

Giving and Receiving Correction

Sunday, August 24, 2025

Start with Application Testimony

- **Last week's exhortation:** Focus on bringing strength and support to someone else's spiritual journey, this week.

INTRO

- **We are going verse-by-verse, in a topical study through I & II Corinthians**
 - **Current Topic:** Church Relationship - The holy work of being the Body of Christ.
 - So far in this series, we've seen the critical role love plays in the church. We're called to function as a loving family—formed by God as our Father and built on Jesus as our foundation. It is only through loving relationships with one another that the promises of God—and the blessings that come with them—are able to manifest in our lives.
 - Today's lesson focuses on giving and receiving correction as a vital part of the loving relationships we're called to have with one another.
 - *We'll be skipping 2 Corinthians 2:5–11 for now, since we'll return to it in a later lesson on church discipline when we study 1 Corinthians 5.*

READ

2 Corinthians 2:1–4 CSB

¹ In fact, I made up my mind about this: I would not come to you on another painful visit. ² For if I cause you pain, then who will cheer me other than the one being hurt by me? ³ I wrote this very thing so that when I came I wouldn't have pain from those who ought to give me joy, because I am confident about all of you that my joy will also be yours. ⁴ For I wrote to you with many tears out of an extremely troubled and anguished heart—not to cause you pain, but that you should know the abundant love I have for you.

2 Corinthians 2:12–17 CSB

¹² When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though the Lord opened a door for me, ¹³ I had no rest in my spirit because I did not find my brother Titus. Instead, I said good-bye to them and left for Macedonia. ¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us in Christ's triumphal procession and through us spreads the aroma of the knowledge of him in every place. ¹⁵ For to God we are the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶ To some we are an aroma of death leading to death, but to others, an aroma of life leading to life. Who is adequate for these things? ¹⁷ For we do not market the word of God for profit like so many. On the contrary, we speak with sincerity in Christ, as from God and before God.

2 Corinthians 6:3–13 CSB

³ We are not giving anyone an occasion for offense, so that the ministry will not be blamed. ⁴ Instead, as God's ministers, we commend ourselves in everything: by great endurance, by afflictions, by hardships, by difficulties, ⁵ by beatings, by imprisonments, by riots, by labors, by sleepless nights, by times of hunger, ⁶ by purity, by knowledge, by patience, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, ⁷ by the word of truth, by the power of God; through

weapons of righteousness for the right hand and the left,⁸ through glory and dishonor, through slander and good report; regarded as deceivers, yet true;⁹ as unknown, yet recognized; as dying, yet see—we live; as being disciplined, yet not killed;¹⁰ as grieving, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet enriching many; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.¹¹ We have spoken openly to you, Corinthians; our heart has been opened wide.¹² We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us.¹³ I speak as to my children; as a proper response, open your heart to us.

EXAMINE

#1 | The devotion of our love for one another must motivate confrontation

1. We must not confront out of any selfish motivation.

- a. Philippians 2:3 *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.”*
 - i. We need to honestly examine our motives when we confront or correct someone. More often than not, we’re reacting to how something affects or offends us—not out of concern for others.

2. If we truly love one another, we will confront one another.

- a. 2 Corinthians 2:4 *“...I wrote to you with many tears out of an extremely troubled and anguished heart—not to cause you pain, but that you should know the abundant love I have for you.”*
 - i. Real love will push you out of your comfort zone to confront and correct someone you care about.

1. *Sometimes we avoid confrontation not out of love, but selfishness—we don't want the confrontation.*

3. When we confront, it must be what God wants to say – not what we want to say.

- a. 2 Corinthians 2:17 “...we speak with sincerity in Christ, as from God and before God.”
- b. 2 Corinthians 6:3–4 “We are not giving anyone an occasion for offense, so that the ministry will not be blamed. Instead, as God’s ministers, we commend ourselves in everything...”
 - i. If we’re going to do the hard work of Godly confrontation, we need to be sure we’re serving God—not our own opinions or desires.

#2 | The state of our heart determines how God’s truth hits us

1. If our heart is closed, God’s truth brings offense and condemnation.

- a. 2 Corinthians 2:14–16 “But thanks be to God, who... through us spreads the aroma of the knowledge of him in every place... To some we are an aroma of death leading to death...”
 - i. The same attitude that resists the gospel can creep back in after we’re saved. When we refuse correction, we stay stuck in our own mistakes – and we damage the love and unity of the church in the process.

