

A) RECAP OF 1ST CORINTHIANS:

- 1. INTRODUCTION: 1st & 2nd Corinthians are 2 of the most highly “Spiritual” writings in scripture, and provide a remarkable insight into the Christian metaphysical reality. The “Spirit Worldview” was a given for the ancients. Ritualized Paganism with witchcraft, sorcery, superstition, shamanism, and black magic all blended into a toxic spiritual stew that Paul needed to address. The letters to the Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, and Thessalonians all bear witness to reality of this problem. Paul presented God as Trinity... a “Triune Monotheism” that did not need to be cajoled, placated, or manipulated. This complex God was a Person who wanted to be known, experienced, and relationally engaged with individuals. This was an extremely countercultural view of Deity than what most of the ancients knew. Through the New Testament Gospel of Grace, all of humanity was called [invited] into a new community of faith, hope and love through Jesus.**

- 2. Brief Overview of 1st Corinthians for Context:**
 - a. Chapters 1-6 are Paul’s itinerary and agenda:**
 - i. 1-4 is Paul’s response due to the report from Chloe’s household, outlining problems in the church.**
 - ii. 5 is about dealing with incest in the church.**
 - iii. 6 is about lawsuits and prostitution.**
 - b. Chapters 8-10 is about food offered to idols and the confusion this caused in the church. Idols are exposed by Paul as false gods inhabited by demons... interesting because Paul is saying there is a valid spiritual reality here, but definitely a wrong one.**
 - c. Chapter 11 is about the appropriate behavior for women in worship. The Jews had a very progressive view of the role of women in their society... they were considered equal, but different. In the Greco-Roman world women were second class citizens. Paul walked a fine line to correct their thinking.**
 - d. Chapter 12 is about debunking Spiritual Gifts – the focus being upon promoting unity within the body rather not self-aggrandizement, and a focus on edifying the congregation. People in the ancient realm were not much different than us today... we desire to be different, to stand out, to have what another doesn’t, to be the best and greatest. This was in direct conflict to Jesus’ “servant leadership model.”**
 - e. Chapter 13 is about the true and transformational expressions of love in the faith community: [see <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/2-spiritual-formation/Spiritual%20Maturity/SF%202.3%20-%20Marriage%20and%20Transformation.pdf> for more on this]**
 - i. Paul was satisfied that the church had true spiritual births and initial transformation, though the Corinthians were confused in their understanding of their new life in the spirit.**
 - ii. Their pagan past and current social/economic pressure made it difficult for them to leave their old life and walk in their new Spirit centered life.**
 - iii. Paul emphasizes the promotion of the body of Christ [innerman] vs. the promotion of self [outerman].**
 - f. Chapter 14 is about Spiritual Life in the faith community... the role of all gifts was to edify and serve the congregation, not the individual. Paul saw prophecy [or Word ministry] as**

vastly superior and desirable than tongues [or “signs ministry”].

- i. Prophecy is a broadly framed term – however the focus was on the local context... the local church as the Body of Christ.
 - ii. Prophecy means “to speak for God” – in essence being the spokesman or ambassador for God.
 - iii. Paul and Peter both related 3 basic types of Spiritual gifts:
 1. Speaking gifts – meaning teaching, preaching, and prophecy.
 2. Service gifts – meaning miracles, mercy & self-sacrificial giving and service, and healing.
 3. Personal gifts – meaning tongues and interpretation.
 - iv. Tongues were considered by the Corinthians as being “angel speak,” which in their view verified that the speaker had already attained God’s Kingdom on earth. Of all the gifts, this was most easily faked and abused, and was often used to satisfy their over-reaching eschatology and self-aggrandizement.
 - v. Mercy and serving others was more consistent with a transformed inner-life, and a far truer indicator verifying the presence of the Spirit.
 - vi. Of the three gifts, the first group [speaking gifts] was far superior as it was an example of Spiritual maturity and promoted the advancement of the Kingdom of God. The second group [mercy and service gifts] was a close second. The third group [personal gifts] was a distant third. Paul’s message... seek the higher gifts.
- g. Chapter 15 is about the resurrection of the dead:
- i. The Greco-Roman philosophical duality of “spirit” and “matter” underlay all of these young Christians worldview.
 - ii. They embraced the notion that matter was nothing really important – meaning you could engage in all sorts of behaviors that would not affect your Spiritual identity. This notion promoted confusion in the faith community. Many held the notion that you could enter into all sorts of sinful behavior that it didn’t count. They gratefully accepted being spiritually perfected now; but they expected the next life would be a continuation of this life without physical bodies.
 - iii. Hence, they had trouble accepting a physical resurrection – meaning that matter would be perfected along with the Spirit. They didn’t really understand this two part redemption – the Spiritual redemption being accomplished at Christ’s first coming, and the physical redemption being accomplished at his second coming.
 - iv. Thus, Paul was correcting this aberrant theology confirming that God created humanity as a physical/Spiritual hybrid... and Jesus was the archetype [first example] of this perfected being in His resurrection body of this new physical/Spiritual reality.
 - v. The Greco-Roman mind had difficulty grasping the idea of the necessity of living a restrained godly life in the present while waiting patiently and hopefully for perfected bodies within a new heaven & earth.

