mislead, trick, snare or "bait" (baiting the trap in attempt to "catch" the unwary victim), in this case the bait being lies that are spoken that are counter to the Word of Truth (cp Jn 8:44, 2Co 11:13 14 15 2Pe 2:1+ 2Pe 2:2, 3+). **Dolos** reflects a desire to gain advantage or preserve one's position by deceiving others. A modern term in advertising is called "**bait and switch**" where the unwary consumer is lured in by what looks like a price too good to be true!

**Utley** adds **doloo** "and its related forms mean (1) watered down (cf. 2Co 2:17); (2) entrapped with bait (cf. Matt. 26:4; Mark 14:1); or (3) defrauded or deceived (cf. 2 Cor. 11:13; Rom. 3:13). It refers to a changing message based on the hearer's sensibilities or trying to trick the hearers (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23)." ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

**Word (3056)** (**logos** from **légō** = to speak with words; English = logic, logical) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind finds expression in words. The Words of the Bible express the mind of God.

**But (alla)** draws a marked **contrast** between negative portrait of the trickery and deceit of the false teachers and the positive picture of Paul's open presentation of the Word of Truth. This is a good reminder to all of us that the best "antidote" for false teaching is the Word of Truth. Remember that spiritual warfare is not so much a "**power**" struggle as it is a **truth** struggle.

**by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God** - ("*by plain statement of the truths of the Gospel in public preaching*" [Bernard](#)) **Amplified** = "but we state the truth openly (clearly and candidly). And so we commend ourselves in the sight and presence of God to every man's conscience." **Manifestation of** (the) **truth** means causing **truth** to be fully known by clearly revealing it and making it plain. By simple exhibition of the truth, stating it as it is, without "additives" (as with philosophies, traditions, etc, cp Col 2:8, 9+), not taking a text out of its **context**, etc. The fact that **truth** has the definite article preceding it (indicating Paul is referring to a specific body of truth) supports the premise that he is referring to **truth** of

the Gospel.

In the first letter to the Corinthians Paul emphasized his approach to ministry writing that "when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. (1 Co 2:1, 2+).

**Ritchie** makes an interesting statement regarding **the manifestation of truth** - Men intuitively recognize the truth. They do not need to be convinced of it. God has so constituted our consciences that we know truth when we hear it. When it is declared a sympathetic vibration is set up in side us. Truth does not really need to be proved to us. The reason people reject the truth is not that they do not sense it is true but because they choose to disbelieve. They would rather go their own way than respond to the truth. ([Ref](#))

**MacDonald - Manifestation of the truth** may take two forms. We manifest the truth when we tell it out in a plain, understandable manner. But we also manifest it when we live it in our lives before others so that they can see it by our example. Paul used both of these methods. He preached the gospel, and he obeyed the gospel in his own life. In doing so, he sought to commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Homer Kent:** One can imagine that certain criticisms of Paul may be alluded to here. Had Judaizing teachers accused him of omitting certain teachings regarding compliance with Mosaic rites? Were they accusing him of enticing Gentiles with a watered-down message of salvation at the outset, with the scheme in mind of adding the other essentials later? Paul's clear answer was that the Word of God had been handled in such a way as to display its truth to every open-minded listener. It had been taught not only for intellectual stimulation, but its moral and spiritual implications also had been clearly aimed at the conscience of each hearer. This in turn should have commended the preachers themselves to the conscience of every Corinthian as being faithful messengers of God. These words reflect no self-seeking on Paul's part, but rather were his solemn recognition that his ministry was carried on "in the sight of God," who not only was guiding his labors but also was enlightening the consciences of those who were open to His truth. How refreshing it would be if it could be said of every preacher that his chief commendation is his fidelity to the truth of God's Word and the impact which he makes on the consciences of his hearers. ([A Heart Opened Wide - Studies in 2 Corinthians](#); see also [2 Corinthians 2:14-4:18 The Glory of Christian Ministry - An Analysis](#))

**Utley** - The false teachers acted in shameful ways, secret ways, but Paul preached the full truth publicly. ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

**Barnes** adds...not by blunting its edge, or concealing anything, or explaining it away; but by an open, plain, straight-forward exhibition of it as it is in Jesus. Preaching should consist in a simple exhibition of the truth. There is no deceit in the gospel itself; and there should be none in the manner of exhibiting it. It should consist of a simple statement of things as they are. The whole design of preaching is to make known the truth. And this is done in an effectual manner only when it is simple, open, undisguised, without craft, and without deceit. ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

**Manifestation** (5321) (**phanerosis** from **phaneroo** = to make manifest) means a bringing to light or to full disclosure. ("the full light of truth") **Phanerosis** describes the full exhibition of any thing by clear evidence, disclosing what is otherwise unseen or obscure. Here it describes Paul's open proclamation of the Word of Truth which stands in marked contrast to the shameful practices that must be hidden. The only other NT use of this noun is 1Cor 12:7 describing spiritual gifts as "**the manifestation of the Spirit**".

