



“My Grace Is Sufficient”

2 Corinthians Ch. 12:1-10

> (v1-4) GRACE FOR ETERNITY!

(v1) What are the “visions and revelations of the Lord?”

- Visions – The purpose of visions was to give guidance and direction to God's servants and to foretell the future.

- Visions regarding Paul:

(1) Paul saw the glorified Christ on the day of his salvation in Acts 9:3; 22:6;

(2) Paul saw a vision of Ananias coming to speak to him in Acts 9:12;

(3) Paul received a vision to minister to the Gentiles in Acts 22:17;

(4) Paul was called to Macedonia through a vision in Acts 16:9;

(5) Paul was encouraged in Corinth through a vision Acts 18:9-10;

(6) Paul was arrested in Jerusalem and was encouraged through a vision from God in Acts 23:11;

(7) Paul was on ship during what appeared to be a fatal storm when an angel informed that he and the passengers would survive in Acts 27:23.

- Revelations - God's communication to people concerning Himself, His moral standards, and His plan of salvation. In Ephesians 3:1-7 - *For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles — if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power.*

(v2-4) Paul was “caught up to the third heaven – caught up to paradise”

– Let us discover the Third Heaven / Paradise - There are three HEAVENS described in Scripture - The first HEAVEN is the expanse over the earth (Genesis 1:8), our atmosphere. The second HEAVEN is the location of the stars (Genesis 1:14; 26:4), our universe. The third HEAVEN is the dwelling place of God (Genesis 28:17; Revelation 12:7-8). It is the source of the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:2,10).

- The word PARADISE occurs only three times: (1) Luke 23:39-43 (the thief on the cross); 2 Corinthians 12:4 (Paul's experience); Revelation 2:7 - *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."*

- Insight for application: Every born-again Christian has the HOPE OF HEAVEN! There is life after death, Jesus explains this in Luke 16:19-31 (the rich man and Lazarus); John 14:1-3 (Jesus is coming for every believer). Believers going to heaven at death is explained in Acts 7:54-60 (Stephen, the first martyr heading to heaven); 2

Corinthians 5:1-8 (Paul says we go directly to heaven); Philippians 3:20-21 (Our citizenship is in heaven).

- What about the RAPTURE? Matthew 24:40-42; 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 3:7-13.

> **(v5-10) GRACE FOR INFIRMITIES!**

- **Why INFIRMITIES?**

- (1) Infirmities could be the result of reaping what we sow (bad diet = bad health);
- (2) Infirmities may be the result of a common illness or disease (1 Timothy 5:23 - *No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent infirmities*) and/or the results of deteriorating old age;
- (3) Infirmities may be inflicted upon a continuously disobedient believer (1 Corinthians 11:27-31);
- (4) Infirmities may be healed for the glory of God (John Ch. 9; John Ch. 11);
- (5) Infirmities may be inflicted upon a believer to keep them humble, close to God, and to strengthen their walk and testimony in Christ (Paul's example is found in 2 Corinthians 11:5-10), this particular infirmity was inflicted by Satan, we also see a similar experience in the Old Testament with Job (Job Ch. 1 & 2).

- The word *THORN* in verse 7 means "a sharp stake used for torturing or impaling someone." This was Paul's infirmity, as Satan was allowed to *BUFFET* him, the word *BUFFET* means "to beat, to strike with the fist."

- **What do infirmities do for you?**

#1 – **Infirmities produce PAIN!**

– Paul's possible infirmity - Galatians 4:13-16; 6:11 - *You know that because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. And my trial, which was in my flesh, you did not despise or reject, but you received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me . . . See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!*

#2 – **Infirmities produce PRAYER!**

– Humble, dependent, sincere, and consistent prayer.

(God always answers prayer, it is either yes, no, or wait. Jesus prayed three times in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39 - "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.") Each time the answer was for Jesus drink of that cup of suffering and death, Christ request was denied, and the will of God fulfilled.

#3 – **Infirmities produce PERFECTION!**

– The word *PERFECT* in Greek is *teleioo*, which means *to complete, accomplish, or (figuratively) consummate (in character)*.

#4 – **Infirmities produce POWER!**

– The word *POWER* in Greek is *dunamis*, which speaks of *force, miraculous power, ability, mighty works, or deeds*.

- Let us meditate on God’s answer to Paul’s prayer for those tough times in life, “*My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*” And let’s never forget Paul’s attitude and heart in the midst of suffering as read verses 9 – 10.



“I LOVE YOU!”
2 Corinthians Ch. 12:11 – Ch. 13:14

> **(12:11-21) In the Name of LOVE!**

Paul continues his defense, as an apostle, a leader, a teacher and one who loved the believers at Corinth.

(v11-12) Paul’s LOVE was manifested through signs, wonders, mighty deeds, which gave proof to his apostleship.

- Acts 14:3 - *Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.*

- Acts 19:11-13 - *Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them.)*

(v13-14) Paul’s LOVE was not burdensome to the believers, whereas, he made no demands of them, nor required monetary support from them. He loved them without expectations.

(v15-19) Verse 15 is up close and personal, it speaks volumes in regards to Paul’s LOVING heart and character, “*And I will very gladly spend and be spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.*”

- In verses 16-18, Paul’s LOVE was honorable and full of integrity, as well as those who ministered with him and for him to the Corinthians. Notice in verse 19 they did all things for the believer’s “EDIFICATION;” remember LOVE EDIFIES!

(v20-21) Paul spoke the truth in LOVE, whereas he was willing to confront difficult issues for the sake of the Corinthians salvation and sanctification.

<u>CHRISTIAN CHECKLIST:</u>	<u>Repented</u>	<u>Need to Repent</u>	<u>No Problem</u>
- Contentions (strife, quarrels)	_____	_____	_____
- Jealousies (anyone?)	_____	_____	_____
- Outbursts of wrath	_____	_____	_____
- Selfish ambitions	_____	_____	_____
- Backbitings (evil speaking)	_____	_____	_____
- Whisperings (to slander)	_____	_____	_____

- *Conceits* _____
- *Tumults (causing disorder)* _____
- *Uncleanness (immorality)* _____
- *Fornication (sexual sins)* _____
- *Lewdness (Impurity)* _____

> **(13:1-10) LOVE’S EXAMINATION!**

- Verse 5 is sobering, even frightening; *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.”*

- **Here is a four-fold “LOVE GOD TEST” to see whether one is in the FAITH:**

Question #1 - Do you BELIEVE AND CONFESS JESUS CHRIST? Romans 10:9-10

Question #2 - Do you have the WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT in your heart?

Romans 8:9-16 Question #3 – Do you LOVE THE BRETHREN? 1 John 3:14-16

Question #4 – Do you WALK IN THE LIGHT? 1 John 1:5-7

(Verse 10 tells us that this test is for our *EDIFICATION*, not destruction.)

> **(13:11-14) LOVE’S COMPLETE WORK**

- *Become complete* (a mature believer); *be of good comfort* (encouraged); *be of one mind* (the mind of Christ); *live in peace* (be a peacemaker); *and the God of love and peace will be with you!*

- Notice the **Trinitarian** farewell! - 2 Corinthians 13:14 - *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.*