3. Components of Pauline “Theology of Christian Identity:”

- a. This identity was not about the individual, it is all about God and our relationship to Him.
 - i. “Flesh” is corrupted by our inherent failure to desire to obey God, the results of

the Fall [sin-curse], the evil of self-centered behavior, and a broken world order in opposition to God's rightful rule.

- ii. "Spirit" is perfected through Jesus and the Cross – the body of Christ is about seeing reality in the context of God's perspective and His purpose.
 - iii. The "Theology of the Cross"... with Jesus as the atonement that reunites humanity and God... the Spiritual separation is now removed and the path to Spiritual reconciliation with God through Christ is available to all, though the broken physical structure remains until Christ's 2nd coming when physical reconciliation will be accomplished.
- b. "Self-esteem" arises out of denying yourself and submitting to God, not from gaining earthly wealth, fame, or personal significance apart from God.
"Self-denial" arises out of not promoting myself... and by deliberately promoting Jesus.
- i. Murder and all the vices are a logical outcome of self-promotion.
 - ii. Love and self-denial are a logical outcome of God-promotion.
- c. This is what "Christian Counterculture" is all about – against which the world has no hold upon or authority.
- i. True freedom happens in living this kind of life – in the tension of a perfected Spirit/Church [Organism not organization] and a yet to be perfected body/world [including the church organization].
 - ii. The problem was not merely the influence of paganism, but rather that they had failed to pursue and allow God to transform them with new values and priorities that the Spirit seeks to develop in God's people. This remains a huge problem for the Church today.
 - iii. The theology of the Cross is not merely the basis of our salvation, but its transformational influence in us inevitably must not merely teach or inform us, but fundamentally transform us into a new way to live and serve God and His mission. This also remains a huge problem in the church as we have set the bar too low in what we should expect God to do in us and through us.
- d. Knowledge vs. Love:
- i. While knowledge and wisdom are desirable, they are easily self-promoting and they often tend to build up the self on their own right apart from God or worse as a badge of merit within the church. In contrast, love is about building up others (8:1).
 - ii. "Self-knowledge" is nothing, while "being known by God" is everything (8:2-3).
 - iii. Because idols are nothing, food sacrificed to idols is untainted (8:4-13):
 - 1. The argument is not to talk someone into or out of their pre-conceived notions – whether they were right or wrong.
 - 2. Demonstrating love through restraint cuts through potentially destructive thoughts & behaviors.
 - 3. The problem was that some knew that idols were nothing and had no problem living in this freedom, but their freedom caused some of their weaker brothers and sisters who observed their exercise of freedom to sin against their own conscience.
 - 4. Conscience issues need to be recognized as important and nurtured

positively.