**Truth** (225) (**aletheia** from **a** = indicates following word has the opposite meaning ~ without + **lanthano** = to be hidden or concealed, to escape notice) has the literal sense of that which contains nothing hidden, that which is not concealed so that it can be seen or expressed for what it really is. The basic understanding of **aletheia** is that it is the **manifestation** of a hidden reality. For example, when you are a witness in a trial, the court attendant says "*Raise your right hand. Do you swear that you will tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?*" And you say, "I do" and you sit down. The question the court attendant is asking is "*Are you willing to come into this courtroom and manifest something that is hidden to us that only you know so that you will bear evidence to that?*" Therefore when you speak the **truth**, you are manifesting a **hidden reality**. Does that make sense? An parallel example in Scripture is the case of the woman in the crowd who had touched Jesus (Read context = Mk 5:24-25, 26-27, 28-29, 30, 31-32), but when she became "*aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him the whole truth*" (Mk 5:33) and nothing but the truth. She did not lie. She spoke no falsehoods.

**Noah Webster** defined **truth** as "Conformity to fact or reality; exact accordance with that which is, or has been, or shall be." (1828 Dictionary)

**Truth** then is the correspondence between a **reality** and a declaration which professes to set forth or describe that **reality**. To say it another way, words spoken or written are true when they correspond with objective reality. Persons and things are true when they



correspond with their profession (which we describe with words like integrity, sincerity, non-hypocritical, etc). In other words, "what you see is what you get". Hence God's **Word of Truth** is His declaration which corresponds to reality in the visible and invisible world and for time and eternity. God's **Word of Truth** is the source and measure not only of all spiritual and moral truth but of all truth of any sort on which it speaks.

**Charles Spurgeon** wisely said that "The spotless purity of truth must always be at war with the blackness of heresy and lies."

**Utley on in the sight of God** - This seems to be an idiomatic phrase parallel to "God is my witness." Other Pauline texts also use this phrase in a similar way (cf. Gal. 1:20; 1 Ti 5:21; 6:13; 2Ti 2:14; 2Ti 4:1). Also notice Paul's oath formula in 2Co 1:23; 2Co 11:31; and 1Th 2:5, 10). ([2 Corinthians 4 Commentary](#))

**THE POWER OF THE WORD** - The renowned preacher C H Spurgeon once tested an auditorium in which he was to speak that evening. Stepping into the pulpit, he loudly proclaimed, "*Behold the lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world*" (Jn 1:29) Satisfied with the acoustics, he left and went his way. Unknown to him, there were two men working in the rafters of that large auditorium, neither one Christians. One of the men was pricked in his conscience by the verse Spurgeon quoted and became a believer later that day! Such is the penetrating power of God's eternal word! Little wonder that Paul is so insistent on our "preaching of the Word" (2Ti 4:2+)!

---

**The Heart Of The Gospel** - When E. Stanley Jones, well-known missionary to India, had the opportunity to meet with Mahatma Gandhi, he asked a searching question of India's revered leader: "How can Christianity make a stronger impact on your country?" Gandhi very thoughtfully replied that three things would be required.

**First**, Christians must begin to live more like Jesus. **Second**, the Christian faith should be presented without any adulteration. **Third**, Christians should emphasize love, which is at the heart of the gospel. (**Ed**: Gandhi would have liked to meet Paul who lived in a way that was open and attractive to every man's conscience.)

These insightful suggestions are the key to effective evangelism around the world. As messengers of God's love, we are to be human mirrors who reflect without distortion a growing likeness to our Lord; we are not to walk in "craftiness" (2Co 4:2). If our lives reflect an image that is spiritually blurred, the truth of saving grace may not be clearly communicated (2Co 4:3, 4, 5). We are also to share the biblical essentials of our faith clearly. We must not handle the Word of God "deceitfully" (2Co 4:2). And our lives are to be marked by love for God and others (1Jn 5:1, 2).

Let's be sure that we reflect a clear image of Jesus' likeness, the truth of God, and love. — by Vernon C. Grounds [Our Daily Bread](#). [Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Called to be salt and light in this world,  
Called to preserve and to shine,  
Called to reflect the glory of God—  
Oh, what a calling is mine!  
—Fitzhugh

**The primary reason for living in this world  
is to reflect the likeness of Christ to the world.**

---

**Truth** is like a "**bluegill**" **fish** in the "war of truth" incessantly being waged against God and His children by the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**...