2. But if our heart is open, God’s truth brings healing and vitality.

- a. 2 Corinthians 2:16 “...but to others, an aroma of life leading to life...”

b. Proverbs 15:31 *“One who listens to life-giving rebukes will be at home among the wise.”*

- i. When our heart is open, being corrected doesn’t feel offensive—it feels life-giving, because it is. It all comes down to our willingness to be corrected.

#3 | Correction is a blessing when given in love and received with an open heart

1. If you want others to open their heart to you, first open your heart to them.

a. 2 Corinthians 6:11–12 *“We have spoken openly to you, Corinthians; our heart has been opened wide. We are not withholding our affection from you...”*

- i. Confrontation often fails because we bring the wrong emotion, the wrong motive, or lack the relationship to go there. But when people know we love them, they’re much more likely to listen and receive.

2. When our hearts are open, the transformative truth of God can be given and received between us.

a. 2 Corinthians 6:13 *“I speak as to my children; as a proper response, open your heart to us.”*

b. Ephesians 4:15 *“...speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into him who is the head—Christ.”*

- i. As we’ve seen throughout this series, God designed the church—and His blessings and promises—to flow through close, committed, loving

relationships. So if we want to receive the things of God, we have to open our hearts to each other.

REFLECT

Let's take a moment to pray

Ask the Holy Spirit to guide our attention and lead our conversation, helping us see and understand what He wants us to apply in our lives.

APPLY

Process the passage together with these questions:

- Paul says he wrote “with many tears” (2 Cor 2:4). What do his words and tone teach about us about the way we should feel when correcting a brother or sister in the church?
- What are some warnings signs that we have the wrong motive in correcting someone? How can we check our hearts before speaking?
- Paul talks about proving himself through hardships and endurance (2 Cor 6:3–10). What role does our character play in our readiness to bring correction to others?

Where we want to “land the plane”

- If we want to grow together in Christ, we have to be willing to both give and receive truth in love. That means confronting each other with the right heart—and being open when others speak into our lives. Correction isn't a threat to unity; it's a tool God uses to build it. But it only works when our hearts are open to Him and to one another.

Exhortation for the Week

- Be courageous – begin to open your heart wider to your brothers and sisters in the church.

FOOTNOTES

1. **Visits and letters.** A servant of Christ is no stranger to pain and suffering (Matt. 5:10–12; John 15:18–20; 1 Peter 2:21). Paul had his share (cf. 2 Cor. 1:4–10; 11:16–32) which he did not shirk. But he was no fool. If he could avoid it and still accomplish his work he would do so. This belief led to his change of plans with the Corinthians. When his first painful visit occurred is an unsettled issue. It could have taken place after his founding visit but before the writing of 1 Corinthians, as many suggest. It is odd, however, if that was so, that no mention or intimation of such a visit is found in that letter. More likely, he went to Corinth from Ephesus after writing 1 Corinthians. His “painful visit” may be linked to the projected double visit previously mentioned (2 Cor. 1:15–16) and may thus refer to the first part of those unconsummated plans. During that visit some painful event transpired which grieved the Corinthians and Paul (see comments on 2:5). To spare further grief for both of them Paul deferred his visit. He decided instead to write a letter, a daring venture in view of the Corinthians’ propensity for misunderstanding (cf. 1 Cor. 5:9–10). If his “painful visit” (2 Cor. 2:1) had occurred before he wrote 1 Corinthians, the letter here referred to (I wrote as I did) would be that letter. But if, as seems more likely, the “painful visit” occurred after he wrote 1 Corinthians, the letter Paul referred to followed 1 Corinthians and is now lost (not having been intended by God as a part of the inspired Scriptures). (See point 5 under “Contacts and

Correspondence” in the Introduction.) What that letter contained can only be conjectured from the comments which follow in 2 Corinthians 2:5–11 and 7:5–12. What is clear was Paul’s depth of feelings for the Corinthians and the level of his own discomfort experienced in writing the letter (great distress [thlipseōs; “troubles or pressures”; cf. 1:4] and anguish of heart and with many tears) and in his waiting for news from Titus concerning its reception (cf. 7:5–8). *David K. Lowery, “2 Corinthians,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 557–558.*