5. This begs the question... “Do you think your way into a new way of living, or live your way into a new way of thinking?” The answer is, Both!
- e. “Cultural issues” of relative experience vs. “Spiritual issues” of imperative significance:
 - i. Propriety in worship is both cultural and gender sensitive.
 - ii. Symptomatic responses are both normative and non-normative.
 - iii. From other letters, Paul had no problem with women praying and prophesying in the public worship service. His recommendations had to do with proper decorum in a specific cultural setting, rather than a dictate that no woman at any time should exercise authority over others... including men. The same was true of teaching and preaching, as Scripture makes it clear that there were female apostles in the 1st century Church.
 - iv. It was also clear that women had equal access to Spiritual gifts – but again the demonstration of these was to be both culturally and socially sensitive and defined accordingly.
 - v. While public prayer in worship was useful, private prayer was the real thing.
 1. Christian integrity is demonstrated by what you do when no one is watching.
 2. Hypocrisy is doing for show in public what you do not do in private.
 - vi. “All things are permissible” was a popular saying of the day that Paul adopted for his oratory purposes.
 1. ^{1Co 6:12} “Everything is permissible for me” —but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me” —but I will not be mastered by anything.
 2. ^{1Co 10:23} “Everything is permissible” —but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible” —but not everything is constructive.
 - vii. The important thing in these culturally sensitive issues was to promote order in the church, rather than to develop a “theology of headship” [a male-patriarchal-Christocentric model] per-se (14:34-35).
 1. There needs to be hierarchy and unity within the church, just as there is hierarchy and unity within the Trinity.
 2. Similarly, there needs to be unity within marriage and family units – as in the Trinity, there is a submission of the self for the greater good of the unity.
 3. Humanity was made purposefully for living in a mutually submitted and interactive context. A woman giving in to what she knows is wrong is not obedience to Christ... as in the cases of spousal abuse, child abuse, etc. This is not how Jesus would have acted.
 4. The female voice and perspective is important in the family as well as in the Church.

B) 2ND CORINTHIANS:

1. Author and Purpose:

- a. It has long been accepted that the author of 1st and 2nd Corinthians is the Apostle Paul. There has not been any other credible author put forward other than Paul.

- b. The purpose of the letter was to speak into the social and cultural context the Corinthian Christians lived within. Especially of their lack of a transformational development of a Christian counter-culture identity as written in “Components of Pauline Theology of Christian Identity” in section 3 above. This was a great concern to Paul, as it should be for us now days as well.
2. **Structure and Integrity** – 2nd Corinthians has three prominent sections: 1-7, 8-9, 10-13; and the somewhat awkward transitions between some of these sections suggest there may have been additional correspondence that has been lost to antiquity.
- a. 1st Corinthians is generally accepted as the initial letter to the Church at Corinth. Its message and cohesion are proof of a single literary work.
 - b. 2nd Corinthians is a little more interesting.
 - i. First, the manner in which it starts out has led most scholars to presume there was an intermediate letter [“sorrowful” letter] Paul had written that was somehow lost in antiquity. This letter is believed to have elicited a response, with our now existent 2nd Corinthians being that response.
 - ii. Second, sections one and two flow together nicely creating a unified response. Section three however seems a little out of sync with the flow of the overall letter. Many scholars suggest that something happened between the end of section two and the beginning of section three. In response to this, scholars have offered some ideas:
 - 1. One possibility is that Paul had set the letter aside for some indeterminate time or reason and came back to it when new information was conveyed regarding the church in Corinth. While plausible, it doesn’t completely satisfy most scholars.
 - 2. The second possibility is that there was another letter exchanged between sections two and three, of which section three is the response. The sum of this would indicate there were a total of four letters to the Corinthian church... one lost between what we now know as 1st and 2nd Corinthians, and one lost between sections two and three of our 2nd Corinthians.
 - 3. Archaeologists are always finding new artifacts and newly recovered documents that shed light on these and other such issues. In the meantime, we can enjoy what God has provided us and be open to be thrilled by new discoveries!
3. **Textual Contents – The Message of 2nd Corinthians:**
- a. Section 1 – Chapters 1-7 is a long and passionate introduction:
 - i. 2:14-7:4 is the meat of this section; with the earlier and later part as the bread of the sandwich.
Comfort and affliction are the realities to be expected of Spiritual life on Fallen earth. The tension of the pull of the Spirit and the drag of the Fallen nature keeps us close to God.
 - ii. 2:3-4 refers to the previously written “sorrowful letter.” Paul goes on to affirm that his heart is pure, and so are his motives... or that no offense was intended.
 - iii. 2:5-11 Paul’s confrontation of sin ultimately led to the repentance and reinstatement of the now repentant sinner – this is great news! It is the best that

could be hoped for! Again, this is a good reminder that discipline is necessary and tough love must be sometimes used... but the desired result is always the 5 parts of the forgiveness cycle... 1)conviction, 2)remorse, 3)repentance, 4)restitution, and 5)reconciliation. [See <http://www.authenticdiscipleship.org/pdfs/2-spiritual-formation/Spiritual%20Disciplines/SF%201.11%20Prayer%20Practicum%209%20-%20Forgiveness%20Study.pdf> for much more on this important topic. The “Forgive and Forget” approach is not what Scripture teaches us. Forgiveness is much more complex.]