San Francisco and New York City are using **bluegill fish** to check for the presence of toxins in their water supply, which could be a possible target for a terrorist attack. A small number of bluegills are kept in a tank at the bottom of some water treatment plants because the fish are sensitive to chemical imbalances in their environment. When a disturbance is present in the water, the bluegills react against it.

Like these bluegills, Paul wanted the Galatians to beware of and react against any toxic disturbance in the "true gospel" that was being preached. The toxin was defined as the false principle that God grants acceptance to people and considers them righteous on the basis of their obedience to a set of rules (especially circumcision and dietary laws). In short, obedience to the law was needed, apart from faith in Jesus. This false teaching was a **toxic disturbance of the truth** and the Galatians were told to react strongly against it. Paul said that anyone preaching a gospel that is not based on grace through faith in Christ alone should be accursed (Gal. 1:8, 9).

Let's faithfully study the Scriptures so we can detect the toxins of false teaching and proclaim the truth of God's

wonderful salvation through faith in Jesus. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, teach us from Your holy Word  
All error to discern,  
And by Your Spirit's light help us  
From Satan's snares to turn.  
—Bosch

**If you know the truth,  
you can discern what's false.**

---

**Commend ourselves** - Note Paul's use of the plural - not "*myself*" but "*ourselves*". Again he goes to great lengths to minimize any accusation of self adulation. The **present tense** indicates this is Paul's continual practice to present himself to men as an "open book". He has nothing to hide as do the false teachers.

**Commend** (4921) (**sunistemi/sunistao** from **sun/syn** = together with + **hístemi** = set, place, stand) means literally to set, place or put together. To bring together. When one brings together someone with another person, the idea of this verb is that it is a way of presenting or introducing them and this gives way to the meaning of **commend**, which means to recommend as worthy of notice, regard, kindness or confidence. When we commend someone we speak in favor of them, present them as worthy or recommend them. It is notable that more than 50% of the uses of **sunistemi** occur in 2Corinthians - 2Co 3:1 4:2 5:12 6:4 7:11 10:12,18 12:11.

**Barnes** comments on **commending ourselves to every man's conscience**...so speaking the truth that every man's conscience shall approve it as true; every man shall see it to be true, and to be in accordance with what he knows to be right. Conscience is that faculty of the mind which distinguishes between right and wrong, and which prompts us to choose the former and avoid the latter, Jn 8:9. ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

**Conscience** (4893) (**suneidesis** is derived from **sun/syn** = with + **eidō** = know) literally means a "knowing with", a co-knowledge with oneself or a being of one's own witness in the sense that one's own conscience "takes the stand" as the chief witness, testifying either to one's innocence or guilt. **Suneidesis** describes the process of thought which distinguishes what it considers morally good or bad, commending the good, condemning the bad. **Suneidesis** - Used 8x in the first letter to the Corinthians 1Co 8:7, 10, 12; 10:25, 27 28 29 (twice) and 3x in 2Co 1:12; 4:2; 5:11

Webster's 1828 Dictionary says **conscience** is "Internal or self-knowledge, or judgment of right and wrong; or the faculty, power or principle within us, which decides on the lawfulness or unlawfulness of our own actions and affections, and instantly approves or condemns them.

In this verse **Paul** presents himself to every man's **conscience** as one who has openly and accurately handled the Word of Truth.

The **conscience** of men who saw and heard Paul's ministry made an internal judgment of whether it was good or bad. Paul had no fear that he would be accused of any of the aspects he has just renounced, for he "knew that both his ministry and his message found approval in the **conscience** of every man, even if they would not admit it." ([Guzik](#))

**John MacArthur** adds that...All people, even those who have not heard the gospel, have an innate (though limited) knowledge of God's law. The preaching of the gospel activates the conscience, which bears witness to the truth of the message even in those who reject it. ([2Corinthians Commentary](#))

**UBS Handbook** adds that...Normally in the New Testament the word **conscience** refers to one's ability to know that one has done something wrong. Here and in 2Co 5.11 **conscience** is used of one's ability to decide on the rightness or wrongness of someone else's behavior. (Ibid)

**The Disciples Study Bible** writes that...The authority of any leader in the church derives from the leader's own devotion to live out God's Word. Leaders must plainly teach God's truth rather than human theories. Teaching must be backed by noble character. Christ gave us the example to follow (Jn 13:1-17).