iv. 2:14 – but thanks be to God – who *ALWAYS LEADS US...*

1. ^{2CO 2:14} But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. ^{2CO 2:15} For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved *and* among those who are perishing; ^{2CO 2:16} to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life.
2. “Discouragement” – happens as I look back at the world for my sense of identity and values.
3. “Encouragement” – happens as I look on heavenly things and the example of Jesus as my identity and values.
4. *We know Him by looking at Him*, we smell like Him because we know Him... this is what the transformed nature looks like.

v. 3:2-3 – “Law” is an outerman covenant written on stone and the flesh... it has the power to convict, but no power to transform. The most sensitive of the Old Covenant were led to Grace... such as what David wrote in the Psalms...

^{Ps 23:6} Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and *I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

This is definitely a great example of New Testament Grace exhibited prophetically from the Old Testament.

“Grace” is an innerman covenant written on human hearts by the indwelling Spirit whose sanctifying work is to form Jesus’ nature within. This is the goal for all Christian discipleship.

vi. 3:4-6 our “Confidence” is based upon the *adequacy* of the gift of Grace derived through God.

vii. 3:7-18 “Law” – Paul’s negative discussion of the ministry of the Law being likened to death & condemnation and the fading glory exhibited on Moses’ face... this is a *diatribe* [form of argument] meant to focus the surpassing difference of the “Spirit” ministry on life & righteousness – whose glory is constantly growing and abounding.

1. Law is described as a veil shrouding God’s Glory, whereas the Spirit removes the veil clearly displaying God’s Glory.
2. This is not to say there was no value in the Law, but rather that the Law’s value is dwarfed by the surpassing riches of Grace in Jesus.
3. The logical result... seek Grace!

viii. 4:1-6:2 Paul outlines the ministry of reconciliation, and this dovetails with the Titus event as a demonstration of New Covenant ministry. Titus errantly left his

master... a crime punishable by death, but instead of receiving what he deserved, Paul encourages his master to provide Grace and freedom – this is what Jesus did for us and it is all about the innerman versus outerman transformation.

1. “Momentary, light, affliction” – are what Paul focuses on in the temporal, but consider it from the alternative – “eternal, heavy, glory” we enjoy with God. **CONTEMPLATE & MEDITATE ON THIS CONCEPT!** The Church is weakened when we focus more on our temporal comfort as opposed to our eternal wondrous glory... perspective is important!
 2. The reality of this argument is that the machinery of heaven defies physics – essentially the “Real World” is unseen, because it is Spiritual. While the material world is “unreal” because it is broken and cannot last in its Fallen state. Paul uses this as a way to encourage his readers in seeing things through God’s eyes.
 3. As a result, Christians need to obey God, be alert to His promptings, and to meditate on His mysteries.
 4. “Beholding the Lord” – transforms both our mind and our heart. Once you really “see” who God really is, everything starts to change... and is followed by working out our faith in awe and wonder [CR Philippians 2:12-13].
 5. “Worship” is bowing [submitting obediently] before the King. This is another concept foreign to our “democratic sensibilities:”
 - a. We want God to come to us on our terms... but when you stand before the King you know he has complete authority.
 - b. An earthly king can compel obedience with prison and death... while our heavenly King returns faith and obedience with freedom and eternal life.
 6. “Ministry” is first prayer and then word ministry:
 - a. Prayer inclines and conforms our mind and heart to God as we purposefully engage Him.
 - b. Word/prophesy is relating the heavenly message of Scripture as we receive it in prayerful contemplation and study.
 - c. The result of this dynamic is that we become engaged in God’s mission to engage and redeem humanity.
 7. “Outerman” is physical, psychological and emotional – outerman will be redeemed at Jesus’ 2nd coming. In the meantime, the physical, psychological and emotional elements are alone unreliable guides at best.
 8. “Innerman” is Spirit – which was redeemed at Jesus 1st coming for His faithful believers. Although our mind and heart remain imperfect, the presence of the Spirit affirms what we understand or learn Spiritually, with our cognitive senses [IQ] and emotional sense [EQ] working together to ratify what the Spirit is telling and teaching us.
- ix. 7:1-16 “*cleansing ourselves*” is a constant act of Spiritual Formation... keeping close to and our hearts clear before God. This is a reaffirmation of love, discipline, repentance, and acceptance – and mirrors or restates 2:5-11.

- b. **Section 2 – Chapters 8-9 are about Christian charity – however, what Paul is advocating is meeting the needs within the faith community by giving to fellow Christians who were suffering economical persecution because of their faith:**
- i. **Generosity was encouraged as a love response and was not a compulsion.**
 - ii. **“Tithe” is an Old Covenant term referring to the involuntary mandate based on the tribute a vassal would be forced to pay their sovereign lord. The “love offering” is a New Covenant term referring to the voluntary response to bless others token of God’s Grace bestowed upon us. In essence, we would be pretty spoiled children if we refuse to bless others in need when we have been so richly blessed by God.**
 - iii. **“Grace” is “to give” – freely and with right motives. The more one realizes how great God’s gift to us is, the more we tend to want to engage and be a blessing to others.**
 - iv. **As God freely gave of Himself, that is the picture we should hold to as well – we are to give freely without expectation or reparation. This is investing in the Kingdom of God.**
 - v. **Christians will answer for and will give an accounting to God for what we have done to advance the Kingdom of God. Having said that, we do not work to please men, but rather to please God. Too many preachers treat their congregations as a bank account to meet the need of the church organization rather than tending to people... meaning the ministry of evangelism and discipleship in developing and equipping the saints.**
 - vi. **Bottom line - organizational needs are real, but they are secondary to the Organism’s needs; meeting the needs of non-believers is a great witness, but if we fail to meet the needs first within the faith community, our witness falls flat.**
- c. **Section 3 - Chapters 10-13 are about Paul and his Apostolic Ministry. The reason scholars believe some new information may have become known to Paul is due to the abrupt change in this letter with the focus to the defense of his ministry:**
- i. **Paul in defending his ministry makes his claim as a true apostle whose authority was ordained [sanctioned] by God. Paul refutes the “false apostles” who apparently were confusing the church, who could claim only the authority of men. The vigorous response Paul mounts suggest that something happened between Chapters 9 & 10 – the best guess offered by many scholars is that new correspondence had arrived before Paul completed his letter that he felt compelled to respond to. We just don’t know for sure.**
 - ii. **Paul mandates that Christian Gospel ministry is not for sale. While it is often appropriate for those who have been blessed to respond with a blessing in keeping with the spiritual blessing received, this is definitely not under any compulsion and only should be given and accepted as a “love offering” in support of the needs of the ongoing ministry.**
 - iii. **11:12-33 Paul allows himself the folly of defending his credentials as being greater than those of his opponents... this is not really boasting as Paul was a leading Pharisee having been trained by the greatest Pharisee of his era Gamaliel. Paul had bragging rights!**

1. 28 – as important and troubling were the external pressures, greater by far was the daily internal pressure of Paul’s heart felt concern for all of the churches that Paul labored with.
 2. The Godly burden to reach out with the message of Grace in the Gospel is a Spiritual compulsion that is the mark of apostolic ministry.
 3. The Godly burden of this internal concern for others is the mark of pastoral shepherds.
 4. Paul considered himself a walking dead man; physical hardship was not enough to deter him, as he was focused on the ever-present comfort of the reality of the Spirit now and in the age to come.
 5. His earnestness is the mark of true love and apostleship, and the Church should be able to identify the false apostle/shepherds from the true apostle/shepherds accordingly.
- iv. 12:1-6 Paul declares that if you have to boast about something, boast about the wondrous Spiritual reality we have been invited into. Thinking “High Thoughts” about these wondrous things stretches our spiritual minds and imaginations, and makes us more open to receive them from God. God is defined by Awe and Wonder, and we would do well to remember that... less we become complacent or treat Him with less respect.
- v. 12:7-9 after listing his impressive qualifications, Paul recounts that he has been afflicted with a thorn in the flesh – referring to some form of a messenger from Satan to torment him and prevent him from pride.
1. Paul’s thorn was something other than what all suffer with – that is the flesh, emotions and the tension of living in this Fallen and broken world while waiting for the perfection of the next world.
 2. This thorn was used by God to keep Paul close to Him; it was a constant reminder to Paul of his desperate need of Grace and supernatural strength.
 3. God’s power works invisibly and is infinitely superior to worldly power that is visibly evidenced.
- vi. 12:10-11 Paul reveals something that our generation really needs to be aware of... it is humility that makes him strong; it is his weakness through which God works wonders.
1. The thorn and compensating Grace was God’s perfect plan for Paul.
 2. Rather than fight against it, Paul chose to trust God and embrace it.
 3. In this way hardships of all sorts are transformed into vehicles of Grace that God uses to further transform our minds and hearts.
- vii. 12:12-31 The “Signs” of a True Apostle... were performed among you by Spiritual signs, wonders, and attesting miracles:
1. Paul makes the case that a sure mark of arrogance and pride is insisting we are somehow better than another. This is not the model of servant leadership Jesus taught His disciples... to walk in humility.
 2. No one should boast about what they think is a more desirable ability or gift they may have instead of another... after all it is the Spirit who gives to each as needed for the body, and all are essential for the health and unity