**First**, the leader must know the Word.

**Second**, the leader must apply it to my own life.

**Third**, the leader must diligently study it in order to teach it.

**Fourth**, the leader must teach it correctly so that others will understand it.

(cp Ezra 7:10+)

Paul's ministry is carried out **Coram Deo**. The phrase **in the sight of** ([enopion](#) from **en** = in + **ops** = face) vividly pictures one serving in the face of God or in front of Him, doing what one does as if it is ever in His presence (which it is because of His omniscience of 2 Chr 16:9). **Coram Deo** - before the face of God **R C Sproul** discussion of [What Does Coram Deo Mean?](#)

**Paul's Coram Deo mindset** reminds me of Peter's exhortation to us as believers that..

if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, **conduct** (aorist imperative = Command to do this effectively. Don't delay. It is important, even urgent) yourselves in fear (reverential awe, shrinking from anything that might grieve your Father) during the time of your stay upon earth (Which in the perspective of eternity is barely a "*blip on the screen*" so to speak but it yields profit [1Ti 4:7, &+] or loss [1Co 3:12-15+] for every believer throughout eternity. May God teach us how to number our days wisely [Ps 90:12+, cp Ep 5:16+] and give us the strength to conduct ourselves circumspectly in Christ. Amen) (1Pe 1:17+)

**Paul's ministry** is "clear and clean" not only before the saints at Corinth but before the **Omniscient** God of the universe, an "Audience of One"! God is the "Onlooker". The One Who discerns, searches and tests our heart (**Study** - 1Sa 16:7 Jer 17:10 1Ki 8:39 1Chr 28:9 Ps 7:9 44:21 139:23,24 Pr 17:3 Jer 11:20 20:12 Ro 8:27 Rev 2:23).

**Hughes** writes that...There is a higher scrutiny than that of the human **conscience**: it is to God that every minister of the gospel is ultimately and eternally answerable. ([2 Corinthians: Power in Weakness. Preaching the Word](#))

Paul's adversaries and critics could hardly have accused him of arrogant self-commendation for not only was his ministry an "open book" to the consciences of all men, but more important he constantly conducted himself with a strong sense that God was continually watching his ministry (cp Paul's statement "*I [continually] serve [God] with a clear conscience*" - 2Ti 1:3+).

**Guzik** adds that...Paul will, later in this chapter, reflect again on his sufferings. In these first two verses, he has made it clear that he has not suffered because he has been an unfaithful minister of the gospel. It would have been easy for Paul's enemies to claim, "He suffers so much because God is punishing him because he is unfaithful." That wasn't the case at all. ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

In his first letter to the Corinthians **Paul** alluded to his continual "Coram Deo" mindset writing that...to me it is a very small thing that I may be **examined** (Make careful, exact research as in legal processes) by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even **examine** myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself (I have a clear conscience), yet I am not by this acquitted (Why? Because he was fully aware that it was God Who stood as final Judge - eg, even examining and disclosing our motives! 1Co 4:5); but the one who **examines** me is the Lord. (1Co 4:3, 4)

**Barnes**...As in the immediate presence of God. We act as if we felt that his eye was upon us; and this consideration serves to keep us from the hidden things of dishonesty, and from improper arts in spreading the true religion. See [2Co 2:17]. ([2 Corinthians 4](#))

**Paul** has a similar statement in the next chapter...Therefore (in light of the truth of 2Co 5:10+), knowing the fear of the Lord (not a shaking fear but a worshipful reverence for God, cp Pr 9:10, Ac 9:31), we persuade men (In context Paul is not persuading men regarding salvation, but about his integrity in ministry), but we are made manifest to God (cp Coram Deo - Do you carry out your ministry as if it were Coram Deo? It is!) and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. (2Co 5:11)

---

**Speaking For God** - Despite my best efforts to write clearly, sometimes I'm misunderstood. I feel bad about my failure and try to improve my skills. Occasionally, however, readers take words out of context or read into them something that bears no resemblance to the intended meaning. This is frustrating because there's no way to control how people use words once they are published.

This brings to mind a much more serious offense—that of misusing the words of the Lord. The prophets in Jeremiah's day did this. They put their own words into God's mouth by claiming He said things they wanted to be true but that God had never said. So the Lord told His people, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. . . . They speak a vision of their own heart, not from the mouth of the Lord" (Je. 23:16). Then the Lord warned the people that He would forsake those who pervert His words and cast them from His presence (Jer 23:36,39).

**In contrast, the apostle Paul made a point of saying that he did not handle the Word of God deceitfully (2Co 4:2). He knew the danger of preaching his own ideas rather than God's.**

All of us need to be careful to use God's Word for His purpose, rather than for our own agenda. October 16, 2010 — by Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, keep us faithful to Your Word,

Although, at times, we might rephrase;  
And help us never twist its truths  
To justify our selfish ways.  
—Sper

We must align ourselves with the Bible  
and never try to align the Bible to ourselves.