of the body. Therefore there is no cause for boasting.

4. Theological Thematic Development:

- a. The “Sorrowful letter” was received by the church and had been properly responded to, and Titus’ report of this greatly encouraged Paul – chap 1-2:
 - i. The sinning brother had repented, and the proper response for the church was to accept and restore their repentant brother to fellowship.
 - ii. This is a great example of effective church discipline:
 1. Pray when you don’t know what you should do.
 2. Pray that the Spirit would intervene and bring clarity of the problem and conviction to all involved.
 3. Pray that each heart would properly respond.
 4. Pray for the goal which is always for restoration and reconciliation.
 5. Only when one refuses all these overtures is it appropriate for turning them out of the fellowship, so they will not be an impediment to the growth of others. Even then, it is expected we should engage these “backslidden” brothers and sisters with the hope of ultimate restoration. “Hate the sin, love the sinner.”
- b. Christian Existence Clarified – chap 3-4:
 - i. Christian’s confidence is through Christ – as citizens of the New Covenant we are a living contradiction:
 1. Being in the world, but not of it.
 2. Being in the Spirit, but living out our life in a fallen material world.
 3. Being perfected in our Spirit, but existing in an unredeemed body of flesh [jars of clay].
 4. Paul’s message is that we avoid discouragement by focusing inward – on the perfected *innerman* and the Spirit life within; rather than on the outward and obvious – on the fallen *outerman* that often frustrates our decisions to faithfully follow and honor God.
 5. We live victoriously through the Spirit; even though we often live with defeat due to the flesh.
 - ii. The Law was written by God for the Israelites on stone – it is a covenant initiated by divine Glory though it was fading. Moses veil concealing the fading glory of his face was testimony to the impermanence of the Law.
 1. The intent of the Law was to bring man to faithful dependence on God, which is still justification by faith. However, it became corrupted by pride and arrogance and resulted in man’s dependence upon himself for justification.
 2. The Law has the power to convict people of sin, but has no power to transform people into a life acceptable by God. Though it points us in the right direction, apart from the Grace of Jesus it ultimately results in death. The Cross and Resurrection of Jesus should be seen as the pivotal event in Redemptive history... radiating outward both through the past and future.

3. The Spirit is written on human hearts, and it is a covenant initiated by divine glory that renews itself daily and is never fading, resulting in eternal life.
- iii. Christian Worship & Life:
 1. Is primarily personal and internal – it involves the innerman and personal Spiritual Transformation [Spiritual Formation].
 2. Corporate worship will validate and infuse our personal and internal worship. Both are important! However, the Spiritual Vitality of our personal walk with God, infuses our corporate walk with God.
 3. True worship is knowing Jesus and experiencing the power of His resurrection life. When we know and accept our identity in Christ, we become transformational beings capable of transforming the world.
 4. Sharing in the experience of suffering is a reality of living Spiritually in a fallen world.
 5. God gives Grace to each to live their lives victoriously in resurrection power:
 - a. Where trials crush the outerman and Spirit life frees the innerman.
 - b. Where the innerman brings Hope in spite of the despair encouraged by outerman.
 - c. In this context God continues to work miracles – with transformational growth happening in steps [sanctification].
- c. Temporal Versus Eternal – chap 5:
 - i. Temporal life causes inward groaning (5:2) as we long for Heaven – our spirit within knows its true heritage and ultimate destination.
 - ii. Eternity is coming for each person – the Apocalyptic “End of Days” greets each person, though most of us will pass on naturally on earth before the Parousia [second coming]. This “natural order” will continue until Christ comes again. Eternity is “the real world” not the fantasy of our present worldly life. Therefore, we should be encouraged (5:6).
 - iii. When eternity comes, there will be a reckoning and God will establish justice (5:10).
 - iv. The Grace at work in our hearts makes us “confessors” of our present sinful nature – it bears testimony of our own unworthiness and God’s Greatness. If we are not thinking great thoughts about God or ascribing greatness to His Name, we are not seeing Him as we ought to. Those who boast and claim otherwise are fools or worse... wolves in sheep’s clothing.
 - v. Forgiveness has already happened at the cross... as the Passover lamb commemorated the freedom of the Jews from slavery in Egypt, so Jesus as the Passover Lamb of the Cross commemorated freedom from sin and death. Our confession of what God has already accomplished is agreeing with the Spirit’s conviction in our innerman of our fundamental unworthiness, of our great need for Grace and redemption; and identifying with Jesus in His death and Life and our absolute dependence upon His Grace.
 - vi. Confession of our need and our sin maintains our dependence and identity in Him.

- vii. Therefore – we are a new creation (5:17-21) – the new is here now, and continues to be worked out in us.
- d. Christian Ministry – chap 6:
 - i. Spiritually, Christians live with one foot in heaven, and with one foot physically tethered to hell – in this tension we deliberately depend on Him while He works out our salvation (6:1). Thus, now is the time of our acceptance (6:2); and as servants, we endure the world [6:4].
 - ii. We are not to be unnecessarily bound to unbelievers, but should maintain a respectful distance [6:14] – this is primarily about the church, not necessarily individuals. The dictate to “be separate from the world” is to remain a countercultural force; unfortunately the great failure of many churches is to have become so completely captured with the worldly ways of doing things, that we cease to be salt and light to the world.
 - iii. The Corinthians to whom Paul was writing acknowledged and rejoiced with being sons and daughters of heaven, yet they continued to engage in pagan temple worship – thus they kept their old friendships and compromised their calling and lifestyle.
 - 1. Christians must recognize the difference between false spirituality and true Spirituality – we are called to be in the world, but not of the world.
 - 2. As Christians, “righteousness and lawlessness” as well as “light and darkness” have no partnership with each other [6:14].
 - 3. As Christians, there is no harmony between Christ and Satan, or believer and non-believer... we serve different masters and values [6:15]. We are obliged to evangelize... to engage the world for Christ, but not to submit to it.
 - 4. As Christians, there is no agreement among the Temples of God [our physical bodies], and the temples of idols [6:16-18]. We are the Temple of the Living God... and we should live accordingly.
 - 5. Therefore – we are required to cleanse ourselves [7:1]. The Spirit does the heavy lifting, but we have a part to play in agreeing with and submitting to Him.
- e. Pastoral Heart of Paul Revealed – chap 7:
 - i. I have great confidence in you – encouragement and exhortation are always at the heart of Christian leadership [7:4]. Encouragement and exhortation are healthy:
 - 1. It moves believers along to a deeper relationship with God.
 - 2. It raises our perspective and expectations from the mundane to the eternal.
 - 3. It moves us from a life in the peripheral to mainstream; and from mainstream to new levels of dependence and holiness.
 - ii. I rejoice in my confidence in you [7:16].
 - 1. Paul is a ‘happily ever after’ and a ‘glass half-full’ kind of guy.
 - 2. He looks at the things that are said, and also at what is not said.
 - 3. The result is a pull toward greater intimacy with God and personal holiness.

4. We all should meditate as one who like Paul is further down the Spiritual road – and speaking with confidence to those who follow us.
- f. A Congregation meeting the needs of other Congregations – chap 8-9:
 - i. The Christian faith community needs to get beyond their own self-interest and engage the needs of other believers and faith communities.
 - ii. Engaging the world for advancing the Kingdom of God necessitates a bigger picture of what God is doing, and my personal role in advancing it.
 - iii. It is too easy for churches to segregate ourselves from the world; and to distance us from other churches.
 - iv. It is too easy to so embrace the world that we lose our counter-cultural impact.
- g. Facing Adversity in the Church – chap 10-13
 - i. This is Paul's example of an attack and defense of a leader's authority.
 - ii. The twin evils part 1 – the surest way to destroy a congregation is to attack its leaders.
 - iii. The twin evils part 2 – the surest way to destroy a leader is to attack its congregation.
 - iv. Chronicling who we are and what we've done as well as why we're done it is often helpful because the human memory tends to be forgetful, and human weakness tends to want to see the worst. A reasoned and balanced approach offered in love can change everything; whereas a more hurtful approach can do great damage.